GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Mar 8, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, March 8th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's** and **World Boards**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There is no new snow. Temperatures are in the single digits above and below 0 F. Winds are 5-15 mph out of the west and north. Temperatures today will rise into the high 20s and low 30s F under sunny skies. Light west and north winds will continue today. No snowfall is expected through the weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

Large human triggered avalanches are likely today. Yesterday, a rider on Henderson Mountain triggered a huge slide that broke more than 10 ft deep and 1000 ft wide (**observation**). Take a second and re-read those numbers, then go look at the photos and video to really drive it home. That is a HUGE slide, especially for one that was human triggered. Thankfully, remarkably, the rider wasn't caught. Many large natural avalanches were seen over the last two days (**Republic video**, **Abundance photo**, **photo**). We expect more of the same today.

Avoidance is the only reasonable strategy when triggering avalanches is so likely and they are breaking so deep. Stay off all slopes steeper than 30 degrees today. Give them a wide berth and be very cautious crossing beneath them as well.

The avalanche danger is rated CONSIDERABLE.

Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

Large avalanches are a very real possibility and getting onto steep slopes requires careful consideration. Yesterday, a rider on Buck Ridge triggered a slide remotely (from a ways away) that broke a couple feet deep (**photo**, **video**). This clearly demonstrates that triggering big slides remains possible.

Yesterday, Dave and I rode in the Lionhead area and only saw a couple of deeper avalanches that broke during the last storm (**observation**). The snowpack handled the big loading event over the last week better than it has any other time this season. While this makes us cautiously optimistic, it is faint praise in this exceptionally unstable season.

The likelihood of triggering a large slide has decreased slightly. It is no longer as much of a sure thing as it was only a few days ago. However, the general snowpack structure hasn't significantly changed. The weak snow we've been worried about all year is still there at the bottom of the snowpack, it's still weak, and it's buried under a few feet (or more) of cohesive slab. That means if you do trigger a slide it will be large and very

dangerous.

For many places it's been over a month since the avalanche danger was last dropped to MODERATE. Don't confuse this for meaning conditions are safe today. Think long and hard about the possibility of triggering a big slide like the one that broke in Hyalite last weekend (**photo**) before getting on or beneath any steep slope. If you do decide to enter avalanche terrain, go gradually and start with less steep and smaller slopes.

The avalanche danger is rated MODERATE today.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: **Events and Education Calendar.**

THIS WEEKEND, March 8-10: Bozeman Splitfest. Check the Bozeman Splitfest website for event details and avalanche education opportunities offered by the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

Every weekend in Cooke City: Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.

Loss in the Outdoors is a support group for those affected by loss and grief related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.