GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 23, 2019

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast issued on Wednesday, January 23rd at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Grizzly Outfitters** in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. it is snowing and 5" have fallen in the Bridger Range and 3"-5" everywhere else. Snowfall will continue today with an additional 8-12" by morning, maybe more outside Cooke City. Winds are blowing west to south at 20-30 mph with gusts of 48 mph in the north and half that in the southern mountains. Today will remain windy with temperatures in the teens and snowfall will end this evening. If you are unable to call in sick this morning, (cough), you should probably do so tomorrow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Since Friday morning our entire forecast area has received 1.5-2 feet of snowfall (near 2.5" of SWE in places). The most accurate measure of instability is avalanche activity and red flags such as collapsing or cracking. Since Friday this list of instability is long and growing with 20 events noted (14 in the northern ranges, 6 in the southern ranges). Check out the **Weather and Avalanche Log** for a synopsis of snowfall and avalanche activity.

Date	Northern Areas	Southern Areas	Wind Speed	Wind Direction	Avalanche Activity
Wednesday 1/23/19 edit	0.3/5" Bridger 0.2/3" Shower 0.1/3" Timber	0.2/3" Carrot 0.2/3" Madison 0.1/1" Fisher	20-30 G48 in north 10-15 G25 in south	W-S	
Tuesday 1/22/19 edit	0.1/1" Brackett 0.3/3" Shower 0.2/5" Timber	0.2/2" Carrot 0.1/1" Whiskey 0.1/1" Fisher	5-15 G25	W-NW	Natural avalanches Bridger pk. through Pinnacles; Cracking wind drifts on Mt Blackmore; Natural avalanche on Football Field; Skier triggered avalanche in Beehive Basin; Collapsing at Bacon Rind; Snowmobiler triggred slide near Two Top
Monday 1/21/19 edit	0.4/4" Brackett 0.3/5" Shower 0.5/7" Lone	0.6/6" Carrot 1.0/9" Black Bear 1.1/9" Fisher	5-15 G40-50	W-SW	Ice climber triggered slide in Hyalite; Natural avalanches on Mt. Republic; Remotely triggered avalanche on Wheeler Mountain
Sunday 1/20/19 edit	1.1/7" Alpine 0.3/4" Shower 0.2/2" Lone	0.5/5" Carrot 0.4/4" Madison 0.4/5" Fisher	15-25 G35	WSW NW Big Sky	Avalanche and cracking, Cooke City; Natural avalanche in Argentina Bowl; Skier/cornice triggered south summit of Saddle Peak; Skier triggered in Frazier Basin; Large natural on NE face of Saddle Peak; Collapsing in southern Madison; Cracking and whumphing; Cracking and whumphing in Sunlight Basin
Saturday 1/19/19 edit	0.2/2" Brackett 0.1/1" Shower 0.1/1" Lone	0.0/0" Carrot 0.0/0" Madison 0.1/1" Fisher	15-30	W-SW	Skier triggered slides on Saddle Peak
Friday 1/18/19 edit	0.5/5" Brackett 0.1/1" Shower 0.4/4" Lone	0.4/4" Carrot 0.5/5" Madison 0.5/5" Fisher	10-20 G 25-30 Bridger-Big Sky	W-NW	Skier triggered avalanche and partial burial near Fairy Lake; Small natural above Saddle Peak cliffs

Two avalanches are especially noteworthy:

- From afar, skiers triggered an avalanche on Wheeler Mountain on Monday (**details**). I expect similar instability anywhere there is shallow, faceted snow: Mt. Ellis, Beehive Basin, Bacon Rind, Hebgen Lake and Cooke City to name a few.
- Ice climbers triggered a small slide on a popular climb up Hyalite on Monday (**details**). Although small, it was extremely dangerous because of the serious terrain. Small avalanches above terrain traps are bad news

no matter if you are climbing, skiing or riding.

Shallow snowpacks are weak and unstable. Yesterday, Eric found this to be true in Teepee Basin in the southern Madison Range (**video**) and also on a road cut on Hwy 191 (**photo**). It remains true in the northern Gallatin Range where skiers triggered a 2-foot deep slide on Mt. Wheeler from hundreds of feet away. Having just come back from Cooke City I know it to be true there as well (**video**). If you sink to ground after stepping off your skis or sled, you can be assured that you found the facets.

Many avalanches are confined to new snow, especially if it has been drifted into wind slabs. This new snow instability is prevalent throughout our advisory area which Alex and Ian found in the Bridger Range on Sunday (**video**). Natural and human triggered avalanches along the **Bridger Ridge** (every day since Friday), in **Hyalite** (Monday), in **Beehive Basin** (yesterday), near **West Yellowstone** (yesterday) and **Cooke City** (Monday).

Your homework for today is to remember three points:

1. The avalanche danger will rise as the snow continues to fall.

2. Shallow snowpacks consisting of weak facets should be avoided.

3. New snow will continue to avalanche on steep slopes, especially if it has been drifted by the wind.

For today, the avalanche danger is rated CONSIDERABLE on all slopes and avalanche terrain should be avoided. Collapsing, cracking and recent avalanches are signs of instability and we've had all three in the last 24 hours. There will be more today.

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, contact us via our website, email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Skier killed in avalanche in Colorado

On Monday, a backcountry skier was buried and killed in an avalanche near Aspen, Colorado. Information from the Colorado Avalanche Information Center is HERE.

Skier killed in avalanche in Utah

On Friday, a skier was buried and killed in an avalanche in Utah. He and his partner were not wearing avalanche transceivers. Details from the Utah Avalanche Center are HERE.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: **Events and Education Calendar.**

BOZEMAN

TONIGHT! January 23, 24 and 26, **Advanced Avalanche Workshop w/ Field Day**, Info and Register Here.

February 2, **King and Queen of the Ridge** at Bridger Bowl (fundraiser). Register with Bridger to hike in the event, and create a pledge page to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 26, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers**, 7-8 p.m. Holiday Inn West Yellowstone.

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday**, Rescue Training and Snowpack Update.** Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.