GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 8, 2020

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Wednesday, January 8th at 7:15 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Werner Wealth Management** and **Beartooth Powder Guides**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

In the last 24 hours Cooke City picked up 6" of snow and 1" fell at West Yellowstone. Wind is from the southwest at 15-20 mph with gusts of 45 mph. Mountain temperatures are in the high teens to low 20s F. Today will be cloudy with scattered snow showers, decreasing southwest wind and steady temperatures. By tomorrow morning the mountains will have 1-2" with Cooke City seeing 2-4". Snow is expected to continue into Friday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Cooke City

In the last 2 days Cooke City has gotten 1.5-2 feet of snow (1.5" snow water equivalent) and southwest wind gusting to 40 mph. Yesterday, skiers reported swirling winds were building drifts in unusual locations. Today wind is expected to lessen yet still remain strong enough to load slopes. The additional weight of new snow and windblown snow will keep the avalanche danger heightened. Natural avalanches are expected in the wind-drifted snow and triggering avalanches on skis or a sled is likely on all steep slopes. In the last decade in Cooke City, people have died playing on flat terrain when avalanches broke above them in conditions similar to today. Do not expose yourself to avalanche terrain as the danger is rated HIGH in all wind-loaded slopes and CONSIDERABLE on all others.

Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Island Park

Ian and I went into Teepee Creek yesterday and snowmobiled by braille in a whiteout. The weight of 6-8" of snow Monday night in the southern mountains, including Lionhead, has elevated the avalanche danger. Strong ridgetop wind is loading slopes even more, and weak, sugary snow at the ground is straining to support it. This is a recipe for avalanches and I do not trust the snowpack. Dave rode into Taylor Fork on Monday and saw first-hand the poor snowpack structure and impending hazard (**video**). For today, triggering avalanches is likely on steep slopes and the danger is rated CONSIDERABLE. Avoid traveling on or underneath avalanche terrain.

Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

The mountains around Big Sky and Bozeman have not gotten much snow in the last 5 days, but they are getting wind and wind-loading. Yesterday, skiers on Yellow Mountain north of Big Sky triggered an avalanche 16" deep in wind-drifted snow that ran 100 feet wide and 300 feet downslope (**details**). Also, Big Sky Ski Patrol released

a large avalanche with explosives, evidence that weak layers at the ground are slow to strengthen. This was the culprit on Saturday when 3 sledders triggered a 10 foot deep monster wind slab off Buck Ridge. Two were partially buried, but uninjured. Alex and I investigated the slide on Sunday (**video**, **photo**, **details**). At the same time, Dave and his partner saw an avalanche that was triggered by a dog breaking a cornice in Middle Basin (**video**, **photo**). Given the recent avalanche activity and continued wind-loading, triggering avalanches is possible and the danger is rated MODERATE.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can fill out an **observation form**, email us (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), leave a VM at 406-587-6984, or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out and plan to attend one or two: Events and Education Calendar.

BOZEMAN

TONIGHT! January 8, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. at REI.

TONIGHT! January 8, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association Groomer Building.

January 10 & 11, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, 6-8 p.m. on the 10th at REI and 10-2 p.m. on the 11th at History Rock. **More info and Register Here**.

January 12, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at SHINE Bottle Shop

January 15 and 16, **Introduction to Avalanche w/ Field Course**, evenings of January 15 & 16 plus one field day either January 18, 19 or 25. Snowmobile specific field day offered January 25. **More info and Register Here**.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 25, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday, **Snowpack Update and Rescue Training**. Friday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.