

## GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Jan 22, 2024

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Monday, January 22nd at 6:45 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Montana State Parks](#) and [Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

Mountain temperatures are in the teens to 20s F this morning, with west to south winds blowing 10-20 mph. There is 1-2" of new snow south of Big Sky through West Yellowstone and Cooke City, with 3" in Island Park. Today, temperatures will be in the upper 20s to 30s F with 10-20 mph winds from the southwest to the south. The mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City will get 1-2" of snow by tomorrow morning, with up to 4" in Island Park.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Southern  
Madison

Southern  
Gallatin

Lionhead  
Range

Cooke  
City

Island  
Park

Very dangerous avalanche conditions exist in the mountains around Cooke City, West Yellowstone, and Island Park. Human-triggered avalanches breaking 1-2 feet deep are very likely, especially on slopes at upper elevations, near ridgelines, or commonly affected by wind.

Instability was obvious yesterday at Lionhead when the first steep slope Alex and I approached had already avalanched naturally, and we triggered a large collapse and shooting cracks ([video](#)). Last week in Cooke City, Ian and his partner remotely triggered an avalanche from hundreds of feet away ([video](#)), and Doug and his partner discussed similar conditions in Island Park ([video](#)). Avalanches, collapses, and cracks shooting long distances are the staples of all recent observations from [Cooke City](#), [Island Park](#), [Lionhead Area](#), and the [Southern Madison](#) and [Southern Gallatin Ranges](#).

Today, ride or ski in low-angle meadows and low-angle trees while avoiding travel on slopes steeper than 30 degrees or the flatter terrain immediately below.

The avalanche danger is [HIGH](#) on wind-loaded slopes and [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all others.



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Dangerous avalanche conditions exist in the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky. We have discussed the exceptionally weak snowpack in the northern portions of the advisory area all season. This weekend, we turned a dangerous corner in the evolution of the season's snowpack, and instability is showing its face.

In the last two days, we received reports of nearly a dozen natural and human-triggered avalanches and more indicating unstable snow ([avalanche activity log](#)).

Standout events include:

- A close call on Saddle Peak yesterday, when a skier descending the Skyline Ridge triggered a slab that broke 2-3 feet deep, ultimately propagating 500 feet wide and running over 1000 vertical feet ([details and photos](#)).
- A skier reacting quickly to dodge an avalanche that he triggered remotely from low down in the bowl on Flanders Mountain ([details and photos](#)).
- A pair of skiers below Hyalite Peak triggered an avalanche from 400 feet away. Thankfully, both were out of harm's way ([details and photos](#)).
- Multiple large, natural avalanches on Cedar Mountain spotted by the Big Sky Ski Patrol ([details](#)).

Levels of uncertainty are higher than normal. Weigh heavily recent evidence of instability whether they be from persistent weak layers or wet snow. Minimize exposure to avalanche terrain, thoroughly assess the snowpack, and employ conservative decision-making.

The avalanche danger is rated [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.

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.

## KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 3rd

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for the top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes*. Info is [HERE](#). Race participants for the February 4th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#).