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Afternoon Backcountry Avalanche Forecast for Front Range

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Issued 02/13/2009 5:12 PM by Simon Trautman

Weather Discussion

The trough axis associated with the latest Pacific storm has moved east of the divide. Most of the state saw a break in the precip today, with intermittent clouds in the mountains and scattered orographic storms in the Northern and Central Mountains through m Another Pacific storm is moving onshore, and satellite images show a nice streak of moisture entering the four corners this aftern series of small shortwaves preceding the approaching trough will bring scattered snow around dusk, while the bulk of the storm w later tonight or early Saturday morning; it is possible that the storm is moving in quicker than forecast and much of the snow sche for the the day Saturday may come in the early morning hours tonight. Potential snow accumulations appear modest, but light to moderate snow is expected for most mountain locations. The Central and Southern mountains will receive the bulk of the precipita The flow will briefly shift to the northwest Saturday night as a small ridge moves overhead in advance of the next storm.

Weather Forecast

Fields	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night
Temperature (°F)	2 to 7	15 to 20	3 to 8
Wind Speed (mph)	10 to 20	20 to 30	20-30 G45
Wind Direction	SW	SW	W
Sky Cover	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
Snow (in)	Tr to 2	1 to 3	0 to 2

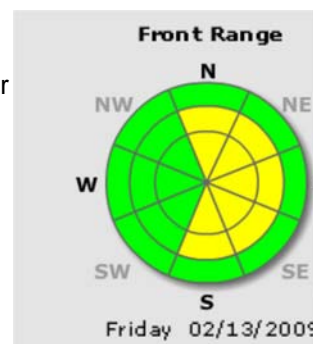
Snowpack Discussion

Last night the zone received ~2" of new snow. Today some of the more northern areas tacked on another inch or so. Winds have primarily out of the WNW during the day and NNW overnight. Although winds have been light for the zone, above treeline they hav strong enough to move the new snow around. Thursday afternoon winds strengthened out of the SW and moved any available snr NE aspects.

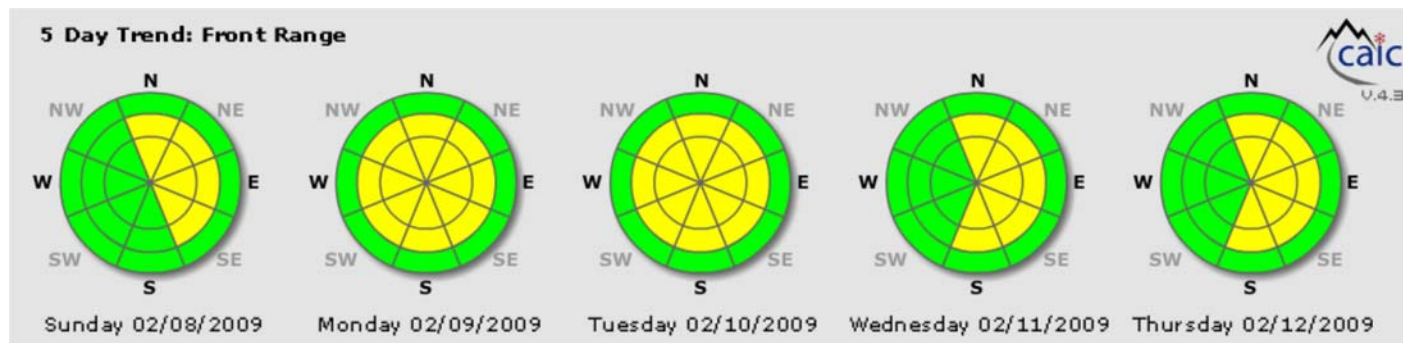
An observer on Wednesday in Rocky Mountain National Park reported gusty winds that are quickly transporting the new snow into reactive and consolidated 3-5" slab. The fresh slab was not bonding to the underlying wind and sun crusts. The reporting group kicked a 30' wide soft slab with a ski cut but it was only 3-4" deep. This observation is typical of what you will find in many parts of the F Range. Although the slab formation has been thin, in complex terrain even these smaller avalanches can ruin your day...choose you wisely, and if there is not a reasonable avenue for retreat, or escape, choose another slope.

Avalanche Danger

The avalanche danger for the Front Range zone is MODERATE near and above treeline on N-NE-E-SE-S aspects. Below treeline, and on SW-W-NW aspects near and above treeline, the danger is LOW. Stiff wind slabs will be touchy on steep slopes where new snow has drifted.

[Avalanche Danger Scale](#)


Danger Rose Trend



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