

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Sat Jan 24, 2015

Good morning. This is Mark Staples with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Saturday, January 24, at 7:30 a.m. [Mystery Ranch](#) in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center sponsor today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning near Bozeman and Big Sky, temperatures were near freezing and winds were blowing 15-20 mph gusting 30-40 mph from S and W. Further south near West Yellowstone and Cooke City it was colder and calmer with temperatures in the teens to 20s F and winds blowing 5-15 mph. Today will be mostly cloudy with snow falling in the mountains and some rain in the valleys. Most mountains should get 2-4 inches of snow by tomorrow morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Southern Gallatin Range](#) [Southern Madison Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

The main problem in the mountains near West Yellowstone is a layer surface hoar buried about 8 inches deep ([photo](#), [video](#)). In many places it has been unreactive with such a thin slab and light load on top of it, and in other places this layer doesn't exist. The rest of the snowpack is strong and stable ([video](#)) as Eric found yesterday near Hebgen Lake. Where this layer of surface hoar doesn't exist avalanches are unlikely. Where it exists, avalanches remain possible.

Near Cooke City, isolated slopes have a weak layer of small facets buried under the 2 feet of new snow that fell last weekend ([video](#)). Many slopes do not have this weak layer and have very good stability.

With weak layers lurking on a few slopes, avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger on slopes steeper than 35 degrees is **MODERATE**. Less steep slopes have a **LOW** danger.

[Bridger Range](#) [Northern Gallatin Range](#)

[Northern Madison Range](#)

Yesterday in the Bridger Range, winds were gusting up to 50 mph and a skier on Saddle Peak reported many new wind slabs forming. Overnight winds near Big Sky increased as well. Wind slabs are the main problem today. Another observer in Hyalite Canyon south of Bozeman reported some scouring and some loading from strong winds. Wind slabs can be tricky to assess in terms of stability but are easy to see and avoid. With strong winds continuing avalanches remain possible and the danger is rated **MODERATE** on wind loaded slopes and **LOW** on all others.

Eric will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or call us at 587-6984.

Avalanche Forecaster's Beer Social Fundraiser

The **Friends of the Avalanche Center** and **Montana Ale Works** are hosting an *Avalanche Forecaster's Beer Social Fundraiser* the evening of January 27th. Get more information and buy tickets here:

<https://www.ticketriver.com/event/14010>

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

Take a look at our [Education Calendar](#) for all our classes being offered.

TODAY: Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association Poker Ride, Buck Ridge, Highway 191, Saturday, January 24. Beacon clinic too! More information here: <http://gvsa.net/>

TODAY: 1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, West Yellowstone, 7 p.m., Saturday, January 24, Holiday Inn.

Advanced Avalanche Workshop with Field Course, MSU Bozeman, evening lectures 7-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, January 28 and 29, with an all-day field session on Saturday. Get more information and register here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/12445>

1-hour Avalanche Awareness, Dillon, UM Western, 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, January 27.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, Livingston, 7 p.m., Tuesday, January 27, Yellowstone Ranger District.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, West Yellowstone, 7 p.m., Saturday, January 31, Holiday Inn.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, Lewistown, 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., Saturday, January 31, Fergus Country Trade Center. More info here: <http://www.mtavalanche.com/images/15/thunderstruck-13-premiere-and-avalanche-classes>