

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Nov 25, 2009

This is Eric Knoff from the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center with an early season Avalanche Information Bulletin issued at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, November 25. **Jeff King at Edwards Jones Investments** in cooperation with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center** sponsor this bulletin. This information will be updated on Friday Afternoon. Uphill traffic is not allowed at Big Sky or Moonlight Basin Ski areas. Bridger Bowl will be opening Friday through Sunday and will be doing avalanche control work today and tomorrow. Check in with the Bridger Bowl office for more details.

Mountain Weather

Southwest Montana has remained in the grip of a northwest flow. Since Monday a trace of new snow fell with westerly ridge top winds blowing up to 30 mph. Winds and cloud cover will decrease as a ridge of high pressure pushes in from the west. Thanksgiving day looks like the best weather day of the week with clear skies and highs reaching into the 40's F. Winds should remain calm today, but are forecasted to blow westerly at 20-30 mph Wednesday night into Thursday. The next possible shot of snow will be Saturday night into Sunday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Overcast skies and mild temperatures have kept the new snow from this past weekend in good shape. Yesterday, Doug, Mark and I dug a pit north of Bridger Bowl and found three feet of well bonded snow. Our stability tests did not indicate any real weaknesses within the snowpack. We proceeded to ski Wolverine Cirque, north of Bridger Bowl and found soft stable conditions over the entire slope.

Other Skiers in the Bridgers and Northern Gallatin Range also reported stable conditions on both east and west facing aspects, with the best skiing being on mid-elevation slopes protected from the wind.

The Madison Range and mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City continue to hold a weaker snowpack. The old October snow has become faceted and has created an unstable base. On Monday, the Big Sky Ski Patrol reported avalanche activity in the Challenger area which is subject to west-northwest wind loading. These avalanches were a foot deep, ran 300-500 vertical feet and produced debris piles 2-4 feet thick. Areas of wind loading will persist throughout the Madison Range and mountains around Cooke City and should be avoided on steep upper elevation slopes. Use caution when traveling in the backcountry and always carry rescue gear and know how to use it.

If you get out in the backcountry give us a call or send us an email with your observations. You can reach us at 587-6984 or at mtavalanche@gmail.com.

AVALANCHE EDUCATION

Basic Avalanche Awareness at MSU (12 Hour Course)

Evening Sessions: December 2 and 3, 2009, 7:00pm to 9:30pm, at MSU in Leon Johnson Hall, room 339.

Field Session: December 5, 2009, 9:15am to 3:00pm, at Bridger Bowl Ski Area.

Cost for the entire workshop is \$25.00 (\$5 each evening and \$15 for the field session). **Registration is not required for the evening sessions, but is required for the field session, which can be done at either of the**

evening sessions.

Basic Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers (12 hour Course):

Bozeman:

Evening Sessions: Wed and Thursday, December 2 and 3, 2009, 7-9:30 pm; **Team Bozeman**

December 13 is an all day field session, exact location TBD. (\$30 Donation)

No Registration Required.

One Hour awareness:

A basic one hour awareness class will be offered at Red Line Sports in Butte, Dec 9th at 6 p.m.

A full listing of the avalanche classes offered in southwest Montana can be found on the education page of our website: <http://www.mtavalanche.com/education>