

CRH Avalanche Report November 2010

Summary

The CRH avalanche season has not begun yet due to lack of snow. No avalanche activity has yet affected the highway. The backcountry has had some avalanche hazard in the upper mountains, but at tree line and below, snow levels have been below threshold.

Weather

November had a lot of precipitation and a lot of cold temperatures, but not at the same time. Snow fell to sea level a couple times and rain reached the peaks at other times. Moderate to strong wind also played a major role.

At Snotel, the average high temperature was 3.0°C (37.3°F), with 6.5°C (43.7°F) recorded November 19th. The average low temperature was -0.7°C (30.7°F), with -5.7°C (21.7°F) recorded November 16th.

Precipitation totaled 371 mm (14.6 in) for the month. 175 mm (6.9 in) of this fell from the 1st through the 6th. The largest 24 hour accumulation of 71 mm (2.8 in) occurred on November 4th.

The wind blew moderate to strong from the East for the first half of the month. At Snotel, the strongest gusts of 46 mph and 42 mph were achieved on the 3rd and 4th respectively. The North wind blew strong mid month and at the end of the month with more east wind in between.

Snow Pack

In general, the November snow pack was shallow. Above tree line, there is now 1 – 2 m (3 – 6 ft) of snow. Micro features have begun to fill in, though strong winds have heavily sculpted the snow pack. Below tree line there is no base layer. At Snotel, November began with 23 cm (9 in) of snow, but decreased to nothing by the 3rd. The snow pack reached its highest of 46 cm (18 in.) on November 28th.

Three snow profiles and seven field observations were recorded during November. Most instability noted was at the new snow interface and either released unobserved or stabilized quickly. A shallow snow pack allowed micro features to increase stability and limit the size of avalanche activity.

Avalanche Observations

Some small avalanches probably occurred during storm events, but went unobserved due to obscured weather. A couple small avalanches were observed at the middle and end of November. Two medium sized avalanches occurred due to loading and warm temperatures.

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