

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Jan 2, 2025

This is Mark Staples with the avalanche forecast for Thursday, January 2nd, at 7:00 a.m. sponsored by [Spark R&D](#) and [World Boards](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

If you like cold, snowy weather with lots of powder, it doesn't get any better than now. Skiing and riding conditions are 5-star, and light snow is falling this morning. A quick look at any weather forecast shows more snow coming at least into next week.

This morning, most areas received 3-5 inches of new snow in the last 24 hours, some falling yesterday and some this morning. 0.1-0.2 inches of SWE in northern forecast zones and 0.3-0.4 in southern zones. Temperatures are mostly in the low teens F. Winds are barely blowing in the Bridgers. In all other areas, winds are blowing 10-15 mph gusting to 25 mph generally from westerly directions.

Today another inch or so of snow should fall and then a few more inches tonight. Areas near West Yellowstone, Island Park, & Cooke City could get more with 3-5 inches tonight. Temperatures will warm into the low 20s F, and winds may increase some. Heavier snowfall should arrive with a warm front sometime tomorrow into Saturday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



All Regions

Here's what we know:

- A lot of snow has fallen during the last week+. The Bridger Range had an impressive 3 day storm total of 35 inches (2.45 inches of SWE). Most other areas have gotten similar snowfall containing 2-3 inches of SWE but spread out over the last week.
- More snow is coming with higher water amounts going into this weekend.
- The snowpack continues to talk to us with collapsing, whumpfs, and avalanches. [Check out our observations page](#) to view the latest reports with all these red flags.
- Visibility has generally been poor (b/c it's snowing so much), so we don't really know the full extent of avalanche activity. There has likely been a lot more than has been observed or reported.
- There is a widespread layer of weak faceted snow now buried 1.5-3 feet deep (more in wind loaded areas) that formed on the snow surface just after Thanksgiving into the first week of December.
- Winds have generally been light the last 3 days (especially in the Bridgers, weird right?) but that also means there is a lot of snow available for them to transport when they eventually pick up.

The best travel advice for today is to remain patient, be conservative, and enjoy fantastic powder riding on slopes less than 30 degrees in steepness.

Assessing stability on individual slopes is challenging right now and worth considering the big picture (many red flags). Ian discusses the challenges in his [video from skiing near Hebgen Lake](#) yesterday. So much snowfall is great in the long run because the snowpack will become strong and stable. In the short term, all that new snow is adding weight and stress which lead to avalanches. Also, areas where the weak layer is buried closer to 3 feet deep will probably not give you any obvious signs of instability like collapsing but may still produce an

avalanche.

Persistent slab avalanches 1.5-3 feet deep or deeper in high alpine terrain are the primary problem. I'm unsure of the likelihood of triggering one of these slides but am sure today has dangerous avalanche conditions because so many red flags are present. For today the avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#)

Wednesday, January 8, 2025, 7-9:30 p.m., Avy Savvy Night at the Colonial Theater, Idaho Falls. More information [HERE](#).

We offer *Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Session* courses targeted towards non-motorized travelers **VERY SOON** in [January](#) and one geared towards [motorized users](#). Sign up early before they fill up.

Every weekend in Cooke City: Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.

THANK YOU - Fall fundraiser

On behalf of the Friends of the Avalanche Center, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your generous support of the Powder Blast fundraiser. This is our largest fundraiser of the year. We are thrilled to share that, **thanks to your contributions and the incredible generosity of an anonymous donor**, we have successfully met our fall fundraising goal.