

## GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Mar 3, 2025

This is Alex Marienthal with the avalanche forecast for Monday, March 3rd, at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is in memory of **Ben Richards**. Ben was killed in an avalanche on Yellow Mountain near Big Sky 18 years ago today. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

Temperatures are high 20s to mid-30s F this morning. Yesterday wind was light from the east, southeast and southwest, and this morning wind shifted to west, northwest and north at 5-15 mph with gusts of 15-25 mph.

Today skies will be mostly cloudy with temperatures in the 20s and low 30s F. Wind will be northerly at 5-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph. Snow showers late this afternoon will favor the mountains near Bozeman with 3-5" possible by morning and 1-2" elsewhere.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Southern Madison   Southern Gallatin   Lionhead Range   Cooke City

Today's primary avalanche problem is human-triggered **persistent slab avalanches** breaking on weak layers that formed in late January. Over the previous 12 days we received reports of multiple persistent slab avalanches, breaking 2-3 feet deep and 50-200 feet wide. The most recent, that we know of, were triggered by snowmobilers on Friday at Lionhead ([photos and observation](#)). One slide broke 5 feet deep on a heavily wind-loaded slope ([video](#)). Many recent avalanches were close calls with riders narrowly avoiding being caught and some partially buried and dug out by partners ([Thursday in Cabin Creek](#), [last Monday in Cooke](#), last weekend in [Tepee Basin 1](#), [Tepee Basin 2](#), [Cooke City](#), [Taylor Fork](#), and [Lionhead two Wednesdays ago](#)).

During our visits to Lionhead on Friday and the southern Madison Range on Saturday ([observation](#)) we dug down and found the weak layers creating a poor structure in our snowpits. Although the weak layers were stubborn and did not produce many unstable test results, the recent avalanche activity is evidence to be cautious of steep slopes.

The problem is tricky because unstable slopes are not widespread, and many (not all) recent slides have been on mid-elevation slopes, surrounded by trees and sheltered from the wind. These may be less typical places you would consider avalanches. Your best options are either avoid slopes steeper than 30 degrees, or before committing to steep slopes dig down 3-4 feet to check for buried weak layers, and choose slopes with minimal consequences such as gullies, trees or cliffs ([video from Saturday](#)).

The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#) near West Yellowstone and Cooke City.



Bridger Range   Northern Gallatin   Northern Madison   Island Park

Near Bozeman, Big Sky and Island Park avalanches are unlikely. Cooler temperatures and cloudy skies will end the threat of wet snow avalanches that were the main concern over the weekend. Additionally, we have not seen deeper persistent slab avalanches like we have in other areas, and drifts that formed last week should be glued on.

A couple things to keep in mind are large cornices along ridgelines and small drifts that might form with new snow and light to moderate wind later today.

On Saturday skiers in Hyalite noted cornices peeling off the ridgeline and a cornice fall that triggered a wind slab avalanche ([observation](#)). Cooler temperatures should prevent cornices from breaking naturally today, but some may be teetering on edge after the recent above freezing temperatures. Stay far back from the edge of cornices if you travel along ridgelines.

If snow starts early or piles up quickly some small fresh drifts might form late this afternoon. These should be generally harmless, but a small wind slab avalanche could knock you over. Be careful of fresh drifts on steep slopes where a small slide could carry you a long distance or push you over cliffs or into trees.

The avalanche danger is [LOW](#) near Bozeman, Big Sky and Island Park.

## Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#)

**TODAY and this Weekend: February 28 - March 2, [Bozeman Splitfest 2025](#)** - Celebrate all things Bozeman backcountry and raise funds for GNFAC. Enjoy live music, demos, clinics, free food and beer from MAP. Connect with fellow outdoor enthusiasts and soak up the winter stoke.

**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.