GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 22, 2020

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Wednesday, January 22nd at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Uphill Pursuits** and **Mystery Ranch**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Last night the Big Sky area received 6" of snow while everywhere else got 2-4". Wind is west to southwest at 10-15 mph with gusts of 35 mph. Temperatures are in the high teens. Today will turn sunny and temperatures will reach the mid-30s and snow again tonight. Wind will shift to the southwest at 15-30 mph. By morning the mountains will have 2-3" with another couple inches falling during the day.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Last night's 2-6" snowfall weighs only .2-.3"of **snow water equivalent**, not a large load, but areas with fresh wind drifts may crack and/or avalanche in the new snow.

The mountain ranges are similar in terms of avalanche concerns and danger. Some areas might be a little stronger (Hyalite) and some a little weaker (Buck Ridge), but overall, sugary facets at the ground are occasionally avalanching the entire season's snowpack. In the last 7 days people triggered deep avalanches on this layer. As time goes on without a large storm the likelihood of triggering big slides decreases. Consider this analogy: After a large storm the backcountry might have 50, very hungry, Great White sharks swimming around ready to kill you. As days pass their numbers thin, leaving 2 or 3 on the hunt, like today. Yes, conditions are safer, but those sharks are still prowling and worth considering before you dip a toe into avalanche terrain.

Yesterday Ian rode towards Cedar Mtn. in the N. Madison Range to look at one of these shark attacks, an 8-10' deep avalanche that broke at the ground after being triggered by a sledder on Sunday. Ian warns in his **video**, "As likelihood of triggering goes down, the consequences do not."

Slopes with thick wind drifts can be triggered from shallow areas of the snowpack where the weak layer can collapse from the weight of a skier or snowmobiler. On Saturday I investigated a slide from last Tuesday in Cooke City that measured 15' tall (**photo**, **video**), the deepest I've ever seen in 25 years of avalanche work that was likely triggered from a thin and rocky part of the slope (explained in this **video**).

Before you head out today, do a little homework and read about these human triggered avalanches in **Hyalite** (Sat), **near Bridger Bowl** (Sun), on **Buck Ridge** (Sun, Mon), **Taylor Fork** (Sat) and **Lionhead** (Mon). Our **Avalanche Activity** page has a complete list with details, pictures and videos. For today, since avalanches are possible the danger is rated MODERATE. Because the consequences of a slide are severe, it is also called a serious-moderate, scary-moderate, spicy-moderate, moderate-plus, or I-don't-care-if-it's-moderate-I'm-still-not-going-there-moderate. Check out Alex and Dave's **Dashboard Talk** on this topic.

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.

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.

BOZEMAN

January 27, **Avalanche Information and Demonstration Table**, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Montana Science Center.

January 29, **GNFAC Forecaster Chat: Avalanche Myth Busters**, 6-8 p.m. at Uphill Pursuits.

January 31, Women's Only Companion Rescue Clinic, 6 - 8 pm at REI followed by a field day February 1. **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.

DILLON

January 29 and 30, **Introduction to Avalanche w/ Field Course**, evenings of January 29 & 30 plus a field day February 1. Snowmobile specific field day offered February 2. **More Info and Register Here**.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

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

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

HELENA

January 28, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. Carroll College.

LIVINGSTON

January 30, **Introduction to Avalanche w/ Field Course**, evening of January 30 plus a field day February 2. **More info and Register Here**.