Large Avalanche on Scotch Bonnet

Date
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Avoiding avalanche terrain remains our risk mitigation strategy in Cooke City (2/18). We investigated a large avalanche on the north side of Scotch Bonnet that ran 400 vertical feet, broke 400 feet wide, and failed 5 feet deep. You would need to get lucky to survive getting caught in a slide that size, and triggering them is likely on slopes steeper than 30 degrees. There was a small avalanche on a steep rollover below the toe of the debris. Digging in their flank and crown, respectively, we found that they both failed on the layer of surface hoar. This was interesting in that there was well-preserved surface hoar at upper elevation slopes often exposed to the wind. However, the actual failure point is somewhat irrelevant, given the multiple weak layers in close proximity within the snowpack.

Region
Cooke City
Location (from list)
Scotch Bonnet
Observer Name
David Zinn