

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Jan 8, 2014

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, January 8 at 7:30 a.m. **Cooke City Motorsports and Yamaha**, in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**, sponsors today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Yesterdays scattered snowfall dropped 2-3 inches in the northern areas and an inch in the south. Winds have calmed substantially and are blowing 15-20 mph out of the west to southwest at the ridgetops. Temperatures are in the high teens up north and near 10F in the south. Today will become mostly cloudy and by tomorrow morning I expect another 1-3 inches of snow with light winds and temperatures reaching into the mid-20s.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

The few inches of low density snow (5%) that fell will not affect the snowpack's stability. This morning I breathed a sigh of relief when I saw that the winds have been light and not loading slopes. However, not having things get worse is not the same thing as having it get better. Yesterday, an MSU graduate student collected a spreadsheet worth of stability data around Cedar Mountain in the Madison Range. He cut out 28 Extended Column Tests and had 27 of them propagate on a layer of very weak, sugary facets a foot off the ground. The tests broke with moderate force indicating poor stability ([snowpit](#)). He also had a collapse/whumph as he traveled to the test slope which is a major sign of instability. A "whumph" is an avalanche on the flats; if the slope was tilted it would have slid. On Monday, the same researcher got similar propagation results on Bacon Rind in the southern Madison Range ([snowpit](#)).

Weak snow near the ground plagues southwest Montana. Cooke City has a few weak layers mid-pack too. Regardless of the exact location of this layer, it's important to remember that both skiers and snowmobilers can trigger avalanches. Over the weekend natural avalanche activity was seen around Cooke City, up Hyalite, in Beehive Basin and also on Buck Ridge in MacAtee Basin. Natural avalanches trump all other observations and warn us that slopes are very unstable and dangerous. Our [photo collection](#) will show you exactly what I'm referring to.

On Monday, Mark investigated the avalanche on Saddle Peak. He made a great [video](#) explaining what happened. Large grains of facets were underlying a thick, dense slab of snow; a common and unstable snow structure right now ([snowpit](#)). Given signs of instability like natural and human triggered avalanches, whumphs and poor stability tests, the avalanche danger today continues to be rated [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all slopes.

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.

ANDROID APP

If you have an android phone or tablet, you can download our new free app. It's a slick way to get the advisory. [Search Google Play for GNFAC](#). An iOS version is coming soon. Stay tuned.

MONTANA ALE WORKS FUNDRAISER DINNER

Montana Ale Works is hosting the 6th Annual Fundraiser Dinner for the Friends of the Avalanche Center. Chef Roth is creating an elegant, multiple course menu. His culinary creation will be paired with wines from the Ale Works cellar. Seating is limited to 40. Get your tickets early. <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/9572>

EVENTS/EDUCATION

TONIGHT, BOZEMAN: Wednesday, 6:30-8 p.m. at REI, **Sidecountry IS Backcountry** lecture.

January 9, BOZEMAN: Thursday, 6-7 p.m. at Mystery Ranch, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

January 9, HELENA: Thursday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Exploration Works, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

January 11, WEST YELLOWSTONE: Saturday, 7-8 p.m. at Holiday Inn, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

January 13, DILLON: Monday, 7-8 p.m., School of Outreach, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

January 15, BOZEMAN: Wednesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m., MSU Procrastinator Theater, **Sidecountry IS Backcountry** lecture.

January 16, BOZEMAN: Thursday, 6-8 p.m., Beall Park, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness and Transceiver Practice**.

January 18 & 19, BOZEMAN: Saturday, 12-4:30 p.m. Bozeman Public Library; Sunday, all day in the field, **Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course**. Pre-registration is required: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/8565-bozeman--snowmo-intro-to-avalanches-w-field>

January 22,23 & 25, BOZEMAN: Wednesday and Thursday 7-9:30 p.m.; all day Saturday in field, **Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course**. Pre-registration is required: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/7113>

January 22 & 23 & 26, BILLINGS and COOKE CITY: Wednesday and Thursday 6-9 p.m.; all day Sunday in field, **Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course**. Pre-registration is required: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/9380>

January 25, WEST YELLOWSTONE: Saturday, 7-8 p.m. at Holiday Inn, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

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