

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Tue Dec 31, 2013

Good morning and Happy New Year's Eve. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Tuesday, December 31 at 7:30 a.m. **JavaMan** and [406 Brewery](#) sponsor today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

ISSUED ON January 1 2014 AT 05:15 am

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center is issuing a **Backcountry Avalanche Warning for the northern Gallatin Range**. Rain and snow has fallen in the northern Gallatin Range with about 7 inches of snow. More importantly the equivalent amount of water is nearly an inch of liquid precipitation. This precipitation was accompanied by very strong winds. This snow has fallen on a weak and unstable snowpack which was producing avalanches prior to this storm. **The avalanche danger is rated [HIGH](#) on all slopes in the northern Gallatin Range**. Very dangerous avalanche conditions exist. Travel in avalanche terrain is not recommended and avalanche runout zones should be avoided.

This warning will either be terminated or updated by 6:30 AM on Thursday, January 2.

Mountain Weather

It is currently snowing in the mountains. Since yesterday morning all areas picked up 1-3 inches. Winds are blowing west to southwest at 20-30 mph with gusts reaching 60 mph in Hyalite. Currently, temperatures are in the low twenties in the northern mountains and teens in the southern regions. Today will be snowy and breezy. A moist northwest flow with good energy will drop 8-12" in the Bridger Range and Cooke City with 4-8" falling everywhere else. Winds will remain strong out of the west to southwest with temperatures barely fluctuating. Dare I say that this looks very promising for the Bridger Range? I don't want to jinx anything, but you might want to go easy on bringing in the New Year if you want to ski deep powder tomorrow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#) [Madison Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

Today's new snow and strong winds will worsen the stability. The adage, "More snow equals more avalanches" will ring true this New Year. Yesterday I rode into Lionhead and dug into the three foot deep snowpack and confirmed the poor snow structure. Our stability tests were inconclusive which we promptly threw out ([video](#)). I mention this only as a warning to not place much confidence in stable test results in the face of other red flags. The day before a snowmobiler was buried to his neck in an avalanche in this area ([photo](#)). Recent avalanche activity trumps all other data. After scooping out handfuls of facets underlying a thick slab of snow my partner and I agreed that with enough load avalanches would be widespread.

Since Christmas avalanches have either been triggered or found in Lionhead, Teepee Basin ([photo](#)), Beehive Basin ([video](#)), Bridger Range, Hyalite ([photo](#)) and Cooke City ([video](#)). Weak, faceted snow near the ground continues to be unstable. The mountains around Cooke City have already gotten a half inch of water weight and I

expect more in the next 24 hours. By tomorrow the places with the most snow will have the greatest avalanche danger.

We have been traveling in the mountains very conservatively--many times descending our uphill tracks or not riding the sleds on or under steep hills. We are not trusting souls right now and you shouldn't be either. Today, the avalanche danger throughout southwest Montana is rated **CONSIDERABLE**.

Watch our [videos](#) and look at all our [pictures](#) to get a broader understanding of why the avalanche danger has not lessened.

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.

EVENTS/EDUCATION

January 1, BOZEMAN: Wednesday, January 1, 10 a.m., **Hyalite Tour** at the Hyalite Reservoir. Classic skiing, free waxing and free lunch. More info [HERE](#).

January 4, BOZEMAN: Saturday, 10:30 a.m. at Bridger Bowl, **Free Avalanche Transceiver Workshop**, next to rental shop at Jim Bridger Lodge.

January 7, BILLINGS: Tuesday, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at High Mountain Recreation, **90-Minute Rescue Presentation**.

January 8, BOZEMAN: Wednesday, 6:30-8 p.m. at REI, **Sidecountry IS Backcountry** lecture.

January 9, BOZEMAN: Thursday, 6-7 p.m. at Mystery Ranch, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

January 9, HELENA: Thursday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Exploration Works, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

January 11, COOKE CITY: Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., **Companion Rescue Clinic for Snowmobilers**, Pre-Registration is required. <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/9445>

January 11, WEST YELLOWSTONE: Saturday, 7-8 p.m. at Holiday Inn, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

More information our complete calendar of events can be found [HERE](#).
