

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Sat Jan 10, 2015

Good morning. This is Mark Staples with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Saturday, January 10, at 7:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Grizzly Outfitters](#) in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Mountain temperatures were in the low to mid 20s F this morning and winds were blowing 10-15 mph from the W and SW. Today will be another great one to be in the mountains with temperatures warming into the upper 20s F and winds remaining light. Clouds will build throughout the day with maybe a trace of snow falling tonight and a few more inches during the day tomorrow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

Heavy snowfall Sunday and Monday spiked the avalanche danger, but things have mellowed out a lot since then. Why? The snowpack has persistent weak layers but they are not widespread. It's a tricky situation because many slopes may be stable while a few may not be.

Small avalanches were triggered by riders on Wednesday and Thursday near Cooke City. A larger one also occurred near Cooke City several days ago ([photo](#)). A large avalanche was spotted yesterday south of Bridger Bowl on Bridger Peak where the snowpack is typically thinner and weaker. Even though many have been safely skiing and riding in avalanche terrain, these recent slides remind us to be prepared. Expose one person at a time and watch your partners from safe zones. Also, consider the consequences of a slide. [Terrain traps](#) make small avalanches deadly.

To be sure of stability before committing to avalanche terrain, dig a quick snowpit ([where](#)) and perform an Extended Column Test ([how](#)). It should take less than 5 minutes and only have to be 3 feet deep. Yesterday skiers in the northern Gallatin Range on Mt. Blackmore found a weak layer about 1.5 feet deep that propagated fractures and wisely chose not to ski in avalanche terrain. Yesterday on Lionhead near West Yellowstone, I consistently found weak facets near the ground about 2-3 feet deep that would propagate fractures in stability tests ([photo](#), [video](#)).

Heightened avalanche conditions exist in specific places but these slopes are hard to identify without putting your shovel in the snow and testing buried weak layers. Because avalanches remain possible today, the avalanche danger is rated [**MODERATE**](#).

Eric 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.

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

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

TONIGHT: 1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, West Yellowstone, 7 p.m., Saturday, January 10, Holiday Inn.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness, Three Forks, 7 p.m., Monday, January 12, Methodist Church Annex.

Women's Avalanche Awareness w/ Beacon Practice, Bozeman, 6:30- 8 p.m., Tuesday, January 13, Beal Park.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness, 4 Corners, 7 p.m., Wednesday, January 14, GVSA Groomer Shed.

1- hour Sidecountry Avalanche Awareness, Bozeman, 6:30-8 p.m., Wednesday, January 14, REI.

Companion Rescue Clinic, Cooke City, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sunday, January 18. More details and registration: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/13990>

Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course, MSU Bozeman, evening lectures 7-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, January 21 and 22, with an all-day field session on Saturday or Sunday (your choice). Get more information and register here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/13090>

Advanced Avalanche Workshop with Field Course, MSU Bozeman, evening lectures 7-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, January 28 and 29, with an all-day field session on Saturday. Get more information and register here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/12445>

The **Friends of the Avalanche Center** and **Montana Ale Works** are hosting an *Avalanche Forecaster's Beer Social Fundraiser* the evening of January 27th. Get more information and buy tickets here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/14010>