GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Jan 29, 2024

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Monday, January 29th at 6:45 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by the **Idaho State Snowmobile Association - Avalanche Fund** and **Uphill Pursuits**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Mountain temperatures are in the high 20s F this morning, except in the Bridger Range, where they are in the low to mid-30s F. Winds are 5-15 mph from the west to northwest, and the mountains around West Yellowstone and Island Park got one inch of snow mixed with a drizzle of rain. Today, temperatures will be in the mid to upper 30s F with mid-40s in the Bridger Range and 5-10 mph winds from the west to southwest. Skies will be mostly sunny around Bozeman and Big Sky and will clear through the day around West Yellowstone, Island Park, and Cooke City.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Dangerous avalanche conditions continue across the advisory area due to an incredibly flimsy snowpack structure with persistent weak layers of feathery surface hoar, sugary facets and depth hoar buried 1-3+ feet deep.

Can we get one day without avalanches? Apparently, this is still too much to ask for. Yesterday, a group of skiers in the Bridger Range kicked off a microwave-sized chunk of cornice that tumbled down and triggered an avalanche on Bridger Peak (**video and details**). A snowmobiler was researching a new stability test we're calling the cannonball and triggered a small avalanche on a test slope in Lionhead (**video and details**). Doug described conditions in Cooke City as spooky, triggering thunderous collapses (**video**). Similarly, groups in the Southern Gallatin and Southern Madison Ranges triggered many collapses wherever there was a hint of wind-drifted snow on top of the weak layers (**observation 1** and **2**). In Island Park, I felt my sled drop as we triggered a collapse in low-angle terrain and repeatedly found unstable conditions in our snowpits (**video**). Reaching back to last week when avalanche warnings and high danger were the norm, the **weather and avalanche log** is packed with documentation of recent slides.

When persistent weak layers are a problem, careful route selection is essential to enjoying a safe day in the mountains. Recreate in terrain less than 30 degrees and reduce time spent below steep slopes. (**Slope Angles and Avalanche Terrain Video**).

Temperatures remained above freezing in the Bridger Range last night and barely dropped below in other areas. A moist snow surface and pinwheels are early indicators of increasing wet snow instability. Shady north-facing aspects will likely remain protected from this hazard. Roofs with snow are prone to avalanches as temperatures warm. Avoid spending time below snowy roofs and keep kids and pets away from the impact zone.

Human-triggered avalanches are likely, and the danger is CONSIDERABLE.

Thanks to all of you who submitted photos and observations of avalanche activity. It is incredibly helpful for the accuracy of the forecast!

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.

Tuesday, 30 January, 6:30 p.m., FREE 1-Hour Avalanche Awareness at the Beall Center in Bozeman.

9-10 February. Companion Rescue Course. More information and registration **HERE**.

9-10 February. Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals. More information and registration for the **MOTORIZED SECTION** and **NON-MOTORIZED SECTION**

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**.