

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Jan 16, 2024

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Tuesday, January 16th at 6:45 a.m. This information is sponsored by [World Boards](#) and [Mystery Ranch](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Mountain temperatures are in the balmy single digits above and below zero F, with west to northwest winds blowing 10-25 mph. There is no new snow. Today, temperatures will soar into the teens F. Winds will be 10-20 mph from the west to southwest, and snow will move into the area early tomorrow morning with a trace to 2" falling by daylight. Snow will continue tomorrow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Southern
Madison

Southern
Gallatin

Lionhead
Range

Cooke
City

Island
Park

Dangerous avalanche conditions exist in the Southern Madison and Southern Gallatin Ranges and the mountains around Island Park, West Yellowstone and Cooke City due to persistent weak layers buried throughout the lower snowpack. Skiers and riders continue to report many clear signs of instability.

Yesterday in the Lionhead area, a group remotely triggered an avalanche on a small slope from twenty feet away ([photos and details](#)), and two groups experienced widespread cracking and collapsing that extended nearly 200 feet in front of their sleds ([observation](#), [observation 2](#)). One team of riders stated, "We did not venture onto steeper slopes, but it felt like they would slide easily if we did!" A fourth group at Lionhead sent a photo of a recent natural avalanche ([Watkins Creek photo](#)). A group of skiers in Cooke City walked south of town to document the recent avalanche cycle and noted avalanches on many aspects and collapsing and cracking that got "spookier" in higher elevation terrain more exposed to the wind ([photos and details](#)).

While yesterday's reports focus on the Lionhead and Cooke City areas, the snowpack and recent loading patterns are similar in Island Park and the Southern Gallatin and Southern Madison Ranges ([Taylor Fork video](#), [Centennials video](#)). Recent [avalanche activity](#) points to a snowpack in which human-triggered avalanches remain uncharacteristically likely this long after the last loading event.

The danger is rated [CONSIDERABLE](#). Slopes less than 30 degrees in steepness and without steep terrain above are generally safe from avalanches. Careful route-finding, a thorough snowpack assessment and a conservative mindset are essential on and around steeper terrain.



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Human-triggered avalanches are possible in the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky. As I described in my [video](#) from Beehive Basin yesterday, persistent weak layers buried within the snowpack are nearly universal

across aspects and elevations. Where these weak layers are capped by a sufficient slab of cohesive snow from wind-loaded drifts or recent storms, they can produce avalanches. As Alex and his partner noted last week on Buck Ridge, loose snow avalanches or sluffs of weak faceted snow are possible on steep slopes and can gouge deep into the season's snowpack ([video](#)).

Avoid the avalanches by seeking out lower-angle terrain or minimize the odds of triggering a slide by selecting terrain sheltered from recent wind loading and testing for instability before considering steeper terrain.

The danger is rated [MODERATE](#).

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](#).