

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Nov 24, 2016

Good morning and Happy Thanksgiving! This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center's early season avalanche information issued on Thursday, November 24 at 6:45 a.m. Today's bulletin is sponsored by Javaman and [**Buck Products**](#). This information will be updated as conditions change.

Mountain Weather

Finally, a taste of winter. Snowfall started yesterday afternoon and ended last night. The northern mountains got 6-8" as did Cooke City. The southern mountains and West Yellowstone picked up 4-5". Winds have been blowing west to northwest at 15-20 mph with gusts of 35 and mountain temperatures are 10-15F. Skies are clearing as a ridge of high pressure moves in. Through Saturday the forecast calls for dry weather and mountain temperatures reaching above freezing. The good news is that unsettled weather is predicted early next week.

Check out our new button that displays the previous weeks weather and avalanche activity:

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

The danger with today's 6-8" of new snow is people losing their minds with excitement and injuring themselves on the thin snowpack. Below 9,000 feet the snow fell onto a patchwork of dirt, rocks and old, icy snow. This [photo taken yesterday of Sacajewea Bowl](#) says it all: good carpeting in the gullies, but bony everywhere else. Above 9,000 feet there's now 15-20" of snow on the ground with closer to 30" outside Cooke City. Recent reports from Cooke City and Big Sky identified layers of sugary facets (weak snow). Until proven otherwise, I believe this weak snow can be found throughout southwest Montana. Outside Cooke City small natural avalanches were reported after last week's storm ([photo](#)), and I expect a few more today. We added about a half an inch of water ([SWE](#)) to the snowpack last night. This is not a large weight, but winds were blowing strong enough to load slopes near the ridgelines and triggering is possible in every mountain range.

Be conservative in your assessments over the next few days. Avalanche activity is most likely immediately after a storm, especially when weak layers are present. Ski one at a time and carry rescue gear.

Hunters, good luck getting your elk, but be careful crossing open slopes and wind-loaded gullies where avalanches can be triggered.

We will begin issuing daily advisories and danger ratings when we get more snow.

We rely on your field observations. Send us an email with simple weather and snowpack information along the lines of what you might share with your friends: How much new snow? Was the skiing/riding any good? Did you see any avalanches or signs of instability? Was snow blowing at the ridgelines? If you have snowpit or test data we'll take that too, but this core info is super helpful! Email us at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 406-587-6984.

[**Upcoming Events and Education**](#)

BOZEMAN

30 Nov. and 1 Dec., **Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course**, 7-9:30 p.m. at MSU Sub Ballroom B: Sign up [HERE](#).

6 December, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at MSU with Backcountry Squatters Ski Club, SUB Procrastinator Theater.

7 December, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at REI.

15 December, **Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice**, 6-8 p.m. at Beall Park.

HELENA

8 December, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at The Basecamp.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

15 and 16 December, **Snowmobile Introduction to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, West Yellowstone Holiday Inn Conference Hotel. More info and sign up [HERE](#).

COOKE CITY

25 Nov. and 26 Nov.; 2 Dec. and 3 Dec.; 9 Dec. and 10 Dec., **Weekly rescue training and snowpack update**, Cooke City Chamber of Commerce on Friday and field location TBA on Saturday.