GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Mar 31, 2020

Good Morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Tuesday, March 31st at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Community Food Co-op** and **Klim Gear**.

Bridger Bowl is closed and strongly advises against uphill travel which could place first responders at greater risk. Backcountry conditions exist. There is NO avalanche control or ski patrol rescue. Please do not loiter or congregate in the parking lots.

Mountain Weather

This morning the mountains near West Yellowstone and Cooke City have 5-8" of dense new snow with 2-3" near Bozeman and Big Sky. Overnight, southwest wind gusts hit 30-60 mph. This morning wind is 5-15 mph with gusts to 30 mph and temperatures are high 20s F. Today wind will increase to 20-35 mph and temperatures will reach low 30s F. Snow showers will drop 4-6" with possible thunder this afternoon, and another 3-5" of snow tonight.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison | Southern Gallatin | Lionhead Range | Cooke City | Island Park

The storm has favored the mountains near West Yellowstone and Cooke City with 5-8" of snow equal to 0.5-1.0" of snow water equivalent (SWE). Strong southwest wind last night drifted snow into fresh slabs. Moderate wind and more snow today will grow larger slabs. Today, fresh wind slabs and avalanches in the new snow are easy to trigger, and natural avalanches are possible. Avalanches can also break deeper on weak layers 1-2 feet down (**video**).

Assume the new snow is unstable and plan your route accordingly, to avoid avalanche terrain. Danger will increase through the day. Make conservative decisions and travel cautiously. Avalanche danger is rated CONSIDERABLE.

Bridger Range | Northern Gallatin | Northern Madison

The mountains near Bozeman and Big Sky have 2-3" of new snow equal to 0.2-0.4" of SWE. Today more snow and moderate southwest wind will create fresh drifts that can be triggered by a person. Be extra cautious and avoid wind loaded slopes. Wind slabs will be large enough to bury a person or can push you into hazards like trees, rocks or over cliffs (**photo**, **photo**).

Over the last week several slides broke on weak layers 1-2 feet deep (**photo**, **photo**, **weather and avalanche log**). Yesterday Dave and Doug went to Buck Ridge and saw avalanches that broke 1-2 feet deep on surface hoar (**video**, **photo**). Similar slides are possible to trigger today.

Expect stability to decrease through the day with more snow and wind, and plan accordingly. Carefully evaluate the snowpack and make conservative choices. Avalanches are possible to trigger and avalanche danger is MODERATE.

We plan to end daily avalanche forecasts on Sunday, April 5th and continue with general bulletins every Monday and Friday through April. We have taken down most weather stations and will no longer receive observations from guides and ski patrol. We need help gathering field data. 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).

Backcountry Skiing and Stay-at-home Order

Park county is requesting anyone who is not a permanent resident or provider of essential service avoid all travel to Cooke City/Silvergate. This includes both single day and overnight visitors.

Please consider mellower terrain and lowering your risk to reduce potential for a needed rescue. Also consider that the distraction of current events may cloud our judgment which compromises our ability to safely attempt more challenging objectives. Take a step back. Ride Safe.

A **Stay at Home order** is in effect for the State of Montana due to COVID-19. This order specifically discourages “outdoor recreation activities that pose enhanced risks of injury or could otherwise stress the ability of local first responders to address the COVID-19 emergency (e.g., backcountry skiing in a manner inconsistent with avalanche recommendations or in closed terrain)”. Get out and enjoy the fresh air, but please dial back your objectives, slow down, and work to minimize the risk of injury or need for rescue.

Online Avalanche Education

See our calendar for a couple live online avalanche courses being offered this week.