

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Thu Jan 19, 2017

Good Morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Thursday, January 19th at 6:45 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Alpine Orthopedics](#) and [Community Food Co-op](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. mountain temperatures are in the 20s F and winds are blowing 15-30 mph out of the W-SW. Today, a weak storm system will move into the area producing cloudy skies, increasing winds and a chance for snow. Before the storm arrives, temps will warm into upper 20s to low 30s F and winds will continue to blow 15-30 mph out of the W-SW with ridgetop gusts breaking 40 mph. Moisture arrives by late morning/early afternoon and the mountains should see 1-3" of new snow by this evening.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Madison Range Gallatin Range

Lionhead area near West Yellowstone Cooke City

It has been nearly a week since the last significant snowfall and avalanches are becoming harder to trigger. Yesterday, Doug and his partner rode in the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone and dug multiple snowpits. Each pit pointed towards improving stability ([video](#)). Although the backcountry snowpack is getting stronger, there are a few avalanche concerns to keep in mind. Weak layers buried mid pack and near the ground still hold the potential to produce avalanches in isolated areas. Natural avalanches in Beehive Basin and Hyalite earlier in the week are important reminders the snowpack still holds a few surprises up its sleeve ([photo](#), [photo](#), [photo](#), [video](#)).

An additional concern today will be increasing winds and the potential for new snow. This combo could form fresh winds slabs in upper elevation, leeward terrain. These fresh slabs won't be large in size, but could potentially carry a skier or rider into unfavorable terrain. Something to keep an eye on will be the fresh crop of surface hoar that has formed during the recent high pressure. If this layer gets capped by a few inches of new snow, it could become the next big avalanche producer. We'll just have to wait and see.

Today, human triggered avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE**.

Bridger Range

The Bridger Range has been favored by more wind than snow lately and as a result has a highly variable snowpack. Yesterday, my partner and I skied in the Bostwick drainage on the west side and returned by skiing Saddle Peak. We found a weak and unconsolidated snowpack consisting of all facets on the west side and a mixed bag of conditions on Saddle. As my partner put it – we made turns on Saddle Peak today and no two were the same. While the Bridger Range has less than ideal skiing and riding conditions, the snowpack is mostly stable.

For this reason, natural and human triggered avalanches are unlikely and the avalanche danger is rated **LOW**.

Check out our [photos](#), [field day videos](#) and [snowpits](#) to get a thorough understanding of the snowpack.

I will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m.

We rely on your field observations. Send us an email with simple weather and snowpack information along the lines of what you might share with your friends: How much new snow? Was the skiing/riding any good? Did you see any avalanches or signs of instability? Was snow blowing at the ridgelines? If you have snowpit or test data we'll take that too, but this core info is super helpful! Email us at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 406-587-6984.

[Upcoming Events and Education](#)

Month of January: Montana Ale Works has chosen the Friends of the Avalanche Center as January's "Round It Up America" recipient. Every time you round-up your bill the change gets donated to the Friends. Pennies equal dollars!

[King and Queen of the Ridge](#), Saturday, February 4th. A Hike and Ski/Ride-a-Thon fundraising event to support the Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Register with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#), make pledges [HERE](#).

BOZEMAN

Advanced Avalanche Workshop w/Field Course, 7-9:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday, January 26 and 27 (MSU Sub Ballroom C); field day, Saturday 28th. Sign up [HERE](#).

COOKE CITY

Weekly rescue training and snowpack update, 6-7:30 p.m., The Antlers Lodge on Friday, field location Saturday TBA.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 21, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

DILLON

February 4 and 5, **Intro to Avalanches with Field Day**, More info and sign up [HERE](#).