GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Jan 4, 2018

Good Morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Thursday, January 4th, 2018 at 6:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by **Grizzly Outfitters** in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

AVALANCHE FATALITY

On Tuesday, a snowmobiler died in an avalanche in Cabin Creek, located on the west side of Sage Peak in the southern Madison Range. Earlier in the day, a member of the group triggered a small, non-threatening slide. This raised a red flag and the entire group decided that conditions were unstable. They agreed that larger, steeper slopes should be avoided. At some point, the group entered a gully at the base of a large steep slope. The victim was turning his sled around at the base of the slope when he triggered the slide from below. He was caught as he sat stationary and carried 25 feet to the bottom of the gully. He was buried under his sled 3 feet deep. His partners saw him get buried and were able to locate him easily. He was dug out in 12-15 minutes but did not survive. Every member of the party had proper rescue gear. See accident **Photos** and **video**.

Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning the mountains picked up a trace to 1" of snow. At 5 a.m. skies are clearing and temperatures are in the teens to mid-20's F. Winds are blowing 5-15 mph out of the W-SW. Today, a ridge of high pressure builds over the area producing clear skies and calm conditions. Temperatures will warm into the 20's to low 30's F by this afternoon. No snow is expected in the next 24 hours.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Cooke City

As the days tick by without new snow, avalanches will become harder to trigger. However, a poor snowpack structure on many slopes continues to provide the necessary ingredients for large slab avalanches (**video**). The slew of activity over the past week is a poignant reminder that human triggered avalanches remain very possible.

Here is a list of the most notable incidents over the past week.

1. Southern Madison Range: A snowmobiler was killed in an avalanche on Tuesday up Cabin Creek near Sage Peak. See photos and description above.
2. Cooke City: Yesterday, a snowmobiler narrowly escaped being caught in a large avalanche on the south face of Crown Butte (**video**, **photo**).
3. Bridger Range: On Tuesday, two skiers underneath the cliffs of Saddle Peak were caught and partially buried by an avalanche from a small, wind-loaded pocket that was triggered from above (**photo1**, **photo2**). The two skiers were uninjured.
4. Bridger Range: The accident report on the avalanche in Truman Gulch that injured a skier on Friday, December 29 can be found **HERE**.
5. Cooke City: On Friday, December 29, two skiers triggered an avalanche on a ridge to the northeast of Baronette Peak. It broke 2-3 feet deep catching them both and partially burying one (**photo1**, **photo2**).

6. Cooke City: Two skiers remotely triggered an avalanche in Sheep Creek on December 28, partially burying one to the neck.

Now is a tricky time. As stability gradually improves, it will become easier to push it in steeper, more dangerous avalanche terrain. Under these conditions, it can take finding the right spot on the right slope to trigger a slide. This means that multiple skiers or riders can hit a slope before it avalanches. Tracks on a slope do not indicate stability.

Today, carefully evaluate the snowpack and treat every steep slope as if it could slide. Although stability is gradually improving, large human triggered avalanches remain possible and the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE**.

*Check out pictures that have been added to our **Photos page** since Monday morning documenting many avalanches.*

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, drop a line via our website, email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Events and Education Calendar

BOZEMAN

Jan. 12 and 13, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, **Info and Register**

Jan. 17, 18 and 20 or 21, **Introduction to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, **Info and Register Here**

Jan. 24, 25 and 27, **Advanced Avalanche Workshop w. Field Day**, **Info and Register Here**

Feb. 9 and 10, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, **Info and Register**

WEST YELLOWSTONE

Jan. 6, **Avalanche Awareness,** 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn Conference Center

BIG TIMBER

Jan. 11, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. at Sweet Grass County High School

BUTTE

Jan. 13, **Rescue Clinic**, 10 a.m. at Homestake Lodge

Dillon

Jan. 16, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6:30-8 p.m. at U.M. Western Library

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday**, Current Conditions Update and Avalanche Rescue,** Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at The Antler's Lodge in January. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Lulu Pass road.