GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Feb 5, 2021

AVALANCHE WARNING

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center is issuing a Backcountry Avalanche Warning for the Bridger Range. Over a foot of new snow with continuing heavy snowfall and strong wind are overloading a weak snowpack, creating very dangerous avalanche conditions. Natural and human triggered avalanches are likely. Avalanche terrain and avalanche runout zones should be avoided. The avalanche danger is rated **HIGH** on all slopes. Contact the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center for more detailed information.

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, February 5th at 7:15 a.m (**UPDATED AT 9 AM**). Today's forecast is sponsored by **Yellowstone Club Community Foundation** and **Montana State Parks**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There are 16” of new snow in the Bridger Range, 4-7” in Hyalite, the Lionhead area, and near Big Sky, and 3” near Cooke City and in the Taylor Fork. Winds are west and northwest at 15-20 mph with gusts of 30-40. Temperatures are in the single digits and teens F. High temperatures will be in the teens and low 20s F. Winds will be 15-20 mph with gusts into the 30s out of the west and southwest.

Snowfall will continue today. By tomorrow morning, 3-5” will accumulate around West Yellowstone, with 5-10” around Big Sky, Bozeman, and Cooke City.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Bridger Range

Avalanche Warning

In the Bridger Range, the combination of 16" of new snow (1.3” of snow water equivalent), strong winds, and an unusually weak snowpack make for very dangerous avalanche conditions. Avalanches will break both beneath the new snow and also on weak layers mid-pack or near the ground. It is snowing heavily and more snowfall today will continue to push the snowpack past its breaking point. Conditions aren’t complicated, they are simply dangerous. Give yourself a wide safety margin while avoiding steep slopes and the runouts beneath them. Human triggered and natural avalanches are likely. The avalanche danger is HIGH on all slopes.

Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

Last night’s 3-7” of new snow (0.3-0.4” SWE) is falling onto a weak snowpack that was already stressed by the snow that has accumulated since Wednesday. Yesterday’s smaller snowfall totals may double by this afternoon.

Human triggered avalanches are likely, breaking 2-4 ft deep on weak layers in the middle of the snowpack or near the ground. Yesterday in Beehive Basin, Dave and I had unstable test results on the mid-pack facets, with more loading they will only be more reactive today (**video**). The long list of large avalanches that broke following last weekend's snowfall provide good examples of the sort of slides that will be easily triggered today (**full list here**, **Lionhead video**, **Ernie Miller video**). Avalanches may break remarkably wide or be triggered from a distance. The avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE in the Gallatin and Madison Ranges.

Cooke City

With 3" of new snow and a somewhat less weak snowpack, conditions won't be quite as touchy around Cooke City. However, there are weak layers in the snowpack and triggering an avalanche is a very real possibility. Watch for signs of instability such as cracking, collapsing or fresh avalanches and dig down to look for reactive weak layers before getting onto steep slopes. For today the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

King and Queen Fundraiser

February 6th and 7th -- AWESOME PRIZES for individuals who raise over $500! Two pairs of skis, Airbag Avy pack, and more! Deadline for fundraising is 1:15 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes*. Info is **HERE**.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our **education calendar** for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

Every Saturday in Cooke City, FREE snowpack update and rescue practice at the Round Lake Warming Hut between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. **Poster with More Info**.

February 5 and 6, Women's Companion Rescue Clinic with SheJumps. Registration HERE.

February 19 and 20, Companion Rescue Clinic. Registration HERE.

February 26 and 27, Women's Companion Rescue Clinic with SheJumps. Registration HERE.