

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Mon Jan 30, 2017

Good Morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Monday, January 30th at 7:15 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Community Food Co-op](#) and [Montana State Parks](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

The mountains have not had any new snow for the last four days. Temperatures yesterday reached the low 30s F in most locations, and low 40s F at lower elevations in the northern ranges. Temperatures this morning are teens to mid-20s F and wind is out of the west to southwest at 15-30 mph with gusts of 40-60 mph near Bozeman and Big Sky. Today will be partly sunny with temperatures in the high 20s F to low 30s F and wind will be out of the west at 15-25 mph. Tomorrow, early morning snow will deliver a couple inches before sunrise with another 4-7" through the day. Snow totals of 1-2 feet are expected through Wednesday, and snow in the mountains is likely to continue through next weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#) [Cooke City](#)

Lionhead area near West Yellowstone

Snowfall followed by strong wind last week created 1-2 foot thick wind slabs that skiers and snowmobilers easily triggered a couple days ago ([photo](#), [video](#), [photo](#)). Recent strong wind has not had snow available to transport and grow slabs, and wind slabs have had time to stabilize. These slabs are difficult to trigger and avalanches are unlikely today. Avalanches are not impossible. Unstable snow could exist where recent wind slabs formed over sugary facets, surface hoar, or low density snow.

No avalanches broke on weak snow near the ground or mid-snowpack during recent snow and wind-loading, which is a good sign that these buried weak layers are able to support overlying slabs. Sugary depth hoar near the bottom of the snowpack is still there, but avalanches on this layer are unlikely. It has been over two weeks since the last reported avalanche on this layer. It is still worthwhile to search for and assess this layer before committing to steep terrain. Minimal recent snow and wind-loading, and lack of recent avalanches make the avalanche danger today **LOW**.

The snow surface today will be covered by fresh snow tomorrow, and new weak layers will be buried. Recent strong wind has scoured and packed the snow surface on many slopes, and other slopes have weak layers on the surface or buried a few inches deep. Surface hoar and facets have been observed buried and on the surface in the Madison Range ([photo](#)), and sugary facets can be found throughout the snowpack around the Bridger Range and Big Sky. These layers are not a problem today, but could produce large avalanches during and after the next storm. Note their distribution and cautiously monitor how they hold up through the storm.

Doug will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m.

We rely on your field observations. Send us an email with simple weather and snowpack information along the lines of what you might share with your friends: How much new snow? Was the skiing/riding any good? Did you see any avalanches or signs of instability? Was snow blowing at the ridgelines? If you have snowpit or test data we'll take that too, but this core info is super helpful! Email us at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a

message at 406-587-6984.

Upcoming Events and Education

Month of January: Montana Ale Works has chosen the Friends of the Avalanche Center as January's "Round It Up America" recipient. Every time you round-up your bill the change gets donated to the Friends. Pennies equal dollars!

King and Queen of the Ridge, Saturday, February 4th. A Hike and Ski/Ride-a-Thon fundraising event to support the Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Register with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#), make pledges [HERE](#).

Beacon Training Park at Beall: Open and free to the public for avalanche beacon practice seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., southeast corner of Beall Park in Bozeman.

BOZEMAN

February 1, **Women's Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., REI Bozeman.

February 7, **Sidecountry and Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., Beall Park.

February 8, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m., Roskie Hall, Montana State University.

February 10 and 11, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, REI and field day, more info and register [here](#).

WEST YELLOWSTONE

February 4 and 11, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m., West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

COOKE CITY

Weekly rescue training and snowpack update, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Cooke City Super 8 on Friday, Lulu Pass Road for field location Saturday (Look for the [yellow sign](#)).

DILLON

February 4 and 5, **Intro to Avalanches with Field Day**, More info and sign up [HERE](#).

ENNIS

February 17, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m.