GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 29, 2022

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, January 29th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Alpine Orthopedics & Sports Medicine**, **Stronghold Fabrication** and **Knoff Group Real Estate**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning temperatures across most of the advisory area are in the low to mid 20s F with 15-25 mph winds from the west. In Cooke City, the temperature is in the low teens F with 5-10 mph wind from the west. Today, high temperatures will be in the low to mid 30s F and winds will blow 10-20 mph from the southwest. Next week's snowstorm seems to be fading away, let's all use the power of positive thinking to bring it back.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

The snowpack across the advisory area is generally stable and avalanches are unlikely. Stay heads up for slides in isolated areas and in extreme terrain by carrying and being practiced with rescue gear, assessing the snowpack and exposing only one person at a time to avalanche terrain.

As we travel in the backcountry, we look for signs of instability as a reason to make more conservative choices. In the context of generally safe conditions, use the following signs of localized instability as motivators to test the snowpack before you step into steep terrain. Yesterday, a group of skiers in Beehive Basin got unstable test results on deeper facets in an area with a thin and weak snowpack. Skiers near Divide Peak found 6" wind-slabs sitting on weak snow that caused them to reevaluate skiing a steep, technical line. On Wednesday, skiers in Beehive Basin backed off a larger objective after triggering "micro" wind drifts that were "showstoppers in exposed terrain." A team of ice climbers had their rope pile and water bottle pulled downhill when ice fall triggered a small avalanche in Hyalite Canyon and skiers on Woody Ridge near Cooke City noticed some minor cracking around steep rollovers. Continue to adjust plans if the mountains tell you that "today isn't the day" and dig to test the snowpack when those signs are not obvious.

Doug, Ian and Alex are finding generally stable conditions in the field. However, at Mount Ellis, Ian found that the snowpack had weakened since he was there last (**video**). Investigating an avalanche on Saddle Peak, Doug and Alex said, "We ended the day less optimistic than when we started regarding future stability" (**video**, **details**). And while the snowpack on Wheeler Mountain is particularly weak, when Doug and Ian stepped out of their skis, they dropped through the snow straight to the ground, never a sign of a strong structure (**video**). We will need to be ready to dial it back and reset our objectives when it starts snowing again.

Today, avalanches are unlikely, and the danger 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 and opportunities to check out:

February 4th, Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals, three-part series of pre-recorded lectures, virtual Q&A and an in-person field session. Pre-registration and more information **HERE.**

February 5th, King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl. Come hike and ski with your friends for avalanche awareness and fun! Details below.

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.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 5TH

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for top 5 individuals who raise over $500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes*. Info is **HERE**. Race participants for the February 5th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl **HERE**.