

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Tue Jan 10, 2012

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Tuesday, January 10 at 7:30 a.m. This advisory is sponsored by the Yellowstone Club Community Foundation in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Under sunny skies temperatures reached the mid 30's yesterday with westerly winds averaging 10-20 mph. Today will be different. A dynamic and moist cold front will roll through this afternoon bringing snowfall through tonight. West winds have already increased to 20-30 mph and will notch higher while temperatures fall to the single digits this evening. The mountains should get 3-6 inches by tomorrow morning; however, it's a strong northwest flow and dare I suggest the Bridgers may get a wee bit extra?

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

The Bridger, Madison and Gallatin Ranges, the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone and the mountains around Cooke City:

The chances of triggering an avalanche have decreased significantly over the last few days. We are not finding nor hearing of instability like cracking, collapsing and natural avalanche activity. The last human triggered avalanche we know about was on Saturday in the Cabin Creek area of the southern Madison Range.

Snowmobilers triggered a slope that narrowly missed a rider parked in the runout zone ([photo 1](#), [photo 2](#)). On Sunday, three of us toured into Bacon Rind and found plenty of faceted snow, but stubborn stability test results ([snowpit](#)). We could still see cracks and buckling on the snow surface from eight days ago, but could not get anything to move.

Yesterday, my partner and I toured into Hyalite in the northern Gallatin Range. This zone has some of the strongest snow around, but I was still able to find facets surviving. On a south facing slope the weakest layer were small grained facets sitting on an ice crust 18 inches from the surface ([video of test](#)). On northeast aspects I could not find this layer. At the ground I could still scoop out large facets, but these were not showing instability in my extended column tests ([snowpit](#)).

Although the likelihood of triggering an avalanche has diminished since the avalanche warning on New Year's Day, the snow structure is still weak. Sugary, unbonded snow is not our friend, no matter how well it's behaving. Because it is still possible to trigger an avalanche, the danger is rated **MODERATE** throughout the entire advisory area today.

I 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.

Beacon Parks

The Friends of the Avalanche Center installed a Beacon Training Park outside West Yellowstone last Friday. It's located south of town on the main snowmobile trail. Stop by and do a quick practice before heading off into the mountains!

Events/Education

Bozeman

[1-hr Avalanche Awareness Lecture](#). Wednesday, January 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at REI.

[20/20 Hindsight - Lessons from recent accidents](#). Tuesday, January 17th, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Montana Import Group

Big Timber

[1-hr Avalanche Awareness Lecture](#). Tuesday, January 10, 7-8 p.m. at Big Timber High School.

Cooke City

[1-hr Avalanche Awareness Lecture](#). Saturday, January 14, 5-6:00 p.m. at Cooke City Community Center.

Cody, Wyoming

[Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course](#). Lectures on Saturday, January 14 at Mountain Valley Motorsports with an all day field session near Cooke City on Sunday, January 15. Advanced registration IS REQUIRED.

Great Falls

[1-hr Avalanche Awareness Lecture](#) Thursday, January 19th, 7-8 pm at Greenup Performance

Billings

[Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course](#). Lectures on Tuesday, January 24 from 6-9 p.m. at Hi-Tech Motor Sports with an all day field session in Cooke City on Sunday, Jan 29. PRE-REGISTER BY JAN 23 at Hi-Tech!! Register with Sharon at 406-652-0090; hitech@hi-techmotorsports.com.