

# GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 15, 2025

This is Dave Zinn with the avalanche forecast for Wednesday, January 15th, at 7:00 a.m. sponsored by [Alpine Orthopedics & Sports Medicine](#), [Bridger Bowl](#) and [Ride Rasmussen Style](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

## Mountain Weather

**This morning**, temperatures are in the teens to 20s F, with single digits F in Cooke City. Winds are light from the west through the north. Stronger winds continue to gust to 45 mph in the Bridger Range.

**Today**, temperatures will be around 30 degrees F, with light winds except for the Bridger Range, where strong winds will continue through the morning. Snow returns to the forecast area on Friday.

## Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



### Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range

Stability is improving slowly in the Southern Madison and Southern Gallatin Ranges and the mountains around West Yellowstone. Persistent weak layers buried 1-3 feet deep make human-triggered **persistent slab avalanches** likely on steep slopes.

The snowpack continues to demonstrate its instability. On Monday (exact timing unknown), a skier triggered an avalanche across the river from Bacon Rind that appeared to fail on the problematic weak layers ([details and photos](#)). At Bacon Rind, we triggered countless collapses that shook the snow off nearby trees ([observation and video](#)), and at Lionhead, we triggered several large collapses and noted the weak snowpack structure ([observation/ video](#)).

Avalanches breaking within recent drifts of wind-loaded snow as **wind slabs** is a secondary concern that exacerbates the persistent slab problem by adding weight to slopes and potentially triggering a deeper slide ([slide near Two Top](#)).

Enjoy great powder turns and ride in low-angle terrain, avoiding slopes steeper than 30 degrees. The danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#).



### Cooke City Island Park

In Cooke City and Island Park, triggering a **persistent slab avalanche** that breaks 4-6 feet deep is possible.

Within the last week in Cooke City, large avalanches occurred naturally and with remote triggers from distant flat terrain ([Ian and Alex's video](#)). The most recent slides occurred on Sunday and Monday ([photos and details, Photos/ details 2](#)). Similar concerns exist in Island Park, but with less recent snowfall, we have seen less activity ([video](#)). Avoid steep, wind-loaded terrain where recent drifts are present. These are the most likely locations to trigger large **persistent** and **wind slab avalanches**.

Lean on careful terrain evaluation to *reduce the chances of triggering a slide* and the *consequences if one occurs*. Steeper terrain, wind-loaded slopes and terrain with variation in depth are more likely to avalanche. Larger slopes with terrain traps enhance the consequences of getting caught. To minimize uncertainty, ski and ride in terrain less than 30 degrees.

The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#).



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

In the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky, **wind slab avalanches** are the primary concern. For the third day, winds gusting above 40 mph are hitting the Bridger Range. The distribution of potential instability related to wind loading is widespread. Lighter winds in the Northern Gallatin and Northern Madison Ranges will drift snow in more predictable patterns near ridgelines and upper-elevation gullies. Evaluate terrain and surface snow for instability, watching for shooting cracks and feeling for a stiffening snow surface. *Seek out* terrain sheltered from the wind, where you will find safer conditions and better snow.

Triggering a **persistent slab avalanche** on buried weak layers is unlikely (Portal Creek [observation and video](#)). Areas where it remains possible include shallower spots on steep, rocky slopes, near rock outcroppings, or wind-scoured ridges ([Blackmore Video](#)).

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](#)

*Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Session* for non-motorized travelers during the [last weekend of January](#).

**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.

## KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski/ride? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge on 2/1 is for you. Hike, ride and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center at Bridger Bowl this year! Join this fun event 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 to fundraise is [HERE](#) or [donate here](#).

\*\*\*Race participants for the King and Queen of the Ridge must register separately with Bridger Bowl [here](#)\*\*\*