GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Oct 18, 2024

This is Dave Zinn with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Friday, October 18. This information is sponsored by **The Friends of the Avalanche Center.** We will update this bulletin as conditions warrant.

You can support the Friends of the Avalanche Center by attending the **POWDER BLAST FUNDRAISER** on October 25, donating to the online fundraiser and bidding on silent auction items (more information, donate, auction and tickets HERE).

Mountain Weather

A winter storm blew into Southwest Montana Wednesday night (10/16) with mountain temperatures dropping into the teens to 20s F by Friday morning. Precipitation shifted to snow, blanketing the mountains with 4-6” in most areas and up to 10” in the Northern Gallatin and Southern Madison Ranges. This weekend and into early next week, mountain temperatures will peak in the 40s to 50s F under sunny skies, and winds will blow 5-15 mph from the northwest to the southwest. There is a chance for additional precipitation Monday night into Tuesday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

This mid-October storm reminds us to dig out warm jackets, tune sleds and skis, check avalanche rescue gear for damage, and put fresh batteries in our transceivers (**Avalanche Gear Check Video**).

Mountain snow also requires us to consider the potential for avalanches. Slides are most likely where wind-loaded snow drifts more deeply in gullies and near ridgelines. Getting caught and carried at this time of year has the added consequence of bouncing off rough underlying surfaces, including rocks and stumps. Early season avalanches in southwest Montana have seriously injured and buried skiers (**2012 Incident Report**), caught and injured hunters (**2015 Incident Report**), and resulted in tragic fatalities (**2017 Incident Report**).

Remember the basics of avalanche safety as we begin traveling on snow-covered slopes.

- Beacons, shovels and probes are requisite equipment for each party member. Helmets and airbags are excellent additions.
- Only expose one person at a time to avalanche terrain (slopes steeper than 30 degrees) while partners look on from a safe area nearby.
- Watch for red flags that indicate instability, such as recent avalanche activity, cracking and collapsing. If these are present, avoid steep slopes.
- If there is enough snow to ride, there is enough snow to slide. Dig down and test the snowpack for instability before considering travel in avalanche terrain.

Before you get out this season, refresh your skills by practicing avalanche rescue with your backcountry partners (**video**) and sign up for an avalanche class. Our **education calendar** lists local courses the Friends of the Avalanche Center and other regional providers offer.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: **Events and Education Calendar.**

The Powder Blast

The Powder Blast is the Friends of the Avalanche Center's biggest fundraiser of the year. Friday, October 25 at 6:00 p.m. @ Emerson Cultural Center

Your $50 ticket gets you an unforgettable evening with:
Live music by The Dirt Farmers,
Dinner by The Bountiful Table**,**
The best silent auction of outdoor gear & experiences in the valley, and your first drink is free!

Get your tickets, donate, and start bidding for items in the silent auction.

Can't attend the event? **You can still donate online or bid on auction items** to support The Friends of GNFAC.

Thank you to all the generous sponsors of the 2024 Powder Blast!

Highline Partners is title sponsor of this year's 26th Annual Powder Blast.

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