

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Nov 15, 2013

This is Doug Chabot with early season avalanche information issued Friday, November 15th at noon. Today's bulletin is sponsored by [Montana Import Group](#) in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This information will be updated on Monday, November 18th.

Mountain Weather

Snow and cold temperatures return to southwest Montana this weekend after a week of dry, warm weather. A Canadian cold front arrives mid-day Saturday. Westerly winds will increase to 40 mph, temperatures will drop and snow will fall from Saturday afternoon into Sunday morning. Snowfall amounts are not as impressive as I had hoped. In the northern mountains three to four inches could fall with closer to six inches around West Yellowstone and Cooke City.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Seven days without snow and above freezing daytime temperatures has created marginal skiing ([photo](#)), but mostly stable avalanche conditions. Unfortunately, it has not been warm enough on all aspects and elevations to change the snow structure from weak to strong. The snowpack is still weak and this weekend's storm has the potential to make it unstable. The snowpack is in its infancy and we will be watching closely how the layers of sugary, faceted snow will react as they get buried deeper. Mark, Eric and I found one to 2 feet of snow on the ground on our tour into Beehive Basin on Wednesday ([photo](#)) and could easily identify the large grains of facets. Observations from the Bridger Range, Big Sky area, Hyalite Drainage and Cooke City show varying snow depth, but a similar snow structure ([snowpits](#)).

New snow and strong winds this weekend may raise the instability and avalanche potential, especially if we get more than my forecasted three to six inches. If snowfall amounts near a foot or close to one inch of [SWE \(snow water equivalent\)](#) folks should be extra careful about getting into avalanche terrain. Last weekend skiers had collapsing and cracking after Friday's storm and stayed clear of avalanche terrain. This weekend could be a repeat. Take a few minutes, dig to the ground and do a couple stability tests before committing to a slope. It's a good habit to get into.

DANGER RATINGS AND FIELD OBSERVATIONS

We will not be issuing danger ratings until we get more data about the snowpack. We need your help. Drop us a line with any of your snowpack observations, pictures or snowpits to mtavalanche@gmail.com. You can also call in your observations in at 587-6984.

EXTRA CREDIT READING

Some recent articles found on our [Blog](#):

[Avalanche Safety for Snowmobilers](#);

[The Rules of the Game – safety and strategy in avalanche terrain](#);

[Do phones interfere with avalanche beacons?](#) ;

[Staying on top during the Bozeman Ice Festival.](#)

EVENTS/EDUCATION

1-Hour Avalanche Awareness Classes

BOZEMAN, November 19, 6:30 p.m. at REI

BIG TIMBER, November 19, 7 p.m. at Big Timber High School

BILLINGS, November 20, 6 p.m. at Basecamp

BIG SKY, November 20, 7 p.m. at Grizzly Outfitters

BOZEMAN, November 21, 6 p.m. at Bozeman Public Library (30 min; Avalaunch)

LEWISTOWN, November 23, 3 p.m. at Eagles Club

WEST YELLOWSTONE, November 26, 6 p.m. at West Yellowstone Conference Hotel

BOZEMAN, December 2, 7 p.m. at Northern Lights Trading Company

Go to our [EDUCATION CALENDAR](#) for details and more courses.

Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course, MSU; 4, 5 and 7 December

Info and registration: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/7112>

Snowmobiler Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course, West Yellowstone: 19 and 20 December

Info and registration: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/7116>