GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Feb 12, 2022

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, February 12th, at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Yellowstone Club Community Foundation** and **Montana State Parks**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Snowfall yesterday brought 2” to the Bridger Range, 1” near Cooke City, and no new snow in the rest of the advisory area. Temperatures this morning are in the teens F with moderate west and northwest winds. Temperatures today will rise into the high 20s and 30s F under mostly sunny skies. Moderate west and northwest winds will continue. The next chance for snowfall is Monday night.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

Near Cooke City, you can trigger avalanches on weak layers buried around a foot and a half under the snow surface. While it’s been almost a week since the last substantial snowfall, avalanches remain possible. There are two primary reasons for this. First, the weak layer of near surface facets and surface hoar isn’t gaining strength quickly (**video**). With this sort of weak layer avalanches are possible days after the last loading event. Secondly, strong winds have continued loading these weak layers and building cohesive slabs above them. This means that on some slopes it hasn’t been a week since they were loaded, they are instead freshly loaded and ready to avalanche. Avoiding steep slopes is the simplest way to avoid these concerns. If you are getting into steep terrain, dig down to analyze the weak layer and watch for unstable snowpack test results, collapses, shooting cracks, or recent avalanches as signs to retreat to lower angled slopes. Large human-triggered avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger is MODERATE.

Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

Large avalanches are unlikely in the rest of the advisory area. Still, stay on alert in case you find an isolated instability. Issues to watch for are wind drifts that haven’t bonded yet, pockets where weak layers in the top foot and a half of the snowpack have a cohesive slab on top and remain unstable, and maybe very small loose wet avalanches on sunny slopes with the warm temperatures this afternoon (**photo**).

Safe travel practices provide an extra safety margin in case of surprises. This means carrying rescue gear (beacon, shovel, probe), only exposing one person at a time to steep slopes and watching your partners while they’re in avalanche terrain. The avalanche danger is rated 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

February 19, Women's only Companion Rescue Clinic sponsored in partnership with SheJumps! **Register Here**.

March 4, Companion Rescue Clinic with the Bozeman Splitfest. **Information and registration HERE.**

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.