GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Nov 26, 2020

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday, November 26th at 7:30 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Alpine Orthopedics & Sports Medicine** and **Blitz Motorsports and Yamaha.** Alex will issue the next bulletin tomorrow morning.

*Note: Bridger Bowl Ski Area is closed and there is no avalanche control or ski patrol services. Backcountry conditions exist. Workers are setting up for the season and making snow. Please stay clear of work areas, snow guns, chair lifts and other equipment.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday, 3-7" of low density snow fell across the advisory area. Temperatures this morning are single digits to mid-teens F. Winds are westerly at 10-15 mph with gusts of 30-45 mph. Skies will clear today with no more snowfall expected. Winds will remain moderate out of the west. High temperatures will be in the teens to low-20s F.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

New snow and wind are the primary avalanche concerns today. Moderate to strong west winds have blown yesterday's new snow into thicker drifts that you can trigger today. The safest solution is to simply identify and avoid steep wind drifted slopes until the new drifts have a couple days to bond. Be on the lookout for pillowy drifts of windblown snow, particularly near ridgelines and downwind of tree or rock islands. Pay attention to the texture of the snow beneath your feet or machine. If it rapidly stiffens, or you see cracks shooting in front of you, stop and reassess conditions.

Below the new snow, there are a mixed bag of conditions. On Tuesday, Alex and Dave found widespread weak, faceted snow near Lionhead (**video**). While Doug and I found generally stable snow in Cooke City, we did find some faceted snow on a north aspect (**video**). Climbers in Hyalite have also found weak, faceted snow lingering in gullies. Where the new snow is falling onto facets, avalanches will be easier to trigger and may break wider. Be particularly mindful of slopes where all three factors line up: new snow, drifted more deeply by wind, lying on top of a weak base. It's early season and uncertainty is still high. We don't yet have a clear picture of which slopes hold these weak facets and which don't. Dig a snowpit to check for yourself before committing to avalanche terrain.

Every day we will update the **weather log**, **photos page** and **avalanche activity list**. We will continue issuing early season updates and transition to daily avalanche forecasts when we get more snow. If you have avalanche, snowpack or weather observations to share, please submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our **education calendar** for an up to date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

December 7-8: **Intro to Avalanches w/ Field** in West Yellowstone. The 7th is online lectures from 1-5 p.m. and separate snowmobile and ski field days on the 8th. Info and sign up is **HERE**.

The December **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course** has SOLD OUT, but **there will be a second course on January 23 and 24**. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge).

Doug spoke with the Last Best Ski Podcast about avalanche fundamentals, some climbing history, and the workings of the GNFAC. The 25-minute podcast is available **here**.

Support the Friends of the GNFAC

This year, The Friends of the Avalanche Center are unable to host an in-person Powder Blast due to COVID. In place of their biggest fund-raiser, the Friends of GNFAC launched an online **GoFundMe campaign**. Please consider a donation, and we look forward to having an in-person event again in the future.