GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Mar 1, 2021

Good Morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Monday, March 1st at 7:30 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Montana State Parks** and **The First National Bank of Gilbert (Minnesota)**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday, westerly wind gusted 30-50 mph near Bozeman, Big Sky and Cooke City. This morning there is no new snow and temperatures are single digits to mid-teens F. Today, wind will be west-southwest at 5-15 mph with gusts to 20 mph, and temperatures will rise to high 20s to low 30s F under mostly clear skies.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Welcome to March. We have an abrupt transition to the new month as we begin talking about wet snow avalanches after a February of record snowfall. Today, temperatures near freezing (thawing) and sunny skies will be a shock to the cold snowpack. Recent soft snow will begin to melt, lose strength and slide naturally on steep slopes. Slopes that get direct sun will be the first to have loose snow avalanches this morning. Anywhere you feel moist or wet snow on the surface is a sign similar slopes are becoming unstable.

Loose snow avalanches are likely today. These could run long distances and become large as they entrain recent snow. Additionally, February's snow and wind created massive cornices along ridgelines that will break naturally and be easy to trigger. Cornice falls and loose snow slides will likely trigger larger slabs of recent snow, or possibly step down and trigger a very large deep slab on weak sugary snow near the ground (**photo**, **videos from Blackmore** and **McAtee Basin**).

Yesterday near Cabin Creek a snowbiker triggered a large avalanche that broke 3 feet deep on weak snow (**details and photos**). Doug and I skied north of Bridger Bowl and found 1-2 foot thick wind slabs that cracked under our skis, and we dug down to see the soft, weak sugary snow buried six feet deep (**photo**, **video**). Dave saw the same poor, untrustworthy snowpack structure in Taylor Fork (**video**). Near Cooke City the weak snow near the ground is less widespread, but some recent avalanche activity has shown weaker snow exists on some slopes with a relatively shallower snowpack (**details** of a natural avalanche in Hayden Creek earlier in the week). Keep these wind slabs and deep slabs in mind, they are possible to trigger even where the snow remains cold and dry today.

Today warm temperatures and sunshine will be an unwelcome change for the cold snowpack. Large to very large natural avalanches are possible, and skier and rider triggered avalanches are likely on steep, sunny slopes. Avoid travel on and underneath large cornices and steep slopes where the snow is becoming wet from the sun or warm temperatures. The avalanche danger is rated CONSIDERABLE.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

The Beacon Park at Beall Park in Bozeman is running!

The Friends of the Avalanche Center in partnership with the City of Bozeman put in a **Beacon Park at Beall Park**. It is located on the north side of the Beall building between N. Bozeman Ave. and the ice rink. Stop by with your avalanche transceiver and do a few practice rescue drills. Your partner will thank you.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our **education calendar** for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

Every Saturday in Cooke City, FREE snowpack update and rescue practice at the Round Lake Warming Hut between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. **Poster with More Info**.