

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Jan 29, 2021

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, January 29th at 7:30 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Summit Motorsports and Ski-Doo](#) and [Grizzly Outfitters](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

In the last 24 hours 7" of snow fell in Taylor Fork to West Yellowstone and 2" outside Cooke City. South to west wind is blustery with speeds averaging 10-20 mph and gusts into the 50s. Temperatures are in the mid 20sF under cloudy skies. Wind will continue unabated today and lessen overnight. By tomorrow morning the mountains towards West Yellowstone will get an additional 6-8" with the mountains around Big Sky, Bozeman and Cooke City getting 2-3".

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range

The snowstorm will continue today in the southern mountains to West Yellowstone. At least 18" has fallen with this storm (1+'' of [snow water equivalent, SWE](#)). Strong south to southwest wind is loading slopes at all elevations. I toured into Bacon Rind yesterday and saw wind-loading first hand. I cracked wind slabs while breaking trail and triggered one large whumpf. My stability test easily broke on a thin weak layer of buried surface hoar 18" deep. Take a look at my [video](#) to get an idea of the instability. Dave and Alex rode into Lionhead by braille and found windblown slopes and similar stability concerns ([video](#)).

With the storm continuing today it's recommended to stay out of avalanche terrain. New snow and steady wind are creating dangerous conditions. The faceted, sugary snow at the ground is weak and unsupportable ([photo](#)). A skier or rider is likely to trigger an avalanche on steep slopes, and possibly even from a distance. Stay away from the runout zones at the bottom of slopes. Today the avalanche danger is rated [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all other slopes.



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

The Bridger, northern Madison and northern Gallatin ranges are anxiously awaiting a serving of snow. The Sierras are gorging themselves while we hope for a few scraps. The snowpack has a widespread weak layer of sugary facets at the ground, and a thin layer of feathery surface hoar buried 12-18" deep on some slopes. These two layers have become less reactive, but triggering avalanches are still possible. Watch for shooting cracks, whumpfs and stay off steep slopes if you find signs of instability. For today the avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#) on all slopes.



Cooke City

Cooke City has gotten 4-5" of snow with this storm. Winds are gusty from the south and are creating thin wind slabs. Shooting cracks in drifted snow is a sign to retreat to low-angled terrain. A thin weak layer buried 18" deep ([surface hoar](#) or small facets) could be triggered today. I dug around on Monday and found this layer in our snowpits and in the crown of a snowmobile triggered avalanche ([video](#)). It is not on all slopes, but you should assume it is unless you are willing to dig and hunt for it. A second weak layer of sugary facets buried 2-3' deep can be found on slopes with thinner snowpacks. Both these layers are not widespread but a person could get unlucky and trigger an avalanche. Cracking, whumpfs or even a small avalanche, are signs to stay out of avalanche terrain. For today the avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#) on all slopes.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).



Island Park

Avalanche Warning

King and Queen Fundraiser

February 6th and 7th, Saturday and Sunday, at Bridger Bowl. Due to the pandemic it is a GS race this year. Prizes will be awarded for the fastest race results AND separate prizes for folks who raise the most money over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes.* Info is [HERE](#).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our [education calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

Every Saturday in Cooke City, FREE snowpack update and rescue practice at the Round Lake Warming Hut between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. [Poster with More Info](#).

February 5 and 6, Women's Companion Rescue Clinic with SheJumps. [Registration HERE](#).

February 19 and 20, Companion Rescue Clinic. [Registration HERE](#).

February 26 and 27, Women's Companion Rescue Clinic with SheJumps. [Registration HERE](#).