

[GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Jan 11, 2024](#)

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Thursday, January 11th at 6:45 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue](#) and [Highline Partners](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

AVALANCHE WARNING

We are issuing a backcountry Avalanche Warning for the Bridger Range. Overnight, close to 1 foot of new snow has fallen onto a weak and unstable snowpack. Very dangerous avalanche conditions exist and the danger is rated **HIGH**. Human-triggered and natural avalanches are likely. Backcountry travelers should stay off of steep slopes and stay away from the bottom of steep slopes. Avalanches can be triggered from flat terrain. Steep slopes can avalanche far above and run into lower-angled terrain.

This warning will expire or be updated by 6:00 a.m. on Friday, January 12, 2024.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. the Bridger Range has 11" of new snow. Hyalite, Cooke City, Lionhead and Island Park got 1-2". Mountain temperatures are 0-5 F and wind is west to north at 10-15 mph with gusts of 25 mph. Another 2-3" of snow is expected by tomorrow morning with westerly wind blowing 10-20 mph. Tonight, temperatures will drop to -10 to -15 F.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range

Avalanche Warning

The Bridger Range, specifically Bridger Bowl Ski Area, picked up 11" of snow (at least .6" SWE) in the last 10 hours. This is a significant loading event that will create widespread avalanches in the sidecountry/backcountry. We have been tracking the weak snow on the ground for a month and have been nervously waiting for it to get loaded and avalanche. The time has arrived. Do not get onto or underneath steep slopes today. Alex's video from Sunday explains the dangerous situation we are in right now.

The avalanche danger is rated HIGH.



Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

From Bozeman to Big Sky, West Yellowstone, Cooke City and Island Park, the backcountry has dangerous avalanche conditions. The wind and snowfall has decreased and current drifting is minimal, but the damage has been done from days of blustery weather: slabs of new snow are now capping the weaker, faceted, sugary snow which is found throughout our forecast area (weak snow recap video). This layer came alive in Lionhead on

Tuesday and my partner and I were able to get widespread cracking, collapsing and also triggered a 1,000' wide avalanche ([video, pics and observation](#)). Yesterday we toured into Beehive Basin north of Big Sky and found unstable snow on all aspects ([video](#) and [observations](#)). Recent avalanche activity, small collapses and cracks and very poor stability test scores kept us off avalanche terrain. Yesterday morning at the Yellowstone Club, ski patrol found a large avalanche that broke naturally during the night ([photo](#)). Other ranges are not immune from this instability. Cooke City had [shooting cracks and collapsing](#), and [skiers triggered a small slide](#) up Hyalite on Mt. Blackmore.

Getting into avalanche terrain is not recommended. Avalanches can break wide and be triggered from afar. For today, the avalanche danger is [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.

January 16, at 4 p.m., **Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund - Movie Night**, The Waypoint, Big Sky. Information [HERE](#).

January 18, 4 p.m., **Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund - Pint Night**, Beehive Basin Brewery, Big Sky. Information [HERE](#).

[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](#).