

## GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Jan 24, 2025

This is Ian Hoyer with the avalanche forecast for Friday, January 24nd, at 7:00 a.m. sponsored by [Highline Partners](#) and [Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

It has started to snow this morning, but **only a dusting has accumulated** so far. Temperatures are in the single digits and teens F. Winds are 20-25 mph out of the south and west, with gusts of 30-50 mph.

Temperatures won't rise much today, with high temperatures being in the single digits and teens F. Winds will back off a bit and shift to be more out of northwest and north. By tomorrow morning, **2-5" of snow will fall around Bozeman and Big Sky**, with the bulk of that coming this morning. **1-3" will fall near West Yellowstone, Island Park, and Cooke City.**

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Southern Madison   Southern Gallatin   Lionhead Range   Cooke City

The primary avalanche concern today is avalanches breaking in wind drifts. **Wind Slab avalanches** could break in wind drifts that formed earlier in the week, or with a bit of snow falling today and adding to the snow available to blow around, 1-2 ft deep avalanches could break in freshly drifted snow. Yesterday, skiers in Cooke City had wind slabs crack and saw lots of wind transport up high ([observation](#)). Mark and Dave found small facets (a weak layer) yesterday about 4" below the surface on Lionhead Ridge, this could make new drifts more reactive and avalanches a little bigger ([observation](#)). Seek out wind-sheltered slopes to avoid this problem.

Larger **Persistent Slab avalanches** breaking on old weak layers also remain possible. We haven't seen slides on these weak layers recently, but we don't quite trust them yet. There were several large avalanches early last week near Cooke City ([here](#) and [here](#)), one in the [southern Madison Range](#), and one [major sign of instability last Sunday near Cabin Creek](#). If you get unlucky and trigger one of these slides - it'll be big, destructive and deadly. This possibility should motivate you to tone down terrain choices and stay off the biggest, steepest, rockiest slopes.

Human triggered avalanches remain possible and the avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#).



Bridger Range   Northern Gallatin   Northern Madison   Island Park

**Wind Slab avalanches** are also the main concern in the mountains near Bozeman, Big Sky, and Island Park. Active wind transport was noted yesterday on the high peaks and winds picked up more overnight ([observation](#)). Skiers in Hyalite yesterday saw a thin, recent wind slab ([observation](#)). More of the same is possible today and they could break deeper as well. The big volume of low density snow that fell in the Bridgers earlier in the week

finally got blown around last night, so this is where I'd expect to find the deepest and most reactive wind slabs today.

As snow falls and drifts today, be alert for fresh wind slab forming. Steering around wind drifts will dramatically reduce the risk of triggering a slide today. Look for visual clues of wind drifting, feel for a stiffening surface snow under your feet or sled, and watch for cracks shooting out in front of you as a clear sign that you've found an unstable wind drift and should retreat to lower angled terrain.

The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#) on wind loaded slopes and [LOW](#) on all other slopes.

## **KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE**

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski/ride? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge on 2/1 is for you. Hike, ride and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center at Bridger Bowl this year! Join this fun event to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for the top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes.* Info to fundraise is [HERE](#) or [donate here](#).

\*\*\*Race participants for the King and Queen of the Ridge must register separately with Bridger Bowl [here](#)\*\*\*

## **Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events**

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#)

**THIS WEEKEND January 25 or 26, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.** Avalanche Fundamentals Field Course. Required pre-registration and more information [HERE](#).

**Every weekend in Cooke City:** Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.