Skier Triggered Windslab Avalanche in Maid Basin

Date
Thu, 01/12/2023 - 12:40
Activity
Skiing

Today my partner and I set out to ski Divide Peak and then re-ascend to connect the ridge over to 'Fat Maid' in Maid of the Mist basin. On our way up Divide peak, a hasty pit yielded poor results so we decided to bail on the main SE Gully that leaves from the summit. We still skied down from the shoulder, in the trees, and continued on our plan to head back up and over to Maid.

While skiing down 'Fat Maid' I triggered a shallow wind slab, after I was about 3/4ths of the way down the couloir. The slide broke to my left as I entered a wider section of the run, that holds a small perched bowl feature (which is what ripped out). The slide didn't propagate out into the main couloir, so the debris never impacted me. Even if it had, I don't think it would've been big enough to knock myself or any other skier off their feet. The slide was about 1/2 the width of the couloir and ran out to about 3/4ths of the apron's length (R2 D1?). The crown was 1-3" deep and maybe 30-40' wide. Had the wind slab been larger, or impacted one of the thin faceted layers mid-pack (like the one that scared us off Divide Peak) it could've been a different story. Thought it'd be good for people to consider heading into the weekend and unsettled weather. The picture is kinda hard to see so I did quickly draw the crown on the same image, but will send you the original as well.

On another note, we found an impressive amount of surface hoar, widespread, even in alpine areas exposed to sun and wind. Hopefully it get knocked down before the next storm!

Region
Northern Gallatin
Location (from list)
Maid of the Mist
Observer Name
Christopher Kussmaul