

## **GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Tue Jan 31, 2017**

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored [\*\*Yellowstone Club Community Foundation\*\*](#) and [\*\*Mystery Ranch\*\*](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

It's snowing! The mountains are showing 2-4" at 6 a.m. with Cooke City grabbing 7". Winds are blowing W-SW (NW in Cooke) at 20 mph with gusts of 30-50 mph. Mountain temperatures are in the high teens. Today's weather is simple: snow will fall, winds will blow and temperatures will drop. By tomorrow morning, storm totals in the mountains will measure 12-16" outside Cooke City and 8-12" everywhere else. Winds will be gusty from the W-SW and temperatures will drop into the single digits tonight. More snow is predicted for Thursday so start coughing, develop the sniffles and lay the groundwork for calling in sick.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[\*\*Bridger Range\*\*](#) [\*\*Madison Range\*\*](#) [\*\*Gallatin Range\*\*](#) [\*\*Lionhead area near West Yellowstone\*\*](#)  
[\*\*Cooke City\*\*](#)

It is snowing and blowing and the avalanche danger is rising. Wind and new snow will drift and avalanche. Today is a day to be mindful of the changing conditions. I recommend a cautious and conservative approach to backcountry travel since natural and human triggered avalanches are most likely to occur during and immediately after any large storm.

In the northern mountains the snowpack has a thick layer of faceted, sugary snow at the ground. On some slopes the entire snowpack is sugary facets, which was evident to ice climbers over the weekend as they wallowed thigh deep to climbs up Hyalite. Most of the Bridger Range and parts of the northern Madison Range fare no better. Today's storm will add weight to this weak snowpack and create unstable conditions.

In some areas a weak layer of surface hoar ([\*\*photo\*\*](#)) just got buried with this morning's snow. This was seen around Bacon Rind ([\*\*photo\*\*](#)) and is likely found on other slopes in the southern Madison Range. Weak snow at the ground in the mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City has been strengthening, but avalanche activity on this layer from this snowstorm is not out of the question.

Identifying the type of weak layer this snow is falling onto is not important. What matters is that it is snowy and windy. For today, the avalanche danger will rise to [\*\*CONSIDERABLE\*\*](#) throughout our advisory area.

Over the weekend wind slabs were triggered near Bacon Rind ([\*\*photo\*\*](#)), outside Cooke City, up Hyalite, and on Sage Peak in Taylor Fork ([\*\*photo\*\*](#)). Additionally, three climbers on Abiathar Peak in Yellowstone NP took an 800' tumble down a couloir when the cornice they were standing on broke. Luckily the cornice did not trigger an avalanche nor did they suffer life-threatening injuries.

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

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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](mailto:mtavalanche@gmail.com) or leave a message at 406-587-6984.

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## **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 4<sup>th</sup>. 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](#).

**Beacon Training Park at Beall:** Open and free to the public for avalanche beacon practice seven days a week from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., southeast corner of Beall Park in Bozeman.

## **BOZEMAN**

**TOMORROW!** February 1, **Women's Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., REI Bozeman.

February 7, **Sidecountry and Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., Beall Park.

February 8, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m., Roskie Hall, Montana State University.

February 10 and 11, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, REI and field day, more info and register [here](#).

## **WEST YELLOWSTONE**

February 4 and 11, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m., West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

## **COOKE CITY**

**Weekly rescue training and snowpack update**, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Cooke City Super 8 on Friday, Lulu Pass Road for field location Saturday (Look for the [yellow sign](#)).

## **DILLON**

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

## **ENNIS**

February 17, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m.