GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Feb 7, 2020

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, February 7th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Swiss Fit Montana** and **Map Brewing**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

AVALANCHE WARNING

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center is issuing a Backcountry Avalanche Warning for the Bridger Range, Gallatin Range, Madison Range, the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone and the Centennial Range near Island Park, ID. Two feet of snowfall and strong wind are overloading a weak snowpack creating very dangerous avalanche conditions. Natural and human triggered avalanches are likely. Avalanche terrain and avalanche runout zones should be avoided. The avalanche danger is rated **HIGH** on all slopes. Contact the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center for more detailed information.

This warning will expire or be updated by 6:00 a.m. on Saturday, February 8, 2020.

Mountain Weather

Our largest storm of the year continues. At 6 a.m., 24-hour snowfall totals are 10-14" near Bozeman and West Yellowstone, with 14-24" near Big Sky, and 4" in Cooke City. The bulk of that snow fell yesterday during the day and it is snowing again this morning. Winds are 10-20 mph out of the west with gusts of 40 mph. Temperatures are in the teens to low 20s. Snowfall will continue today with a brief break this evening before another pulse hits overnight. By tomorrow morning an additional 6-10" will fall with strong W-NW winds and mountain temperatures in the 20s to low 30s F.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

Avalanche Warning

Two to three feet of new snow have fallen since Wednesday (1.5-3.0" of snow water equivalent). This storm has been accompanied by strong winds with gusts up to 40 mph, drifting that new snow into even deeper drifts. Avalanches were already breaking naturally yesterday and it has continued snowing and blowing (**photo**).

Yesterday, Alex and I saw several natural avalanches within the storm snow on Buck Ridge and triggered a slide on a small steep slope (**video**). Ski patrols easily triggered large avalanches with ski cuts and explosives running long distances and snapping trees. Skiers north of Bridger Bowl triggered a large slide that also broke some trees (**details**).

In addition to avalanching within the new snow, avalanches will also break near the ground. Widespread weak layers have just gotten a very large load. These avalanches may be 10 or more feet deep (**video**).

If you get onto a steep slope today, you will likely trigger a large avalanche. Avoid all steep slopes, no matter how small. With so much new snow even a road cut could avalanche big enough to bury you. Give runout zones

a wide berth as avalanches are breaking naturally and running long distances.

The danger is rated HIGH on all slopes.

Cooke City

While Cooke City has gotten less new snow than the rest of the advisory area it has still received a substantial load (12” of snow with 1” snow water equivalent since Wednesday) with strong winds. Human triggered avalanches are likely on wind-loaded slopes. Avalanches can break under the new snow or on the weak layers near the ground. Avalanche breaking at the ground will be large and almost certainly lethal (**video**). Avalanches are also possible on non-windloaded slopes. For today the avalanche danger is rated CONSIDERABLE on all wind-loaded slopes and MODERATE elsewhere.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can fill out an **observation form**, email us (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), leave a VM at 406-587-6984, or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out and plan to attend one or two: Events and Education Calendar.

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday, **Snowpack Update and Rescue Training**. Friday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.

BOZEMAN

TODAY! February 7, **Companion Rescue Clinic**. 6 - 8 pm at REI followed by a field day February 8. **More info and Register Here**.

February 10, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**. 5:30 p.m. at Gallatin Valley YMCA.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

TOMORROW! February 8, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.