GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Mar 5, 2022

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, March 5th, at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Montana State Parks** and **onX**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There are 1-2” of new snow in the mountains around Bozeman and Cooke City with only a trace elsewhere. Temperatures are in the teens F. Light winds are generally blowing out of the north and east, with moderate winds in the Bridger Range. Winds will pick up a little bit today and shift northwesterly in the Bridger Range, staying northerly and easterly elsewhere. High temperatures will be in the teens and 20s F. Snow flurries will end this morning without significant additional accumulation.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

You can trigger large avalanches today on weak layers buried 1-2 feet deep. A number of slides broke ~100 feet wide on these weak layers on Thursday in Republic Creek, Hayden Creek, and on Mineral Mountain (**photo**, **photo**, **details**). A slide on the NE face aspect of Mineral Mountain ran ~1600 vertical feet (**photo**). Similar slides are possible today. If you’re planning to go into steep terrain, digging and testing the weak layers in the upper snowpack is your best strategy to avoid triggering one of these slides. Ride one at a time on steep slopes, watch your partners from a safe spot, and choose slopes with clean runouts to stack the deck in your favor in case you do trigger a slide. The avalanche danger is MODERATE.

Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

Large avalanches are unlikely today. Temperatures have cooled to well below freezing, so wet avalanches are no longer a concern. The inch or two of new snow is not enough to create a significant or widespread hazard, especially because winds have generally been light. Do be on the lookout for isolated pockets where more than a few inches of wind drifted snow sit on weak layers in the upper snowpack (**video**). Winds have been shifting and blowing from unusual directions, so drifts may be found in unusual locations. Cracks shooting out in front of your skis or snowmobile are the best clue that you’ve found an unstable drift. LOW danger does not mean NO danger. Even a small slide can knock you off your feet and have big consequences if you’re above trees, rocks, or cliffs - so be heads up if you’re pushing into more exposed terrain. The avalanche danger today is LOW.

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).

Upcoming Education Opportunities

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

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.