GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Feb 26, 2022

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, February 26, at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue** and **Spark R&D**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There is no new snow this morning. Temperatures are in the single digits above and below 0 F. Winds are generally 15 mph out of the west/northwest with gusts of 20-30 mph, except for in the Bridger Range where they are blowing 30 mph with gusts of 45 mph. These winds will continue today under mostly sunny skies. High temperatures will be in the 20s and 30s F. The next chance for a little bit of snowfall is tomorrow night.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

You can trigger a large avalanche today on weak layers buried around 2 feet deep. Yesterday, Alex visited the large avalanche on Mount Abundance that was triggered by a snowmobiler on Monday (**video**, **details**). He dug nearby and got unstable results in his snowpack tests, showing that conditions are still ripe for triggering a similar slide. Each day without new snow makes it more difficult to trigger these slides, but it is still very much a possibility. Stack the odds in your favor by digging down to look for and test the weak layer before riding steep slopes, carrying avalanche rescue gear (beacon, shovel, and probe), and only exposing one person to avalanche terrain at a time. Large avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger is MODERATE.

Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

While conditions are generally stable, there are a number of small and/or isolated avalanche hazards to watch for. Be on the lookout for thin fresh wind drifts or older drifts that haven't bonded. Cracks shooting out in front of you are a clear sign you've found one of these unstable drifts and should stop to assess before getting onto steep slopes. These wind drifts will be most problematic in the isolated spots where they have formed slabs above weak layers buried 6-18" deep. Skiers on Blaze Mountain yesterday found this combination and triggered several thin avalanches in wind pillows below rocks (**photo**). Snowmobilers in Teepee Basin also triggered two slides that broke a bit deeper (around 18") on the same weak layer under a crust (**photo**). These avalanches are good reminders to stay diligent about safe travel practices during LOW danger. Skiers in the northern Bridger Range yesterday also noted substantial loose snow sloughing that is worth watching for to avoid getting knocked off your feet, over a cliff, or into trees. Despite a long list of concerns, the avalanche danger is LOW today because large avalanches are unlikely.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Education Opportunities

See our **education calendar** for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events.

March 4, Companion Rescue Clinic with the Bozeman Splitfest. **Information and registration HERE.**

Every Saturday near Cooke City, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. FREE snowpack update and transceiver/rescue training. Stop by for 20 minutes or more at the Round Lake Warming Hut.