

Wilson Peak Avalanche Accident

Accident Report

[wilson_peak_avalanche_accident_220403.pdf](#)

Activity

Skiing

Date

4/3/2022

1 caught/ 0 buried/ 0 killed

Synopsis

On April 3, 2022, two skiers traveled from the North Fork Trailhead near Big Sky to Wilson Peak in the Northern Madison Range. The pair skied a run off the north side of Wilson Peak. At approximately 2:10 p.m., during their return ascent up the west ridge of Wilson Peak, they triggered an avalanche that caught and carried the skier who was lower on the slope.

The upper skier was 10' from the ridgeline when the avalanche initiated. He yelled "Avalanche", dug into the bed surface voided being caught. His partner was approximately 100' lower on the slope and was injured by impacting a tree while being carried by the slide. The upper skier descended the avalanche path his partner on the surface of the debris and provided medical care. After an initial assessment, the pair moved down the slope to eliminate continued exposure to the avalanche terrain above. They activated the SOS feature on their satellite communication device because injuries to the skier's upper leg and hip made self-evacuation unlikely, if not impossible.

The pair had avalanche beacons, probes and shovels. Both have formal avalanche training (Pro Level 1 and Recreational Level 2 & Companion Rescue). Both had read the avalanche forecast the morning of the accident and are regular readers of the GNFAC avalanche products. They did not dig a snowpit the day of the accident. They had discussed "New Snow" and "Wind-Drifted Snow" as their primary avalanche concerns for the day. Earlier in the day when considering their descent route, the pair identified wind-loading loading chute and chose to avoid it in favor of a wind-scoured, likely more stable slope.

The Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue team responded with a member of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center staff and evacuated both members of the party. The skiers were evacuated to an ambulance in Big Sky by 4:20 p.m. on April 3rd.

[FULL REPORT IS AVAILABLE HERE](#)