GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Jan 31, 2022

Good morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Monday, January 31st at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association**, **Bridger Bowl**, and **Beartooth Powder Guides**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Snow will begin to fall this morning as temperatures drop from teens and low 20s F to single digits by tonight. Wind is out of the southwest-south at 20-30 mph with gusts of 35-55 mph. Today wind will shift to the west and remain moderate to strong. A round of heavy snow this morning will drop 1" near West Yellowstone and the Bridger Range with 2-3" of low-density snow elsewhere by mid-day. An additional 2-3" are possible by tomorrow morning with intermittent snow expected through tomorrow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

A few inches of low density snow this morning will not increase the danger, but it will create some small hazards to watch out for. Strong westerly wind will drift any new snow into fresh slabs. These slabs will be shallow, maybe 4" deep, but could be easy for a person to trigger and propagate wide due to weak snow that recently formed near the top of the snowpack (**photo**, **Cooke video**, **Lionhead video**). Fresh drifts will unlikely be large enough to bury a person. If today's strong wind doesn't blow the low-density snow back to the sky, it could form thick dangerous slabs in favored, isolated areas. Before riding steep slopes watch for signs of instability like cracking of the snow surface or natural avalanches. Avoid fresh drifts in terrain where any size slide could be deadly due to pushing you into trees or over cliffs.

Avalanches deeper than today's snow are unlikely, but shouldn't be ruled out on slopes favored by recent wind-loading. Ian saw this yesterday near Cooke City where he found one slope with a weak layer buried deeper than anywhere else he had found it (**video**), and a natural avalanche near Big Sky last Friday shows types of terrain where isolated instabilities might linger (**photo and details**).

The forecast for snow has backed off for the mountains near West Yellowstone and the Bridger Range, and less than an inch is expected. It will take a couple inches of new snow for strong wind to form even small fresh drifts. If you choose to ski or ride in avalanche terrain it is always important to carefully assess the snowpack on each slope, only expose one person at a time, and carry proper avalanche rescue gear.

Today the snowpack is generally stable with small and isolated instabilities, and the avalanche danger is LOW. If more snow falls than is expected, danger will rise on wind-loaded slopes.

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**.