

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Mon Sep 20, 2010

The GNFAC is excited for the upcoming winter season, our 21st year of operation. We hope everyone had a great summer and if you are reading this you have obviously started to think about the winter ahead, just as we have.

If this summer and fall are any indication of what this winter might bring, it could be a cold and stormy one. The mountains of southwest Montana have experienced many snow events already, indicating that now is a good time to start practicing with your avalanche rescue gear and to plan to take an avalanche education class. The GNFAC and Friends of The Avalanche Center will start presenting avalanche awareness classes starting in early November (you can click the education link on our website for more specific dates).

As the winter starts to draw closer and more snow starts to accumulate in the mountains, it becomes increasingly important to pay close attention to the building snowpack. Early season is a dangerous time when our skills may not be fully dialed in and it's easy to take a thin, shallow snowpack for granted. It's not just skiers and climbers that early season avalanches pose a threat to, but hunters and hikers alike.

If you are traveling in avalanche terrain, it is critical to pay attention to what is above you and below you. A small slide this time of year may not be enough to bury you, but it could easily drag you into trees or rocks, prematurely ending your season or worse. I have already observed a good sized avalanche in the Tetons on September 1st that easily would have ruined your day if you were in its path. The old saying 'If there is enough snow to ski or ride then there is enough snow to slide' is especially poignant this time of year.

The GNFAC wishes everyone a safe and happy fall and we will begin to issue more current weather and avalanche forecasts as conditions dictate.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion