

## **GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Feb 28, 2023**

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Tuesday, February 28th at 7:15 a.m. This information is sponsored by the [\*\*Yellowstone Club Community Foundation\*\*](#) and [\*\*Montana State Parks\*\*](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

This morning there is 2-4" of new snow near West Yellowstone and Cooke City and an inch near Bozeman and Big Sky. Temperatures are in the single digits to teens F and 10-25 mph winds from the south to west. Today, snow will continue to favor the mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City with 3-6" by tomorrow morning. The mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky will get 1-2". Temperatures will be in the teens to 20s F with 15-25 mph wind from the southwest to west.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



#### Lionhead Range Cooke City

Excepting last Thursday, the mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City have received measurable snowfall every day for over a week, with 9-12" in the last two days and moderate to strong winds for the last four. A lot of new snow and strong winds will likely result in avalanches, especially on wind-loaded slopes where recent drifts could break from a few inches to several feet deep.

This has undoubtedly been the case in Cooke City, with many large natural avalanches and four people caught and partially buried since Saturday ([\*\*Town Hill - 2 partially buried, Mt. Abundance - partial burial, Round Lake - partial burial\*\*](#)). Browse through the [\*\*Avalanche Activity Log\*\*](#) on our website to see a complete list of recent activity. Take note of the great [\*\*video\*\*](#) a group of riders captured of a natural avalanche occurring near Pilot Creek on Friday ([\*\*additional details\*\*](#)). Yesterday, Alex and I rode north of Cooke City and described our concerns highlighting wind-loaded slopes ([\*\*video\*\*](#)).

We have not received an equivalent number of reports from the Lionhead area, but we know that recent snow and wind conditions have been similar, a rider was partially buried on Thursday ([\*\*details\*\*](#)) and a second group submitted a [\*\*photo\*\*](#) of a recent avalanche on a wind-loaded slope.

Avoid steep, wind-loaded slopes where triggering an avalanche is likely. Evaluate the snowpack for instabilities within or underneath recent snow before considering riding or skiing non-wind-loaded slopes. The avalanche danger is [\*\*CONSIDERABLE\*\*](#) on wind-loaded slopes and [\*\*MODERATE\*\*](#) on other slopes.



#### Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range

In the Gallatin, Madison and Bridger Ranges, 2-11" of snow since Saturday favored the areas further south. Slides breaking a few inches to 2 feet deep within drifts of the most recent snow are the most likely scenario today. Yesterday, the USFS snow rangers reported a small avalanche on a wind-loaded slope at Buck Ridge (

[photo and details](#)). On Saturday, skiers in the Southern Gallatin Range intentionally triggered a small avalanche on a wind-loaded slope below a cornice ([video](#)). Last Friday, a rider triggered a small avalanche at Buck Ridge ([photo and details](#)), a large cornice collapsed in Bear Basin ([photo and details](#)), and large natural avalanches occurred on [Mount Bole](#), [Mount Blackmore](#) and [Fan Mountain](#). While less likely, larger avalanches similar to those in Hyalite and near Big Sky that break under the 2-4' of snow from the last week are possible.

Identify and rule out wind-loaded slopes by noting, for example, active drifting or areas below or next to cornices. On non-wind-loaded slopes, test for instability with a quick snowpit before considering riding or skiing steeper terrain. Today, human-triggered avalanches are possible, and the danger is [MODERATE](#).

Please share avalanche, snowpack or weather observations via our [website](#), email ([mtavalanche@gmail.com](mailto:mtavalanche@gmail.com)), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram ([#gnfacobs](#)).



## Island Park

The Centennial Range received 10-14" of snow in the last 48 hours. Moderate to strong winds are transporting this snow into drifts on wind-loaded slopes where human-triggered avalanches are likely and natural avalanches are possible. Avoid steep, wind-loaded slopes. Evaluate the snowpack for instabilities within or underneath recent snow before considering travel on non-wind-loaded slopes.

## Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#).

March 3, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Bozeman Splitfest - Companion Rescue Clinic. Classroom session followed by a field session. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 3-5, Bozeman Splitfest. [More info and register here](#).

March 3 & 4, Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 9, 6 p.m.-7 p.m., 1-Hour Awareness - Spring conditions. FREE at REI Bozeman.

March 10 & 11, SheJumps - Women's Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

Every Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. **Avalanche Rescue Training**, drop in for any amount of time. Round Lake Warming Hut, Cooke City. Free.

[Loss in the Outdoors](#), is a support group for those who have been affected by grief and loss related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.