

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Wed Dec 10, 2014

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, December 10 at 7:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Mystery Ranch](#) in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

We are living under a dome of high pressure which is bringing unseasonably warm temperatures and mostly clear skies. Yesterday, mountain temperatures spiked into the upper 30s to low 40s and cooled last night to freezing. Today will be partly cloudy and warmer with southwest winds blowing 15-25 mph. Weather models are showing this ridge of mountain biking weather to continue into Friday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#) [Madison Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

This week's warmer than average temperatures and lack of new snow is helping to strengthen and stabilize the snowpack while demoralizing my spirits. The junkie in me needs a hit of snow while the forecaster side is pleased with the improving stability. Weak, sugary facets at the ground are beginning to bond and strengthen on many slopes, but they are still our number one problem. A snowmobiler triggered a slide on this layer on Crown Butte outside Cooke City on Saturday which was our last reported avalanche. He was caught, but not buried or injured and his partner [shared a couple pictures](#) with us.

In stability tests by us and others we are finding the weak snow at the ground can still propagate a fracture on some slopes. Skiers in Bacon Rind over the weekend (not recommended!), others in Beehive/Middle Basin and me in Cooke City found spotty, lingering instability ([snowpit](#)). The season is young and my confidence in the snowpack is not yet full grown. Since avalanches are still possible the danger is rated **[MODERATE](#)** today.

Unseasonably warm temperatures will start to melt the snow surface, but the low sun angle will keep wet avalanche activity to a minimum.

The weak layer at the ground should be tested before hitting a steep slope. I just wrote an article [posted on our blog](#) titled "Put Your Shovel in the Snow!" which explains this in more detail.

Mark will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or call us at 587-6984.

Have a Smartphone or Tablet? The Friends of the Avalanche Center just published two FREE apps so you can get the latest avalanche information, videos and photos: [iOS 8 GNFAC App](#); [Android app](#)

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

Take a look at our [Education Calendar](#) for all classes being offered.

TONIGHT: Avalanche Awareness (1-hour), 6:30 p.m. at REI, Bozeman

Avalanche Awareness (1-hour), Thursday, December 11, 6 p.m. at Summit Motorsports, Bozeman

Weather Workshop, Thursday, December 11, 6:30 p.m. at REI, Bozeman (
<http://www.rei.com/event/62227/session/102926>)

Fundraiser at Katabatic Brewing, Tuesday, December 16, 4-8 p.m., Livingston

Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice, Wednesday, December 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Beall Park, Bozeman

Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course

West Yellowstone: Dec 18 and 19, 2014: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/12955>

Five hours of lectures are followed by a full day field course. Topics covered include: avalanche terrain recognition, the affect weather has on avalanche hazard, the development of the mountain snowpack, decision making skills, and basic search and rescue procedures.