GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 3, 2024

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Wednesday, January 3rd at 6:30 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue** and **World Boards.** This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. mountain temperatures are 15F and wind is southwest at 15-20 mph with gusts of 35 mph. Today will be partly cloudy and mountain temperatures will rise into the high 20s F as wind continues from the southwest at 15-20 mph. A strong high pressure system is creating dry conditions, but by the weekend snow is expected.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

This season has been unusually dry, with precipitation only 50-60% of normal. Consequently the snowpack is only 2 feet deep and unusually weak. In most areas the entire snowpack has turned into sugary, unsupportable snow. Breaking trail feels like powder, but it's not, just unbonded facets. Although this type of snow grain is weak, it is not currently unstable. That will change very quickly when it snows. The snowpack will struggle to support even the lightest load, so be forewarned…as hungry as we are for powder the avalanche danger will rise, just not today.

Throughout our forecast area we have weak yet stable conditions. The exceptions are small slopes that have a slab of denser snow capping it, such as a wind drift. These have the potential to avalanche. Alex describes this recipe in his **video** from Cooke City, while Dave and I found nothing but thin, weak snow (and lots of downed trees) in our tour up Bacon Rind yesterday (**video**).

As you ski or ride, if the surface snow becomes supportable you will have found the missing ingredient of an avalanche, a slab of cohesive snow. Dave describes these conditions in his **video** from Beehive Basin on Monday. Although avalanches are unlikely, they are not impossible.

For today, throughout our forecast area, the avalanche danger is rated LOW.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: **Events and Education Calendar.**

Every weekend in Cooke City: Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.

We offer *Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Session* courses targeted towards non-motorized travelers in **January** and one geared towards **motorized users**. Sign up early before they fill up.

King & Queen 2024, 3 February 2024. Form a team or sign up individually to hike laps on the Bridger Bowl ridge to fundraise for the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

Loss in the Outdoors is a support group for those affected by loss and grief related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.