GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 29, 2020

Good Morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Wednesday, January 29th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Knoff Group Real Estate** and **Beartooth Powder Guides.** This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday's snowfall favored the mountains from Big Sky through West Yellowstone with 4-6" of new snow. Other areas received 1-3". Light winds blew 5-15 mph moving from southwest to northwest through the day and temperatures peaked in the low to mid-20s F. Clouds will dissipate today with light winds blowing 5-10 mph from the northwest and high temperatures in the 20s F. Tonight, winds will shift to the west at 10-20 mph, and another round of snow arrives with 3-5" falling in the mountains by morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

In the last 24 hours, the mountains from Big Sky through West Yellowstone received 4-6" of snow equal to 0.3-0.4" snow water equivalent (SWE). Other ranges received 1-3" (0.1-0.3" of SWE). The added weight of the new snow on a weak snowpack warrants extra caution if you are considering entering avalanche terrain today. Avalanches within the new snow are the most likely problem. These will be most concerning in high consequence terrain where a small avalanche could be dangerous. Less likely, but more frightening are large avalanches that could break on weak snow deep in the snowpack and fail over a wide area.

Doug and Ian collected field data in Beehive Basin yesterday and found the sugary snow near the bottom of the snowpack was still weak and able to produce an avalanche (**photo**, **video**). I dug a snowpit yesterday in Second Yellowmule and found that while it is becoming more difficult to trigger an avalanche, the potential for a giant slide is still real for an unlucky skier or rider (**profile**, **video**). My pit was close to the **massive avalanche** that broke three weeks ago, snow and wind have nearly erased the evidence that the slide ever occurred, in its place are enormous cornices that could break far back from the edge (**photo**). One skier north of Bridger Bowl was surprised yesterday with numerous unstable extended column tests propagating failure when before the storm, his tests showed stable results. The information we gathered in the Northern Madison Range yesterday corresponds to what we have seen across our advisory area. Go to our **video page** for quick summaries of all the recent data we collected in the field.

We are maintaining a status quo outlook on avalanches, the snowpack, and travel advice. Read the **mid-season snowpack summary** to catch up on this year's snowpack and avalanche activity. Today, you can manage the avalanche problems by assessing the snowpack, making conservative terrain choices, exposing only one person at a time to avalanche hazard, and giving cornices a wide berth if you decide to play on or around steep slopes. Human triggered avalanches are possible, and 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).

King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl

Next Saturday, February 1, is the King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl! Come up and help us raise money by hiking and skiing laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and a good time are guaranteed. Register with Bridger to hike in the event and create a pledge page to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

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

TONIGHT, 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. Help us raise money by hiking and skiing laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and a good time are guaranteed. **Register with Bridger** to hike in the event, and **create a pledge page** to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

DILLON

TONIGHT, 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

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

LIVINGSTON

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