GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Jan 24, 2019

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast issued on Thursday, January 24th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Morrison-Maierle** and **Ph.D. Skis**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

In the last 24 hours 8-10" fell in the northern mountains and 6-10" fell in the south. Temperatures are in the single digits to low teens with west to northwest winds averaging 10-15 mph with gusts of 30 mph. Today will be cloudy with scattered snow showers and similar wind. By tomorrow morning there will be 1-2" of new snow with a few more inches falling during the day.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Storm totals are 15-18+" at Bridger Bowl and Big Sky ski areas, 11" in Hyalite, 12" around West Yellowstone and 9" outside Cooke City. The Bavaria weather station at Big Sky recorded 10" *last night*, so totals may be higher in the northern Madison Range. The snow water equivalent (SWE) measures .8" in Cooke City to 1.6" in the Bridger Range.

Leading up to yesterday's storm were **20 records of instability** (avalanches, cracking, collapsing). Yesterday, collapsing and cracking up Hyalite (**photo**) and in the southern Gallatin Range were whispers of today's danger. An inch or more of SWE in 24 hours has ramped up the likelihood of triggering slides. Our snowpack is weak with facets where it is shallow. Skiers proved this when they triggered an avalanche from 100+ feet away on Wheeler Mountain (Monday), a head-snapping warning since *all our ranges* have many slopes with this same snow structure (**details**, **photo**).

Videos from the field outline our concerns. Eric found weak snow in **Teepee Basin**, I had slopes crack in **Cooke City** and Alex and Ian found weak interfaces in the **Bridger Range**. There were avalanches before the storm, so it's a safe bet there will be avalanches after the storm. The day after a storm is when I'm the most anxious about someone triggering an avalanche. The snow needs time to adjust to its new load, yet people are impatient. I tend to be conservative in my actions, especially with a weak layer of facets at the ground, yet I know that many are trying to be the least conservative as possible; to ride the edge of being safe and getting good powder without getting caught in an avalanche. Never forget, it's a sharp and unforgiving edge.

Triggering slides is likely today, especially near ridgelines or above treeline where wind-loading added even more weight to the snowpack. Dig and assess what is under your feet before getting close to avalanche terrain. Avalanches can be triggered from afar so be watchful of not being under steep slopes. For today, given the recent avalanche activity, new snow and wind, the danger throughout our advisory area is rated CONSIDERABLE.

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, contact us via our website, email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

King and Queen of the Ridge

Saturday, February 2 at Bridger Bowl. This is the Friends of the Avalanche Center's second biggest fundraiser of the year. Come on out and help us raise some money by hiking and skiing some laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and a good time is guaranteed. Register with Bridger to hike in the event, and create a pledge page to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

BOZEMAN

January 26, **GVSA Poker Ride**, Buck Ridge. Registration is from 8 a.m. to noon, ride ends at the Corral Bar at 4:30 p.m. Proceeds benefit the Friends of the Avalanche Center. More info is HERE.

February 2, **King and Queen of the Ridge** at Bridger Bowl (fundraiser). Register with Bridger to hike in the event, and create a pledge page to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 26, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers**, 7-8 p.m. Holiday Inn West Yellowstone.

LIVINGSTON

January 31, **Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, Info and Register Here.

DILLON

January 31-February 2, **Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, Info and Register Here.

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday**, Rescue Training and Snowpack Update.** Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.