GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Mar 16, 2019

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast issued on Saturday, March 16th at 6:45 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **World Boards** and **Map Brewing**. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning there's no new snow to report and skies are mostly clear. Temps are in the teens F and winds are blowing 10-20 mph out of the west. Today, skies remain clear and temps warm into the mid to upper 30's F. Winds will stay light to moderate out of the west. Warm and dry weather continues through the weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Clear skies and warm temps yesterday affected the snow surface on most slopes. Below freezing temps overnight formed a stout melt freeze curst on all but high north facing terrain. This crust will create challenging but relatively safe riding conditions this morning. Shallow instabilities that plagued the snowpack earlier in week have gained strength and shouldn't be a problem today (**video**). There's still a slight chance a skier rider could trigger a pocket of wind drifted snow in high alpine terrain, but this is an isolated problem (**photo**). Without a recent loading event avalanches failing near the ground are unlikely (**video**).

Today, the primary concern is wet loose avalanches on steep sun exposed slopes. The thick surface crust that formed overnight will hold up through the morning hours but begin to break down as the day heats up. Roller balls and point releases are signs the surface snow is becoming unstable. Move to shadier aspects or away from steep terrain if these signs of instability are present. Wet loose slides won't be big enough to bury a skier or rider, but could push you into unfavorable terrain is you're caught off guard (**photo**).

Today, dry slab avalanches are unlikely and the dry snow avalanche danger is rated **LOW**. The wet snow avalanche danger will start out **LOW** but could rise to **MODERATE** by this afternoon.

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