GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Feb 3, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, February 3rd at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Highline Partners** and **Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

It's starting to snow. Only a trace up to two inches have fallen so far, but it's supposed to keep snowing today. By nightfall two to five more inches will fall. Temperatures are in the 20s F and low 30s F. Temperatures today won't rise much, they may even drop a few degrees through the day. Winds are light at 5-10 mph out of the southwest to west this morning and will continue similarly today. Another couple inches of snowfall tonight will bring snow total up to 4-8" by tomorrow morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

Human triggered avalanches are likely today. New snow will make it easier to trigger avalanches, but be especially heads up because even before this new snow started to fall, we were seeing avalanches triggered days after the last loading event. Yesterday, a rider in Island Park triggered an avalanche and was partially buried while riding solo, but was thankfully able to eventually dig himself out unharmed (**observation**). Earlier this week, near Cooke City, an avalanche was triggered on Daisy Pass (**photos**), ice climbers approaching a climb triggered a large slide from 150 feet away (**observation**) and a rider was partially buried near Round Lake (**video**).

This season's snowpack is unusually weak. Every time it's snowed even a couple inches things have become very touchy and we've seen avalanches being easily triggered from hundreds of feet away and breaking widely. Expect the same today. I wouldn't be surprised to see avalanches breaking naturally. Keep things simple today - avoid all steep slopes and be cautious passing beneath them because you could trigger a slide from below.

The danger will rise as snow falls today. The more snow that accumulates, the more dangerous conditions will become. The avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE.

Bridger Range

In the Bridger Range, it has snowed less than elsewhere so far and it is expected to get a little less snowfall today. This means that human triggered avalanches are a little less likely in the Bridgers. Don't misread this as saying conditions are safe. Triggering big slab avalanches is still a possibility. This skier triggered slide on Saddle Peak (**details**) from a couple weeks ago that ran 1400 vertical feet over rocks and cliffs is the sort of avalanche you could trigger today and should consider before getting onto steep slopes.

Today, your reasonable options include either continuing to avoid slopes steeper than 30 degrees, or carefully assessing the snowpack, watching for signs of instability, and considering the consequences of triggering a slide before riding in avalanche terrain.

The avalanche danger is MODERATE today. If it starts snowing harder than expected, the danger will quickly rise to CONSIDERABLE.

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.

POSTPONED: King and Queen of the Ridge. Bridger Bowl's community event series events this weekend are postponed, including King & Queen - stay tuned, details coming soon.

9-10 February. Companion Rescue Course. More information and registration **HERE**.

9-10 February. Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals. More information and registration for the **MOTORIZED SECTION** and **NON-MOTORIZED SECTION**

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.