

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Feb 10, 2014

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Monday, February 10 at 7:30 a.m. [**Pinhead Classic Telemark Festival**](#) and [**406 Brewery**](#), sponsor today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Over the past 24 hours the mountains around Cooke City have picked up 3-4 inches of new snow totaling .4 inches of SWE. The mountains around Big Sky and West Yellowstone received around one inch while the mountains around Bozeman have remained mostly dry. This morning, temperatures are in the teens F and winds are blowing 15-25 mph from the west with ridgetop gusts in the thirties around Big Sky. Today, a weak ridge of high pressure will build over the area allowing temperatures to warm into the 20s F under partly cloudy skies. Winds will remain light to moderate out of the west. This break in the weather will be short-lived as another storm system is forecasted to impact our area tomorrow into Wednesday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Madison Range Southern Gallatin Range Cooke City

Lionhead area near West Yellowstone

On many slopes, a layer of facets buried 1-3 feet deep are reactive and capable of producing avalanches ([photo](#)). On other slopes this layer is less developed and not much of a problem.

Yesterday, Mark rode into the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone and found just this setup. He found some stable slopes, but also observed debris from a human triggered slide that occurred earlier in the day ([video](#), [photo](#), [photo](#)). This slide failed on facets near the ground; a good reminder this problem can't be forgotten. Just north of the Lionhead area, a group of skiers found unstable conditions up Beaver Creek in the southern Madison Range. They found conditions to be most unstable on south facing slopes where they triggered multiple slides, one remotely.

The mountains around Big Sky have a slightly stronger snowpack, but continue to display signs of instability. Yesterday, a snowmobiler on Buck Ridge found many stable slopes, but also triggered a slide on a south facing slope that failed on facets near the ground.

The mountains around Cooke City also have a layer of facets buried 2-3 feet deep that have been reactive over the past week. This layer has been most prevalent on southerly aspects where it sits on top of an ice crust.

Along with buried facets – recently formed wind slabs will also be a problem. Upper elevation slopes leeward to west-southwest winds will be the most likely areas to encounter this problem.

Today – riding in avalanche terrain will be crapshoot. It will be easy get on a roll and bet big, but it only takes one loss to lose everything.

Today – human triggered avalanches are likely on all slopes steeper than 35 degrees which have a [**CONSIDERABLE**](#) avalanche danger. Less steep slopes have a [**MODERATE**](#) avalanche danger.

Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Range

In the Bridger Range and northern Gallatin Range, upper elevation slopes that have been heavily wind loaded will be the most likely to hold unstable snow. On Saturday, skiers near Frazier Basin in the northern Bridgers triggered small pockets of wind-blown snow in steep terrain ([photo](#)).

Although wind loaded slopes are the primary concern, facets buried 1-2 feet deep continue to make avalanches possible on non-wind loaded slopes. This layer has not produced widespread instability, but should be assessed before committing to steeper slopes.

Today, human triggered avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE**.

Doug will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or call us at 587-6984.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Saturday, February 15th is the **12th Annual King and Queen of the Ridge** Hike/Ski-a-thon fundraiser to support avalanche education in southwest Montana. Collect pledges for one, two or the most ridge hikes you can do in the five hours of competition. 100% of the proceeds go to the Friends of Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Kids and families are encouraged to hike too! Hike as an Individual or Team. [Make a Pledge](#). [Sign Up](#). [More Info](#).

EVENTS/EDUCATION

February 12, BOZEMAN: Wednesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m., MSU Procrastinator Theater, **Sidecountry IS Backcountry** lecture.

February 22, BIG SKY: Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Beehive Basin Trailhead, **Companion Rescue Clinic**. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. <https://ticketriver.com/event/9964>

More information our complete calendar of events can be found [HERE](#).