

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Thu Feb 12, 2015

Good morning. This is Mark Staples with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Thursday, February 12, at 7:30 a.m. A **Montana FWP Recreation Trails Grant** sponsors today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning temperatures were mostly in the mid 20's F with SW winds blowing 10-15 mph gusting to 30 mph. Winds were blowing from the NW near Cooke City. Today will be similar to yesterday with mountain temperatures in the mid 30's F and valley temperatures reaching the 50s F. Winds shouldn't change much other than shifting a little more westerly.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison Range Southern Gallatin Range

Lionhead Area near West Yellowstone

The mountains near West Yellowstone have a mostly strong and stable snowpack. The one problem is a weak layer buried 1-2 feet deep. Eric and I found it last weekend in Teepee Basin and Doug found it in the Taylor Fork area on Sunday ([video](#), [photo](#), [snowpit profile](#)) the same day a small slide was triggered by a sledder. Because this layer may fracture and produce an avalanche it's worth looking for especially since it only takes a few swipes of your shovel to find it. With this layer present and 4-6 inches of new snow early this week, the danger is **MODERATE** on all slopes steeper than 35 degrees and **LOW** on less steep terrain.

Cooke City

The mountains near Cooke City received a foot of snow on Monday. This snow fell on a strong snowpack and the only avalanche problems are fresh wind slabs and drifts. Winds increased a little this morning compared to yesterday. Heightened avalanche conditions exist on all wind loaded slopes where the avalanche danger is **MODERATE**. All other slopes have a **LOW** danger.

Bridger Range Northern Madison Range

Northern Gallatin Range

On Tuesday the northern mountains received 4-6 inches of snow. Triggering an avalanche is unlikely but not impossible. Look for isolated places with fresh wind loading or a weak layer buried about 1 foot deep. This layer was found in Beehive Basin yesterday but did not propagate in stability tests. It was also found in the upper bowls of Hyalite as well as in the Portal Creek drainage. There has been no reported avalanche activity on this layer. With a generally strong and stable snowpack the avalanche danger is rated **LOW**.

I will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or call us at 587-6984.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Saturday, February 14th is the **13th Annual King and Queen of the Ridge** Hike/Ski-a-thon fundraiser at Bridger Bowl to support avalanche education in southwest Montana. Collect pledges for each lap of hiking to the ridge and skiing back down. 100% of the proceeds go to the Friends of Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Hike as an individual or form a team of your workmates or playmates or family! Prizes are awarded for Team and Individual categories. [Make a Pledge](#). [Sign Up and More Info](#).

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

Take a look at our [Education Calendar](#) for all classes being offered.

Snow Science and the Human Factor, Bozeman, MSU Procrastinator Theater, 6-8:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 17. The free event will feature a talk by Powder editor and MSU graduate John Stifter, multimedia presentations on the human factor in avalanche risk, a panel of experts from MSU's Snow & Avalanche Lab and Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center, as well as a Q & A session ([poster](#)).

Companion Rescue Clinic, Bozeman, REI, 6-8 p.m., Friday, February 20 and 10 a.m.-2 p.m. on Saturday, February 21 (field location TBD). Pre-registration is required: www.rei.com/stores/bozeman.html

1-hour Avalanche Awareness, West Yellowstone, Holiday Inn, 7 p.m., Saturday, February 21.