

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 8, 2022

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, January 8th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Yellowstone Club Community Foundation](#) and [Montana State Parks](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There are 11" of new snow in Cooke City, 4" in Big Sky, 3" near West Yellowstone, and 0-1" around Bozeman. Strong winds continued yesterday with 20-30 mph steady winds and 50-65 mph gusts out of the southwest and west. Winds will back off a little today, but remain strong and gusty. Temperatures this morning are in the teens and won't rise much. Expect clearing and mostly sunny skies today. Another inch or two of snow may fall in Cooke City this morning before snowfall ends.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Cooke City

Triggering large and dangerous avalanches is *likely* today on all steep slopes. Two ft of new snow fell in the last 48 hours (2.6" of [Snow Water Equivalent](#)). Close to 3 ft fell in the last 5 days (3.3" of SWE). Strong winds are building deep drifts. Wind-loaded slopes have been pushed past their breaking point and are avalanching naturally ([details](#) on 6 natural avalanches on Wall Mountain). A rider yesterday triggered a 2 ft deep slide that broke 100 ft wide while digging out his stuck sled, thankfully he is okay ([details](#)). Conditions are very dangerous on all slopes - we just barely missed the criteria for issuing an avalanche warning. Today is a day to avoid avalanche terrain including the runout zones beneath slide paths. You could trigger a slide from below or it could break naturally above you. The avalanche danger is [HIGH](#) on wind-loaded slopes and [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all others.



Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Island Park

Very strong winds continue to build huge, unstable drifts. Expect to find drifts in unusual places and to trigger avalanches in those drifts or on deeper weak layers. Stay off of and out from under all steep, windloaded slopes to avoid triggering a slide. Slopes without drifted snow are less worrisome, but with extreme wind speeds these slopes are few and far between and hard to confidently identify.

Weak layers near the ground have also been loaded by the new snow and could avalanche today. Riders in Taylor Fork on Thursday got audible collapses on these layers on small slopes. On larger or steeper slopes it would have avalanched. The avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#) on wind-loaded slopes and [MODERATE](#) on all others.



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Winds have been intense but there is less recent snow near Bozeman and Big Sky. Still - be skeptical of wind drifts. There were numerous small avalanches in the Bridger Range on Thursday, many slopes have stabilized since then but some have not ([photo](#), [photo](#), [photo](#)). Before riding a steep slope, make sure that any wind drifted snow is either very thin or well bonded and that there are not unstable weak layers lower in the pack. The avalanche danger is MODERATE because human triggered avalanches are possible.

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

The [West Yellowstone Beacon Park](#) is up and running! Stop by to check it out and practice with your rescue gear.

See our [education calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

January 13, 6:30 p.m., [Avalanche Awareness Night at Uphill Pursuits](#)

January 20 + Field day. Our popular [Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course](#) is perfect as a refresher or an introduction to avalanches. We are introducing a new format with four pre-recorded lectures to watch at your convenience, a live question and answer session, and a choice of a snowmobile or ski/ board based field day occurring the following two weekends.

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.