GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Jan 25, 2022

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Tuesday, January 25th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Mystery Ranch** and **Spark R&D**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning, mountain temperatures are in the high single digits to mid teens F with 5-15 mph winds from the north to west. The Northern Gallatin Range received 6” of snow yesterday with 2-3” everywhere else. Today, temperatures will be in the upper teens to low 20s F with 10-15 mph winds from the north shifting to the southwest. Some areas may get a dusting of snow before the skies become mostly sunny through the day.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Gallatin Range Southern Madison Cooke City

The Northern Gallatin Range was the snowfall winner yesterday with 6” of snow equal to 0.4” of snow water equivalent (SWE). The Southern Gallatin and Southern Madison Ranges and mountains around Cooke City got 2-3” equal to 0.1-0.2” SWE. The wind will pick up through the day and easily move this low-density snow into small drifts where human-triggered avalanches are possible. In the mountains around Cooke City and in the Southern Gallatin and Southern Madison Ranges there is a thin weak layer buried under one to two feet of snow on many slopes that may result in wider propagation of these wind slabs (**video**, **photo buried surface hoar**). A skier triggered avalanche late last week near Cooke City and one reportedly triggered on Sunday near Goose Lake illustrate the type and size of avalanche that are possible today (**photo and details**).

Avalanches breaking on deeper weak layers are unlikely so spend your time **digging quick pits** to test interfaces in the upper snowpack. If you observe propagating tests or see obvious signs of instability such as shooting cracks or recent avalanches, retreat to a different slope or move out of wind-loaded terrain. The danger is MODERATE on wind-loaded slopes and LOW on all others.

Bridger Range Northern Madison Lionhead Range Island Park

In the Lionhead area along with the Bridger and Northern Madison Ranges 2-3” of snow equal to 0.1-0.2” of SWE fell on a mostly stable snowpack. A weak layer of surface hoar is buried under 6” of light snow near West Yellowstone, but similar to areas without the weak layer, this is not enough to pose much of a hazard outside of technical or very steep terrain where a small avalanche could push you into or off obstacles. Over the weekend, the wind blew recent snow into relatively small, but unstable drifts in the northern ranges. On Saturday, a snowmobiler in the northern Bridger Range triggered a slide on a small slope (**photo**) and on Sunday, a skier north of Bridger Bowl was caught and carried about 150’ in a small avalanche (**details and photos**). Thankfully, all parties involved were unharmed. Winds have been calm since then and these wind slabs have largely stabilized.

Today, avalanches are unlikely. Dig and test the upper snowpack and watch for signs of isolated instability such as cracking and expose only one person at a time to avalanche terrain. With mostly stable conditions, the danger is LOW.

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

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:

February 4th, Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals, three-part series of pre-recorded lectures, virtual Q&A and an in-person field session. Pre-registration and more information **HERE.**

February 5th, King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl. Come hike and ski with your friends for avalanche awareness and fun! Details below.

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.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 5TH

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for top 5 individuals who raise over $500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes*. Info is **HERE**. Race participants for the February 5th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl **HERE**.