

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Dec 9, 2014

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Tuesday, December 9 at 7:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Edward Jones](#) and [Bountiful Table](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Today's weather is dominated by high pressure which is basically, sunny, warmish, calm and boring. This morning, mountain temperatures are in the mid-20s as southwest winds blow 15-25 mph at the ridgetops. For today, winds will lessen and temperatures will climb into the low 30s with clouds increasing tonight, but sadly, no snow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

No new snow and warm temperatures are bad for the psyche but good for the snowpack which has gotten an extended holiday to rest and gain strength. The mountains have average depths of four feet around Cooke City and two to three feet elsewhere. No matter the location, sugary facets at the ground are the weakest layer and our biggest concern. These facets were responsible for all our previous avalanche activity, but recent warmth and a lack of snowfall allowed them to start strengthening and bonding. Like a delinquent schoolboy who promises to do better, we are warily keeping an eye on it yet currently pleased with its progress ([video](#)).

I was in Cooke City on Sunday and found the snowpack to be trending toward stability, but not quite there. On Saturday a snowmobiler triggered and was caught in a slide on a heavily wind-loaded slope on Crown Butte ([photo](#)) that buried his sled, but not him. I originally reported this as a natural slide, but a rider in the party emailed a correction. In the other mountain ranges there has not been human triggered avalanche activity in ten days, but the poor snow structure ([snowpit](#)) is still talking to us with the occasional collapse, whumph and poor test score. Given the possibility of triggering avalanches, the avalanche danger is rated **[MODERATE](#)** on all slopes throughout our advisory area today.

The weak layer at the ground should be tested before hitting a steep slope. I just wrote an article that I [posted on our blog](#) titled "Put Your Shovel in the Snow!" which explains this in more detail.

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.

Have a Smartphone or Tablet? The Friends of the Avalanche Center just published two FREE apps so you can get the latest avalanche information, videos and photos: [iOS 8 GNFAC App](#); [Android app](#)

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

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

Avalanche Awareness (1-hour), Wednesday, December 10, 6:30 p.m. at REI, Bozeman

Avalanche Awareness (1-hour), Thursday, December 11, 6 p.m. at Summit Motorsports, Bozeman

Weather Workshop, Thursday, December 11, 6:30 p.m. at REI, Bozeman (
<http://www.rei.com/event/62227/session/102926>)

Fundraiser at Katabatic Brewing, Tuesday, December 16, 4-8 p.m., Livingston

Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice, Wednesday, December 17, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Beall Park, Bozeman

Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course, West Yellowstone: Dec 18 and 19, 2014:
<https://www.ticketriver.com/event/12955>

Five hours of lectures are followed by a full day field course. Topics covered include: avalanche terrain recognition, the affect weather has on avalanche hazard, the development of the mountain snowpack, decision making skills, and basic search and rescue procedures.