

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Wed Jan 13, 2016

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, January 13, at 6:45 AM. Today's advisory is sponsored by [**Mountain Valley Motorsports of Cody**](#) and [**Spark 1**](#). **This** advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Around Bozeman and Big Sky only a trace of snow has fallen. Temperatures are in the mid-20s with west winds blowing 20-25 mph and gusts of 50 mph up Hyalite. To the south, including West Yellowstone and Cooke City, scattered snow showers dropped a trace to a couple inches of low density powder with temperatures in the teens and light winds of 10-20 mph. Today will be cloudy with scattered snow showers and not much change in wind and temperature. By morning new snowfall will measure 1-2 inches up north and 2-4 inches in the southern ranges.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

There's no need to look up your Powerball Lottery Number, because you didn't win. The odds are 1 in 292 million. Getting hit by lightning has odds of 1: 1 million which means you are 292 times more likely to get struck with electricity than struck with riches; and if you backcountry ski or snowmobile, the odds of getting caught in an avalanche are much, much higher than being zapped by lightning. If you want to reduce your odds of getting caught in a slide put your energy into things that matter, such as looking for signs of instability, digging and testing the snow under your feet, carrying rescue gear and traveling one at a time in avalanche terrain. When we make mistakes assessing the snow stability simple travel rituals can keep us alive. Right now assessing the snow is tricky and mistakes will be made.

There is a thick layer of depth hoar ([photo](#)) underlying the snowpack in every mountain range. It is weak and unstable, but no longer hair-trigger. Alex and I were in Lionhead yesterday and got this layer to break in our stability tests ([video](#)) after hitting it with a lot of force. Triggering avalanches is getting more difficult. In the absence of recent avalanche activity or collapsing and cracking we have to lean on stability tests and conservative route choices to be safe. We do not trust the snowpack ([article](#)). An avalanche in Tepee Basin on Friday, along with a slide outside our forecast area in the Crazy Mountains over the weekend, were both triggered from the bottom of the slope ([photos](#)). These incidents are outliers, but outliers kill.

Avalanche activity and other signs of instability have waned, but the snowpack is unstable and it's still possible to trigger avalanches. Consequently, for today, the avalanche danger is rated [**MODERATE**](#).

Alex will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations to share, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 587-6984.

EVENTS and AVALANCHE EDUCATION

A complete calendar of classes can be found [HERE](#).

TONIGHT, Bozeman: January 13, *1hr Avalanche Awareness*, REI, 6-7:30 p.m.

TONIGHT, Four Corners: January 13, *1hr Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers*, GVSA Groomer Building, 7-8 p.m.

TOMORROW, Livingston: January 14, *1hr Avalanche Awareness*, Neptune's Brewery, 6-7:30 p.m.

EVENT in Bozeman: January 19, 5:30-7 p.m. and 7:30-9 p.m., *Avi Center Beer Social at Montana Ale Works*. This event is a fundraiser for the Friends of the Avalanche Center, \$35. Tickets here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/18542>

EVENT at BRIDGER BOWL: February 6, *King and Queen of the Ridge*. A day of hiking and skiing the Ridge as a fundraiser for the Friends of the Avalanche Center. Teams and individuals are welcome! More info here: <http://bridgerbowl.com/event/king-and-queen-of-the-ridge>

SATURDAY, Cooke City: January 16, *1hr Avalanche Awareness*, Visitor's Center, 6-7:30 p.m.

January 30, *Companion Rescue for Snowmobilers*, <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/18078>

Dillon: January 19, *1hr Avalanche Awareness*, UM Western Library, 6:30-8 p.m.

January 23 and 24, *Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course*, <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/18441>

West Yellowstone: January 23, and 30, *1hr Avalanche Awareness*, West Yellowstone Holiday Inn, 7-8:30 p.m.

ASMSU Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course

January 20, 21 and 23 or 24: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/16861>

The workshops will be held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with a field course on either Saturday or Sunday. Different topics will be presented each evening. Topics include: avalanche terrain recognition, the effect weather has on avalanche hazard, the development of the mountain snowpack, decision making skills, and basic search and rescue procedures.

Advanced Avalanche Workshop w/ Field Course

January 27, 28, and 30: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/16862>

Course content includes: snowpack metamorphism, the mechanics of avalanche failure and fracture, and decision-making. Different topics are covered each evening session. The field session includes snowpack analysis and avalanche rescue scenarios.