

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Feb 2, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, February 2nd at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Bridger Bowl](#), [Cooke City Motorsports](#) and [Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Mountain temperatures are a few degrees above or below freezing this morning under cloudy skies. Winds are 10-20 mph out of the southwest to southeast, with gusts of 30-50 mph. High temperatures today will reach the 40s F in the Bridger Range and 30s F elsewhere. Winds will diminish a little today and stay generally southerly. There has been no precipitation yet, but it is expected to start snowing today in the southern regions and everywhere else by tonight. Expect a trace to 3 inches by daybreak tomorrow, with snowfall continuing through the weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

The remarkably weak snowpack remains unstable and human triggered avalanches are likely today. It is very unusual for the danger to remain elevated for so long after the last snowfall, but continued signs of instability and avalanches show us that we're in an unusual situation. Riders in Island Park yesterday had widespread collapsing and saw several recent avalanches ([observation](#)). On Tuesday, an avalanche was triggered on Daisy Pass, near Cooke City ([photos](#)). On Monday, ice climbers approaching a climb near Pilot Peak triggered a large slide from 150 feet away ([observation](#)) and a rider was partially buried near Round Lake ([video](#)). Many avalanches were triggered or broke naturally last weekend ([Henderson Mountain](#), [Henderson Ridge naturals](#), [Fisher Creek natural](#)).

Don't try to thread the needle in avalanche terrain today. When you can trigger slides from hundreds of feet away it is very difficult to manage the avalanche hazard. Stay off of slopes steeper than 30 degrees and continue to be wary and cautious of crossing beneath these slopes as well. The avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#).



Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range

Skies have clouded up and temperatures are a bit lower than they have been. Surface melting will be minimal today and we're back to primarily being concerned with dry slab avalanches. With that said, water will remain in the lower snowpack on sunny slopes until we get a sustained period below freezing so wet avalanches aren't entirely impossible today.

Unfortunately, our early season weak layers stuck around through this warmup and you could still trigger a dangerous slide breaking far above you. Yesterday, in the Taylor Fork I got quite unstable snowpack test scores and triggered a large collapse ([video](#)). I also found dry snow remaining reactive in the Bridgers on Tuesday ([video](#)). The likelihood of triggering a big slide has diminished a little bit, but the consequences of doing so

remains high.

Your options today are either to continue avoiding slopes steeper than 30 degrees, or carefully assessing the snowpack, watching for signs of instability, and accepting a not insignificant degree of residual risk.

Human triggered avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger is [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.

POSTPONED: King and Queen of the Ridge, February 3rd. Bridger Bowl's community event series events this weekend are postponed, including King & Queen - stay tuned, details coming soon.

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](#)

[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.