GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Feb 6, 2022

Good morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Sunday, February 6th, at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Bridger Bowl** and everyone who hiked and fundraised for the King and Queen of The Ridge. This year's top 3 fundraisers were **Matthew Sebren** (1) and **Dash Rodman** (3) of team Grassy Mtn. Yurt/Cooke City Exxon, and **Nick English** (2) of The Mountain Project team. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning the mountains got 7” of snow near Cooke City, 4” in Hyalite, 1-2” near West Yellowstone, and a trace to 1” in the Bridger Range and Big Sky. Yesterday, northwest wind was 20-30 mph with gusts to 55 mph. This morning, wind has decreased to 5-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph, and temperatures are single digits to teens F. Today, skies will be mostly clear with temperatures reaching 20s to low 30s F, and west-northwest wind will average 5-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph. No snow is expected for a few days.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

Yesterday’s storm gifted Cooke City with 10” of low-density snow (0.6” of snow water equivalent), with possibly more in higher areas. This new snow adds weight above weak layers that are now buried 18-24” deep (**photo**). Two days ago, these weak layers produced small skier triggered and natural avalanches (**photo and details**, **details**), and a skier triggered a large collapse of the snowpack on a low angle slope (**details**). Today avalanches are easy to trigger and will be large enough to bury or injure a person. Be extra cautious of steep slopes, even if you don’t see obvious signs of instability. The snowpack needs time to be trusted with this new load of snow. Plan to avoid travel on and underneath slopes steeper than 30 degrees. Dangerous avalanche conditions exist and the avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE.

Northern Gallatin

Last night, 4” of snow fell in Hyalite (0.3” SWE) which is enough to keep avalanche danger heightened. Avalanches are possible to trigger, especially on wind-loaded slopes where 10” of low-density snow from earlier this week was drifted into thick slabs. Yesterday, climbers near Flanders witnessed a natural avalanche that was small, but would have knocked someone down and been deadly in that terrain (**details**). Two days ago, skiers got unstable snowpack test results on weak layers 6-10” deep and triggered small avalanches in wind-drifted pockets (**photo**). Last night’s snow adds weight to recent drifts and creates some smaller, unstable fresh slabs. Today, plan to avoid wind-loaded slopes, and watch for signs of instability like cracks shooting from your skis as a sign to avoid any steeper slopes. Avalanches are possible and danger is MODERATE.

Bridger Range	Madison Range	Southern Gallatin	Lionhead Range	Island Park

Near West Yellowstone, Big Sky, and in the Bridger Range avalanches are unlikely or will be small. These areas got 5-10” of snow earlier this week which was drifted into slabs that might remain unstable in isolated areas. The last couple days wind was moderate to strong, but had minimal snow left to blow into drifts, and today wind has decreased to light with a few moderate gusts. Recently formed drifts have become generally stable. If you travel in steep terrain stay alert for areas of isolated instability, and carefully evaluate the snowpack for wind-loading and buried weak layers (**photo**). Large avalanches are unlikely and the avalanche danger is LOW near West Yellowstone, Big Sky and the Bridger Range.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

King and Queen of the Ridge Results

Thank you and great work to everyone who participated in this year’s King and Queen of the Ridge event. This year you set a fund-raising record of $29,345! We are greatly appreciative of the support from everyone who hiked, donated, and raised money for The Friends of GNFAC. The King of the ridge this year is **Casey Bloomer** with 30 hikes, and Queen is **Jennifer Allen** with 22 hikes! **Full Results Here**.

This year's top 3 fundraisers were **Matthew Sebren** (1) and **Dash Rodman** (3) of team Grassy Mtn. Yurt/Cooke City Exxon, and **Nick English** (2) of The Mountain Project team.

Upcoming Education Opportunities

See our **education calendar** for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming

February 10th, Forecaster Chat at Uphill Pursuits, “Beyond the Beacon” with GNFAC Forecaster Dave Zinn

Every Saturday near Cooke City, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. FREE snowpack update and transceiver/rescue training. Stop by for 20 minutes or more at the Round Lake Warming Hut.