

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 28, 2015

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, January 28, at 7:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Montana Ale Works](#), host of last night's successful *Avalanche Forecaster's Beer Social Fundraiser* for the Friends of the Avalanche Center. Thanks to everyone who came out to support us! This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

After being shunned we are back in winter's embrace. Last night three inches fell around West Yellowstone and Cooke City with 1-2 inches everywhere else, except the Bridger Range which got missed. Winds are 10-20 mph out of the west to southwest with temperatures in the upper 20s. The mountains will get a few flurries this morning, then clearing skies and temperatures in the mid-30s. My fingers are crossed for a little more snow this weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

A few inches of snow falling with light winds will not affect the snow stability. This new snow fell onto a strong snowpack ([video](#)) with a rock hard surface on many slopes. The heat wave on Monday and Tuesday created a melt-freeze crust on all but the shadiest high elevation slopes. The new snow came in warm and will bond to old snow surface. Instabilities are confined to the upper 6-12 inches of the snowpack where some slopes in the southern mountains have a buried layer of surface hoar while in the north there's a crust with a thin layer of facets. These weak layers are scattered, but since they are shallowly buried it only takes a minimal effort to look for them. Yesterday, Karl Birkeland and his partner were doing research in the meadows of Bacon Rind and found the surface hoar six inches down, but it did not propagate in their stability test.

Given the stable snowpack and generally safe avalanche conditions, the danger is rated **LOW** throughout our advisory area. There are isolated slopes holding weak layers so avalanches are not impossible, just unlikely to occur. Use normal backcountry precautions and travel one at a time in avalanche terrain, carry rescue gear and take a few seconds to dig.

For more details on past weather and avalanche events, check out the "[What's Been Happening](#)" page, a new resource this season.

Mark 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 14th is the **13th 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 and More Info](#).

RESEARCH PROJECT ON UNDERSTANDING TRAVEL BEHAVIOR IN AVALANCHE TERRAIN NEEDS YOU!!

Scientists from the Snow and Avalanche Lab at Montana State University are seeking more participants for their project examining decision making and travel in avalanche terrain. Their project aims to collect GPS information (from your smartphone) and survey responses from backcountry skiers and riders to better understand what types of terrain are used, and how decisions are made. Their focus is on backcountry skiers and riders of all abilities and experience. You need not be an expert backcountry skier to participate in this research.

To Participate or get more information: www.montana.edu/snowscience/tracks or their companion site directed toward snowmobilers at: www.montana.edu/snowscience/sleds

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

Take a look at our [Education Calendar](#) for all classes being offered.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, West Yellowstone, 7 p.m., Saturday, January 31, Holiday Inn.

1-hour Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers, Lewistown, 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., Saturday, January 31, Fergus County Trade Center. More info here: <http://www.mtavalanche.com/images/15/thunderstruck-13-premiere-and-avalanche-classes>