GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Oct 25, 2020

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Sunday, October 25 at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Montana Chevy Dealers.**

*Note: Bridger Bowl Ski Area is closed and there is no avalanche control or ski patrol services. Backcountry conditions exist. Workers are setting up for the season and making snow. Please stay clear of work areas, snow guns, chair lifts, and other equipment.

Mountain Weather

1-3” of new fell yesterday morning before snowfall tapered off around noon. Temperatures this morning are bitterly cold (below zero F) and will only rise into the single digits F today. Winds are generally moderate out of the east, except on the Bridger Ridge where they are holding steady in the high 30s mph and gusting into the high 50s mph.

Winds will shift to the north and then west tonight and tomorrow. Temperatures will rise steadily each day through the middle of the work week. Sunny and dry conditions will prevail for the next week.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

We’re on the tail end of the first big storm cycle of the season. Triggering avalanches remains a very real possibility. With cold temperatures and continued blowing snow it will take several days for the hazard to significantly decrease.

During this storm we’ve seen avalanches and shooting cracks throughout the advisory area: in the Bridger Range (**photo**, **photo**), on Mt Blackmore in the northern Gallatin Range (**photo**), near Cooke City, and on the Sphinx in the Madison Range (**photo**). Wind drifted snow is the common theme between all these signs of instability. Slopes with drifted snow have the most continuous snow cover and are also where you are most likely to trigger avalanches. With shifting winds today and tomorrow, watch out for new slopes being loaded. Shooting cracks or recent avalanches are bullseye data that the snowpack is unstable. Watch Doug’s **video** from the Sphinx for a good reminder to stay heads up, even though it’s early season.

Snow depths range from less than a foot at lower elevations to 2-3 feet at higher elevations in the northern ranges and around Cooke City. This is plenty of snow to cause a season ending avalanche. Despite it being October, because there is snow on the ground, normal mid-winter travel advice applies: bring a partner, travel one at a time in avalanche terrain, and make sure you’re carrying rescue gear (beacon, shove and probe) and know how to use it. Hunters, ice climbers, and skiers have all been caught in early season avalanches (accident reports). Be cautious and stay safe, we have a long winter ahead.

We’ll be updating the **weather log**, **photos page** and **avalanche activity list** daily and issuing early season updates throughout the fall as conditions merit. If you have avalanche, snowpack or weather observations to share, please submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

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:

On Thursday, November 5 at 6 p.m. Uphill Pursuits is hosting a GNFAC Forecaster Chat with Doug Chabot who will discuss early season snowpack and avalanche accidents. Anyone can attend **via this link**.

The **6th Annual MSU Snow and Avalanche Workshop** will be an hour of live online talks each Monday evening in November.

Our popular **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course** will have online lectures the evening of December 2 and 3 with a choice of field days over the following two weekends. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge).

Last year, the "Avalanche Hour" podcast interviewed **Alex** and **Doug** individually. Besides acting as a helpful refresher for the coming season, there's good information about our work at the GNFAC. Check out the Avalanche Hour's long list of other great interviews as well.

Support the Friends of the GNFAC

This year, The Friends of the Avalanche Center are unable to host an in-person Powder Blast due to COVID. In place of their biggest fund-raiser, the Friends of GNFAC launched an online **GoFundMe campaign**. Please consider a donation, and we look forward to having an in-person event again in the future.