

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Mar 30, 2021

Good Morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Tuesday, March 30th at 7:15 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Spark R&D](#) and the [Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

The winds eased off yesterday evening and this morning they are blowing 10-20 mph from the west, temperatures are in the single digits F and there is 1-2" of new snow. Today, temperatures will be in the upper teens to low 20s F, winds will be 5-15 mph from the west to northwest and snow this morning will deliver 1-2" before tapering off mid-day.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



All Regions

There are three distinct avalanche concerns across the advisory area today.

1. **Fresh Drifts of snow and wind-loaded slopes:** For the last two days southwest to northwest winds blasted the mountains with gusts regularly reaching 70-85 mph with a peak of 104 mph at the summit of Big Sky two nights ago ([Wolverine Peak wind-loading](#), [Big Sky wind transport photo](#)). Winds stripped some slopes of all available soft snow and deposited drifts 1-3' deep on others. Drifted slopes avalanched naturally on [Saddle Peak](#) in the Bridger Range, near [Maid of the Mist](#) ([video](#)) in Hyalite Canyon, and on [Iceberg Peak](#) near Cooke City and under the weight of skiers on [Miller Mountain](#). Avoid steep slopes with on-going wind-loading or large pillows of recently drifted snow where small to large avalanches are possible.
2. **Persistent weak layers near the ground:** This weekend skiers triggered an 8-10' deep avalanche near Mount Blackmore ([photos and details](#)), others observed a natural deep-slab avalanche near Flanders Creek ([photo](#)), and snowmobilers triggered an avalanche that broke near the ground in McAtee Basin ([photo and details](#)). These are the first three slides to break on sugary snow at the base of the snowpack since February. Slides like this are a low probability, high consequence event and avoiding steep, complex slopes is the safest management strategy until this layer has fully adjusted to recent loading.
3. **Weak interface under recent snow:** A weak layer of near-surface facets formed on some slopes, but not all, and was buried under 2-4' of snow during the last 10 days. Skiers triggered avalanches at the interface between the old and new snow 7-10 days ago on Mount Blackmore ([photo and details](#)), Alex Lowe Peak ([photos and details](#)), and Hyalite Peak ([photos and details](#)) and we found it on some slopes around Buck Ridge ([video](#)) and Cooke City ([video](#)). It hasn't been reacting recently, but it is worth digging down and performing a quick stability test at this interface before committing to any steeper terrain ([How-To Video](#)).

Human-triggered avalanches are possible today and the avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#).

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 Avalanche Education and Events

See our [education calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

April 5, 6:30 p.m., Forecaster Chat with Alex Marienthal, hosted by Uphill Pursuits, “Spring Snowpack and Forecasting Tools”. [Link to Join](#).