GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Jan 9, 2020

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Thursday, January 9th at 7:30 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Swiss Fit Montana** and **Yellowstone Ski Tours**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 6 a.m. it is snowing in the mountains. Bridger Bowl and the Yellowstone Club have 8" of snow, 3-4" at Big Sky, Taylor Fork and Cooke City, and 1" in Hyalite and West Yellowstone. Wind is southwest at 10-15 mph with gusts of 35 mph and mountain temperatures are 10-15 F. Scattered showers will bring 2-4" by tomorrow morning with southwest wind at 15-25 mph. Friday looks to be sunny and more snow is expected this weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

The mountains around Cooke City have gotten snow for the last 9 days. Another 4" fell last night bringing their 9 day total to 37" measuring 3.6" of snow water equivalent. Steady loading from new snow and wind drifting is creating dangerous conditions. Avalanches may break in the new snow or even deeper. Wind-loaded slopes are especially dangerous, but even on slopes without a wind load, avalanches are likely. Upper elevation slopes are starting zones for large avalanches and they have not had a reprieve. Do not get on or underneath steep slopes. For today, the avalanche danger is rated HIGH in all wind-loaded slopes and CONSIDERABLE on all others.

Bridger Range Northern Madison

New snow and southwest wind gusting to 35 mph is loading slopes in the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky where 4-8" has fallen. It is still snowing and blowing and wind-loaded slopes will be easy to trigger. In the last 5 days there have been avalanches triggered by sledders on Buck Ridge, a dog in Middle Basin, skiers north of Big Sky, and red flags of collapsing and cracking. Videos, pictures and details of all these can be found on our **Avalanche Activity** page. Additionally, the Big Sky Ski Patrol continues to release deep avalanches on wind-loaded terrain with explosives. This is relevant because these deep layers are a concern in the backcountry. For today, the avalanche danger is rated CONSIDERABLE on wind-loaded terrain and MODERATE on all others.

Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Island Park

A few inches of snow (1-3") fell in the southern mountains and West Yellowstone with 10-20 mph wind from the southwest. The snowpack averages 3 feet and consists of weak, sugary, unbonded snow in the bottom foot. Over the last 3 days Ian and I rode into Teepee Creek (**photo**), Dave was in Taylor Fork (**video**), and a gaggle of sledders in an avalanche class rode to Lionhead. We all found poor snow structure and do not trust it.

Consequently, I advise caution when approaching avalanche terrain. Although the likelihood of triggering slides is decreasing, it is still possible to avalanche a slope. Recent avalanche activity, cracking or collapsing are red flag warnings to stay away. For today, the avalanche danger is rated a *serious* MODERATE on all slopes. Avalanches are possible. Don't blow it.

Northern Gallatin

The northern Gallatin Range has gotten an extra helping of wind but a famine of snow. Wind-loaded slopes at the ridgelines or in gullies are where lingering instabilities are found. Avalanches are still possible so do not let your guard down. Cracking, collapsing or recent avalanche activity, no matter how small, are red flags of caution. For today, the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can fill out an **observation form**, email us (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), leave a VM at 406-587-6984, or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out and plan to attend one or two: Events and Education Calendar.

BOZEMAN

January 12, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at SHINE Bottle Shop

January 15 and 16, **Introduction to Avalanche w/ Field Course**, evenings of January 15 & 16 plus one field day either January 18, 19 or 25. Snowmobile specific field day offered January 25. **More info and Register Here**.

February 1, **King and Queen of the Ridge** at Bridger Bowl (fundraiser). This is the Friends of the Avalanche Center's second biggest fundraiser of the year. Come on out and help us raise money by hiking and skiing laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and a good time is guaranteed. Register with Bridger to hike in the event, and create a pledge page to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 25, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

COOKE CITY

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