

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Wed Jan 26, 2011

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, January 26, at 7:30 a.m. Team Bozeman and Yamaha, in cooperation with the Friends of the Avalanche Center, sponsors today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

As the snowstorm tapered off yesterday morning it dropped an additional two to three inches up Hyalite with a trace to one inch everywhere else. Temperatures reached the mid 20's with westerly winds at 15-20 mph. A brief spell of "precipitation" (code word for rain) was reported on Mt Blackmore around noon yesterday. Today's high pressure will bring partly cloudy skies, temperatures warming to the high 20s and westerly winds at 5-15 mph.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

The Bridger, Madison and Gallatin Ranges, the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone:

In the last 36 hours four to six inches fell in the mountains. The snowpack is strong and wind slabs that formed over the weekend are now glued down. Sluffing and easy ski cuts with the new snow were reported by Big Sky and Moonlight Basin Ski Patrols. Yesterday, a snowmobiler up Buck Ridge noted a small avalanche from this weekend, but saw little evidence of wind or cornice growth. Further south skiers in Bacon Rind found stable snow in their snowpits with no signs of instability. Eric toured around Hyalite yesterday and wrote that, "The snowpack welcomed the fresh foot of snow (since Sunday) with open arms." Not far away a skier on Blackmore was bummed to have it drizzle up to 10,000 feet which put a crust on slopes they were skiing. Luckily, this event seemed localized. I rode and skied into the Fairy Lake area in the northern Bridger Range yesterday. Unfortunately, visibility was poor and we could not see the reported slide on Hardscrabble Peak from late last week, but we did tour around and dig pits looking for weak snow. With over five feet on the ground the only weakness was about a foot under the surface when an interface between old and new snow broke clean in some of our tests. This issue appears isolated and after close inspection I'm convinced it won't last long.

Given the increasing strength of the snowpack the avalanche danger is dropping accordingly. For today the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE on all slopes steeper than 35 degrees. All other slopes have a LOW avalanche danger.

The mountains around Cooke City and the Washburn Range:

The mountains around Cooke City also have a strong snowpack. The only stability issue in these mountains is all the new snow; over six feet has fallen in the last two weeks. Although there are no buried weak layers, this heavy load of snow is a concern all by itself. It's been less than 24 hours since the storm stopped and even the strongest snowpack needs time to adjust from this much snowfall. For this reason the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE today. Winds are calm, but previous loading at the ridgetops should be approached with caution ([photo](#)). In general, it's still possible to trigger a slide.

Mark 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.

This Friday: Beacon Park Opening Celebration

The Bozeman Recreation Department is celebrating the opening of the Bozeman Beacon Park on Friday, January 28th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at Beall Park, 415 N. Bozeman. The Recreation Department will offer food, refreshments, music, and training on how to use the park with your avalanche beacon. This event is free to the public. For information call 582-2290

West Yellowstone: Beacon Park Operational

Skiing or riding near West Yellowstone? Test your beacon skills at a beacon park near the old airport where you can search for pre-placed beacons switched on/off by a control panel. Look for it by orange snow fence and signage just south of the snow cross track.

[Avalanche Education](#)

January 26, 27 and 29 in Bozeman

Basic Avalanche Awareness – TONIGHT & Thursday 7:00 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. at MSU EPS Building, Room 103 with a field day on Saturday at Bridger Bowl ([more information](#)) ([Prepay](#))

February 2, 3, and 5 in Bozeman

Advanced Avalanche Awareness –Wednesday & Thursday 7:00p.m. – 9:30 p.m. at MSU SUB Room 235 with a field day on Saturday at Bridger Bowl. ADVANCED REGISTRATION REQUIRED ([more information](#)) ([Register](#))