

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Fri Feb 8, 2013

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Friday, February 8 at 7:30 a.m. **Grizzly Outfitters** in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center sponsors today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Under partly cloudy skies and very light winds, mountain temperatures are in the upper teens this morning. For the next 24 hours winds will remain 5-15 mph out of the southwest with temperatures reaching the mid-20s under increasing cloud cover. A few flurries may dust the southern ranges, but no accumulation is expected. Tomorrow the weather pattern will change in favor of snow, so do not despair.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#) [Madison Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

The snowpack throughout southwest Montana is adjusting to the weight of last week's big snowstorm. Although there are some local differences in snow depth and layering, we've identified some helpful generalizations and patterns. Avalanche activity, as well as our [snowpits](#), highlights two concerns:

1. A weak layer under the new snow.

Small grains of facets and/or feathery surface hoar crystals are easily seen as a darker stripe under the new snow. This weak layer is a prominent concern in the mountains from Big Sky to West Yellowstone. Last Saturday, immediately after the storm, an MSU graduate student got unstable results in 23 out of 28 Extended Column Tests at Bacon Rind. Yesterday, his research yielded only 9 of the 28 tests breaking clean, a positive trend towards stability.

1. Thin snowpacks: areas where the snow was less than three feet deep before the storm.

Zones with a thinner snowpack are comprised of well-developed weaker facets, but luckily this problem is not on most slopes. Mark and others found this around Cooke City ([photo](#), [photo](#)) and it's also seen in the Bridger Range ([photo](#)), on Mt Ellis and Mt. Blackmore, and near Big Sky. Sinking deep into the snow after stepping out of your skis or off your snowmobile is evidence of a weaker and possibly unstable snowpack.

It is becoming more difficult to trigger an avalanche, but determining which slopes are dangerous requires diligence and work. Dig, test and heed signs like "whumphs" or shooting cracks which warn us the snow is unstable. Today, in the Bridger, Gallatin, and Madison Ranges including the Lionhead area, the avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#).

Near Cooke City, Mark is mostly finding stable and strong snow up to ten feet deep ([video](#)). These mountains lack a weak layer under the new snow and the primary avalanche concern is on steep, thin snowpacks. For today, the avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#) on slopes steeper than 35 degrees and [LOW](#) elsewhere.

Eric 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.

February 16: 11th Annual King and Queen of the Ridge

The **Avalanche Center**, **Montana Ale Works** and **Beartooth Powder Guides** have already entered as teams. Organize your own team or come out as an individual hiker. Better yet, let others do the hiking for you and **donate** instead! If you would like to donate to the Avalanche Center team of Mark and Eric (50 lap goal!) drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com. Pledges can be made per lap or just a flat donation. Kids and families are encouraged to hike too! Prizes will be awarded to the most hikes (1st, 2nd, and 3rd); most money raised; most laps for a team; most money raised for a team. [More Information](#) / [Registration Form](#)

Ice Creek Lodge in Valhallas (Canada) available at a deep discount!

Funds benefit the Friends of the Avalanche Center. Dates are March 22-29, 2013. This backcountry touring lodge is a Helicopter ride in and holds up to 10 people. The lodge is private, has full kitchen, sauna, etc., and will be a world class March trip into the Valhalla's!

http://www.icecreeklodge.com/back_country_lodge_accommodation.html Interested? Contact Eric Ladd at 406-570-0639 or eric@theoutlawpartners.com

EDUCATION

A Dozen More Turns, a documentary on the 2005 avalanche in the Centennial Range by Amber Seyler is now uploaded on YouTube! Check it out [HERE](#).

5 SPOTS LEFT!! The Friends are teaching a free *Companion Rescue Course* in **Big Sky**, at Grizzly Outfitters, **TONIGHT**, February 8 from 6-8 p.m., followed by a field session the next day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Space is limited and pre-registration is required: <https://ticketriver.com/event/5830-companion-rescue-clinic-for-skiers-&-boarders>

In **West Yellowstone**, **TONIGHT**, February 8th, the Friends are giving a 1-hour *Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers* lecture at 7pm at the Holiday Inn.