

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Fri Nov 2, 2012

Next advisory will be posted Saturday, November 10 at 7:30 a.m.

Good morning. This is Mark Staples with early season snowpack information issued Friday, November 2 at 11:00 a.m. Today's information is sponsored by **Mystery Ranch** in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center. This information will be updated as conditions change.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday precipitation fell mostly in the mountains near Bozeman and Big Sky with an inch or two of snow above 8000 ft. Temperatures cooled overnight and were in the low 20s F this morning. Temperatures shouldn't warm much today under partly cloudy skies. Saturday morning should be sunny with a short-lived ridge of high pressure. More rain and snow will come Saturday evening and Sunday mostly in the areas near Bozeman.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Most areas have 5-10 inches of snow on the ground except the mountains near Cooke City that have 15-24 inches. Regardless how much snow is reported, if there is enough snow to ski or ride, there is enough snow to produce an avalanche. Last Sunday 3 skiers were partially buried in an avalanche in the northern Bridger Range following a storm with 18-24 inches of new snow and strong winds. Two were injured with one sustaining a pelvic fracture which required evacuation by Search and Rescue. The full accident report is available [HERE](#) ([photo1](#), [photo2](#)).

While this recent avalanche fractured about 3 feet deep and 100 feet wide, even small avalanches can have serious consequences. In 2004 two ice climbers were killed near Big Sky on Sphinx Mountain when they were swept off a cliff by a very small avalanche.

What's the point? If you go skiing or riding, keep avalanches on your mind. We're all a little rusty with our decision making and stability assessments. Make sure your beacon has fresh batteries, your shovel and probe are in good shape, and read the "Lessons Learned" section in the accident report from last weekend's avalanche. Fortunately it's not all bad. On Wednesday, I installed our weather station near Cooke City and found strong stable snow with good firm skiing conditions ([video](#), [photo1](#), [photo2](#)); however, I also found a recent natural avalanche on Henderson Mountain on an east aspect at 10,200 feet. You can find both good and bad riding conditions and both stable and unstable slopes.

Hunters are especially vulnerable to avalanches, as they often travel alone and are thinking of elk not avalanches. Avoid any snow covered open slopes, especially ones with wind drifts or ones that drain into gullies or other terrain traps.

If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or call us at 587-6984.

EVENTS

Today is the final day to purchase raffle tickets to win your own pair of Northside Customs Skis - made right here in Bozeman. The raffle is tonight at 406 Brewing Company at 8PM! If you win you can design your own skis right down to the dimensions and top sheet. Raffle tickets are \$5 each or 5 for \$20 and are being sold at 406 - proceeds benefit the Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Check out our Facebook page for more info.

EDUCATION

Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course at MSU in the evenings of November 28 and 29 with an all-day field session on December 1. Sign up for this class [HERE](#).

FREE 1 hour lectures:

November 9 at the Bozeman Public Library at 6 p.m. for *Avalaunch*

November 14 at Grizzly Outfitters in Big Sky at 7 p.m.

November 14 at the Basecamp in Billings at 6:30 p.m.

November 15 at the Basecamp in Helena at 6:30 p.m.

November 20 Avalanche Movie at the West Yellowstone Holiday Inn at 6 p.m.

WEATHER STATIONS

Currently we have all four of our weather stations running ([Cooke](#), [Taylor Fork](#), [Hyalite](#) and [Lionhead](#)). Unfortunately, the Lionhead station has an old cellular modem that is having difficulty connecting to Verizon's upgraded network. We're working with Verizon to fix it but may have to install a new modem this fall. The local ski areas are coming online soon and we'll be putting their weather data on the website as soon as it's available. Lastly, the NRCS [SNOTEL](#) sites are a great resource for checking snowfall.