GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Jan 23, 2020

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Thursday, January 23rd at 6:45 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **World Boards** and **Yellowstone Club Community Foundation**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. skies are cloudy, mountain temperatures are in the low teens F, winds are westerly at 15-25 mph and scattered snowfall is beginning. In the next 24 hours the mountains will get 2-4" with temperatures rising into the mid-30s and wind from the southwest at 15-25 mph. The next couple days look to be warm with scattered showers, but no significant storms.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Yesterday marked the second day in a row without avalanche activity. The last 2 day spell without avalanches was December 23rd, 31 days ago, and during that time we've had snowfall somewhere in our forecast area on 26 of those days. It's been an active season with avalanches getting deeper and larger as snow accumulates (**Weather and Avalanche Log**).

Our mountains have a common problem: weak, sugary facets near the ground are avalanching. Avalanches have been unusually large and breaking 5-15' deep in areas that are wind-loaded. The slides have been piecemeal with one here and one there, making it difficult to determine which slopes are safe and which are not. Typically we see signs of instability like cracking or collapsing that warn us of danger, but with these deeper slides there is no warning, it just avalanches. Consequently, the other forecasters and I are being conservative in our route choices, even though the likelihood of triggering slides is decreasing. We just don't trust the snowpack, and neither should you.

We try and investigate as many of these slides as possible, especially those that are human triggered. Yesterday, Dave skied up Flanders Creek in Hyalite to look at two large slides, one 7' deep that was triggered on Saturday by 2 skiers (**video**). The story will be familiar to regular readers of the forecast. A thick slab of windblown snow was triggered from a thinner part of slope when the skier's weight collapsed the weak layer. This last sentence could be cut and pasted onto reports about deep avalanches on Saddle Peak, Buck Ridge, Cedar Mtn, Taylor Fork, Lionhead and Cooke City. The full list of **Avalanche Activity** is impressive.

For today, the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE because avalanches, especially large ones, are still possible.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can fill out an **observation form**, email us (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), leave a VM at 406-587-6984, or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out and plan to attend one or two: Events and Education Calendar.

COOKE CITY

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

BOZEMAN

January 27, **Avalanche Information and Demonstration Table**, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Montana Science Center.

January 29, **GNFAC Forecaster Chat: Avalanche Myth Busters**, 6-8 p.m. at Uphill Pursuits.

January 31, Women's Only Companion Rescue Clinic, 6 - 8 pm at REI followed by a field day February 1. **More info and Register Here**.

February 1, **King and Queen of the Ridge** at Bridger Bowl (fundraiser). This is the Friends of the Avalanche Center's second biggest fundraiser of the year. Come on out and help us raise money by hiking and skiing 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.

DILLON

January 29 and 30, **Introduction to Avalanche w/ Field Course**, evenings of January 29 & 30 plus a field day February 1. Snowmobile specific field day offered February 2. **More Info and Register Here**.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 25, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

February 1, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

HELENA

January 28, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. Carroll College.

LIVINGSTON

January 30, **Introduction to Avalanche w/ Field Course**, evening of January 30 plus a field day February 2. **More info and Register Here**.