GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 12, 2022

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Wednesday, January 12th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by Grizzly Outfitters and Blitz Motorsports and Yamaha . This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. skies are partly to mostly cloudy with mountain temperatures in the mid 20s F. Cooke City received an inch of snow overnight and will see flurries this morning, but no snowfall is expected anywhere else. Wind is west to southwest averaging 15-30 mph with gusts hitting 57 mph in Hyalite. Today under mostly cloudy skies, wind will continue and unseasonably warm temperatures will rise to above freezing in the north and near freezing in the south. Tomorrow night is our next chance of snow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

In general the snowpack in the southern ranges, including Cooke City, is trending towards stability as it adjusts to the snowfall that ended Saturday. Yesterday, Ian and I rode into Lionhead. The only avalanche we saw was the one reported a week ago (**photo**) that likely failed on a thin layer of weak faceted snow about a foot under the surface . We found this layer yesterday (**photo**), but its lifespan as a problem has waned. However, we found weak, faceted snow near the ground that broke in a stability test (**video**), a snowpack's way of saying, "Hey, don't forget about me!" Around Cooke City, **avalanche activity** late last week indicates weak layers mid-pack and near the ground still need time to strengthen.

The potential exists to trigger avalanches, and the danger is rated MODERATE today. Do not assume all slopes are safe and travel one at a time in avalanche terrain. Also, cornices are getting big and may be teetering, ready to break.

Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Strong winds have made snow surfaces variable, in some instances stripping slopes to dirt (**photo**) or carving waves of sastrugi (**photo**). Without new snow, avalanches are not likely. I found stable conditions in Beehive Basin on Sunday (**video**) and skiers reported stable and wind hammered snow in Hyalite yesterday (**photo**). These areas along with the Bridger Range have gotten an extra helping of wind. No snowflake has been left behind. Yesterday, skiers in the northern Bridger Range approached the Great One and turned around after assessing the snow. Stacked layers of wind slabs over sugary facets did not inspire their confidence. Even during times of relative stability it's *always* a great idea to look carefully at individual slopes. A small avalanche can have an oversized consequence. For today, the avalanche danger remains LOW since conditions are generally safe.

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).

Upcoming Education Opportunities

The **West Yellowstone Beacon Park** is up and running! Stop by to check it out and practice with your rescue gear.

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:

TOMORROW! January 13, 6:30 p.m., **Avalanche Awareness Night at Uphill Pursuits**

TOMORROW! January 13, 6-7 p.m., Virtual Avalanche Awareness with Basecamp Helena and Billings, **Link to join**.

January 15, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Park at Big Sky Community Park with Big Sky Community Organization.

January 20 + Field day. Our popular **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course** is perfect as a refresher or an introduction to avalanches. We are introducing a new format with four pre-recorded lectures to watch at your convenience, a live question and answer session, and a choice of a snowmobile or ski/ board based field day occurring the following two weekends.

Every Saturday near Cooke City, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. FREE snowpack update and transceiver/rescue training. Stop by for 20 minutes or more at the Round Lake Warming Hut.