

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Feb 1, 2017

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, February 1st at 7:00 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [**Grizzly Outfitters**](#) in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Storm totals from 4 a.m. yesterday are 12" in the Bridger and northern Gallatin Ranges, 10" in the Big Sky area, 7" in Taylor Fork, 3-4" around West Yellowstone and 14-16" outside Cooke City. Winds have been blowing 10-20 mph out of the W-SW, except in the Bridger Range where they are east. Temperatures are in the single digits under partly cloudy skies with lingering snow showers this morning. Winds will remain light and temperatures will warm into the teens. A smaller storm approaches pre-dawn tomorrow that will bring 3-6" throughout the day.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Bridger Range Northern Madison Range Northern Gallatin Range

The northern mountains from Big Sky to Bozeman got 10-12" of snow measuring .7-1" of [snow water equivalent](#) (SWE). Wind-loading was minimal and today's concern is triggering avalanches at the old snow interface. Yesterday, a skier on Mount Ellis dug a pit and found a weak layer of surface hoar buried under the new snow. Surface hoar crystals are prone to avalanche. Throughout the northern mountains the snowpack also has a thick layer of sugary snow (depth hoar) at the ground which could slide. On many slopes the entire snowpack is weak and unsupportable. The weight of the new snow is creating unstable conditions and triggering avalanches is likely. For today, the avalanche danger is rated [CONSIDERABLE](#).

Cooke City

Cooke City got more snow (14-16"/.7" SWE) and more wind than the other mountain ranges. Eric drove white-knuckled to Cooke City early yesterday morning and then rode and skied around Lulu Pass. He found a stable 6' deep snowpack and his concern was limited to avalanches in the new snow. Winds were blowing the snow around and he expects wind slabs to be an additional problem today. His [video](#) succinctly explains the situation. Given that it is likely a skier or snowmobiler could trigger an avalanche in the new snow, today's avalanche danger is rated [CONSIDERABLE](#).

Southern Madison Range Southern Gallatin Range Lionhead area near West Yellowstone

The southern mountains received .2-.4" of SWE measuring 7" of snow in Taylor Fork and 3" outside West Yellowstone. This is not a lot of weight but we are concerned because this storm buried a new layer of surface hoar ([photo](#)), the second one in a week ([photo](#)). These layers are not found everywhere, but they were seen in Bacon Rind and are likely buried around West Yellowstone. It's possible to trigger avalanches on either of these layers and the avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#).

Eric 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

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

TONIGHT! February 1, **Women's Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., REI Bozeman. Register [HERE](#).

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.