

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Feb 17, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, February 17th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Uphill Pursuits](#) and [Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There is no new snow. Temperatures this morning range from the negative single digits to the low positive teens F. Winds are generally light and northerly, except for in the Bridger Range where westerly winds have picked up this morning and are now blowing 15-20 mph, both at the ridgeline and at mid-elevations. Winds will shift to the west and south as day progresses, generally remaining light (winds in the Bridgers will remain a bit stronger). Temperatures will rise into the 20s and low 30s F under sunny skies.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



All Regions

Don't let the beautiful weather today fool you, avalanche conditions remain quite dangerous. Avalanches will be easily triggered if you get on, or even near, any steep slope.

Yesterday, there were many skier and rider triggered avalanches across the advisory area. Large avalanches were triggered on Henderson Mountain and Scotch Bonnet, near Cooke City ([details](#), [details](#)). The larger of these slides broke 800 ft wide and 3-4 ft deep ([photo](#)). Riders in Portal Creek remotely triggered four avalanches from up to 900 ft away ([details](#)). And Alex and I saw a slide near Lionhead that was remotely triggered during the day yesterday from around 150 ft away by a group of riders in a flat meadow on the far side of a band of trees ([photos](#)). The remarkably weak layers in the snowpack will take a long time to heal. Loading has just stopped and this process has barely begun. Expect to trigger more of these deep, wide, slides today. Because so many avalanches are being triggered from far away, make sure to give steep slopes wide berths if you're crossing beneath them.

Dave dug a snowpit in Bear Basin on Thursday and got unremarkable test results but advised ignoring them because of the big picture signs of instability ([video](#)). That night, a natural avalanche broke only a couple hundred feet away from his snowpit ([details](#)). This is a great example of why we should all follow his advice and not over complicate our decision making right now. Simply plan to avoid riding on, or beneath, all slopes steeper than 30 degrees regardless of what signs of instability you do or don't see while you're travelling through the mountains.

Slopes where winds have blown recent snow into thicker drifts may be even touchier than others, but don't worry about trying to identify these slopes, because human triggered avalanches are likely on all slopes today whether wind-loaded or not.

The avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#) today.

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.

[*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.