

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Feb 3, 2022

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Thursday, February 3rd, at 6:45 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's](#) and [Spark R&D](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. there's no new snow, just wind and temperatures below zero. Around Bozeman and Big Sky the wind is W-SW at 15-30 mph with gusts of 46 mph and temperatures about -3F. Near West Yellowstone and Cooke City the wind is SW-NW at 10-20 mph with temperatures near -10F. Today will be partly sunny with temperatures hitting the teens and wind lessening. We may see a trace to 1" of new snow by morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Monday and Tuesday's 10" of new snow is getting blown into drifts which will be widespread. At ridgelines wind is strong and gusty from the W-SW and even at lower elevations the wind is strong enough to move snow. The drifts are piling onto a weak surface (sugary/faceted) and I expect them to easily crack and possibly avalanche, with the potential to propagate wider than we might think. Weak layers are found in the upper 12-18" of the snowpack. Ian rode into Buck Ridge yesterday and determined that wind-loading would create instability, and last night it blew at all elevations. Wind drifts will be found at ridgelines and in gullies. Unintentionally triggering a wind pillow, even a small one, could injure and/or bury you. Today, avalanches are possible on wind-loaded slopes and the danger is rated [MODERATE](#). On slopes untouched by the wind, the danger is rated [LOW](#).



Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

The mountains south of Big Sky to West Yellowstone and Cooke City received 5-6" of snow on Monday and Tuesday. Winds have been mostly light and wind drifting could be found in a few isolated areas. Two skiers outside Cooke City found one of these slopes and triggered a slide in a steep, technical gully near Goose Lake ([details and photo](#)). One person was carried 600' and partially buried with his head under the snow. His partner rescued him within a couple minutes and was thankfully uninjured. In general, avalanches are unlikely today. Although there is weak snow in the upper 12-18" of the snowpack, a few inches of snow earlier in the week was not enough to tip the scales toward widespread instability. On Tuesday [I was in Cooke City](#) happily skiing in a snowstorm (yeah!), yet also concerned about loading which did not happen because the snow stopped (waah!). For today, the avalanche danger is rated [LOW](#). As yesterday's skier triggered avalanche illustrates, a low danger does not mean slides are impossible, just improbable.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

THIS SATURDAY: KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes.* Info is [HERE](#). Race participants for the February 5th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#).

Upcoming Education Opportunities

See our [education calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

TOMORROW, Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals, three-part series of pre-recorded lectures, virtual Q&A and an in-person field session. Pre-registration and more information [HERE](#).

THIS SATURDAY, King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl. Come hike and ski with your friends for avalanche awareness and fun! Details above.

February 10th, Forecaster Chat at Uphill Pursuits, “Beyond the Beacon” with GNFAC Forecaster Dave Zinn

Every Saturday near Cooke City, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. FREE snowpack update and transceiver/rescue training. Stop by for 20 minutes or more at the Round Lake Warming Hut.