GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 13, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, January 13th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Uphill Pursuits** and **Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Temperatures are in the negative teens to negative 30s F this morning. Winds are 15-20 mph out of the northwest and west with gusts of 40-55 mph. There is no new snow. Today will be mostly sunny and remain cold, with highs below 0 F in most places. Winds will slacken a little and shift southwesterly. No new snow is expected.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Madison Range Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

Temperatures are dangerously frigid and the snowpack is unstable. This is a worrisome combination. Think long and hard before venturing out into the backcountry today. Any bad situation you get into can very quickly become much worse in such cold conditions.

Natural avalanches were reported over the last several days on The Fin, Henderson Mtn., Sheep Mtn., and Scotch Bonnet Mtn. near Cooke City (**photos**, **photos**) and in closed terrain at the Yellowstone Club near Big Sky (**photos**). There were two skier triggered slides yesterday. One slide broke a foot deep on Miller Mtn. near Cooke City (**observation and photos**) and another 2 ft deep on a wind-loaded slope in the Big Sky area (**observation**). Slides are being triggered from a distance, raising concerns that you could trigger a slope from below (**Taylor Fork video**, **Lionhead video**).

The snowpack situation is simple - a very weak snowpack has been pushed to its breaking point by snow and wind over the last week and avalanches are being triggered, both naturally and by people. Human triggered avalanches are likely today. Avoid traveling on or beneath steep slopes. The avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE.

Bridger Range

Thursday's foot of new snow was low density and noncohesive, but the winds picked up last night and drifted it into stiffer slabs (**Bridger Range video**). This will make it easy to trigger avalanches on any wind loaded slope, breaking on the weak layers beneath the new snow. Watch and feel for signs of wind drifting and avoid those slopes. Dig and perform a stability test before riding any steep slope. Triggering avalanching is likely and the avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE on wind-loaded slopes and MODERATE on all other slopes.

Northern Gallatin

The northern Gallatin Range has received less new snow than elsewhere, reducing the likelihood of an avalanche, but the same sorts of slides as elsewhere are still possible, including facet sluffs gouging deep into the weak snowpack (**Buck Ridge video**). Carefully evaluate the snowpack before committing to steep slopes and be alert for signs of instability. 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.**

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.

We offer *Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Session* courses targeted towards non-motorized travelers in **January** and one geared towards **motorized users**. Sign up early before they fill up.

January 16, at 4 p.m., **Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund - Movie Night**, The Waypoint, Big Sky. Information **HERE**.

January 18, 4 p.m., **Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund - Pint Night**, Beehive Basin Brewery, Big Sky. Information **HERE**.

King & Queen 2024, 3 February 2024. Form a team or sign up individually to hike laps on the Bridger Bowl ridge to fundraise for the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

Loss in the Outdoors is a support group for those affected by loss and grief related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 3rd

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort 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 is **HERE**. Race participants for the February 4th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl **HERE**.