GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Jan 31, 2020

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, January 31st at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's** and **Yellowstone Ski Tours** . This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning there is no new snow. Mountain temperatures are in the 20s and 30s F near Bozeman and Big Sky and single digits to teens F near West Yellowstone and Cooke City. Winds are 15-30 mph out of the west. Temperatures will rise into the high 20s to mid-30s F today. Winds will be southwesterly at 20-30 mph. Intermittent snow showers today won't leave much accumulation. More substantial snowfall is expected Saturday night and into Sunday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

The snowpack hasn't gotten a real break from loading at any point during January. There were only two consecutive days without snowfall in the whole month (see the Weather Log for details). This steady, incremental loading hasn't spiked the avalanche danger up, but it also hasn't let it drop. Our whole forecast area has been stuck at a moderate danger rating for almost two weeks. Don't let this lull you into complacency. Stay vigilant. Today, slides could break 1-3 ft deep under recent drifts, or much deeper on weak layers near the ground.

Yesterday, Alex triggered a wind slab avalanche near Cooke City from the safety of a flat ridgeline. The slide broke on a windloaded slope below him, 2-3 ft deep and 100 ft wide (**video**). Avalanches do not have to break down into the deeper weak layers to be large and dangerous. Alex saw widespread active wind loading yesterday and continued strong winds overnight built thicker and deeper drifts that you can trigger today. Avoid heavily wind loaded steep slopes.

Larger, deeper natural avalanches were seen yesterday in Hyalite and near Big Sky. The slide in Hyalite broke at least 5 feet deep on a windloaded slope near Mt. Bole (**photo**). An avalanche on Fan Mountain near Big Sky broke 1000 ft wide and to the ground (**details**). These slides clearly demonstrate that triggering very large avalanches remains possible. Weak snow at the ground is widespread and until it gets a real break from loading can't be trusted.

For our entire forecast area, the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE.

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).

King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl

Tomorrow, Saturday, February 1, is the King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl! Come up and help us raise money by hiking and skiing laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and a good time are 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 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

TOMORROW! 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. Help us raise money by hiking and skiing laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and a good time are guaranteed. **Register with Bridger** to hike in the event, and **create a pledge page** to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

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