GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 9, 2021

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, January 9th at 7:15 a.m. This forecast is sponsored by **Beartooth Powder Guides** and **Montana State Parks**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There is no new snow. Winds shifted yesterday from the south to north and northeast at 5-15 mph. Winds in Bridger Range are westerly with gusts to 20 mph. Temperatures this morning are in the single digits and low teens F. Winds will remain generally light and northerly today. Temperatures will rise into the mid-20s F. No snow is in the forecast until the middle of next week.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Bridger Range | Madison Range | Southern Gallatin | Lionhead Range | Island Park

Large, dangerous, human triggered avalanches are likely today. Yesterday, an avalanche was triggered remotely (from a distance) in Cinnamon Creek (**details**), and there were many large collapses reported in the northern Madison and Bridger Ranges including some cracks breaking 300 ft away from the trigger point (**details**, **details**). Yesterday, Alex and I saw 9 human triggered and natural avalanches on Buck Ridge that broke since Tuesday. A slide triggered on Thursday afternoon broke 2 ft deep and 1000 ft wide (**video**, **photo**).

All of this activity is happening on the weak snow at the ground. We're on the tail end of the largest loading event of the year. The snowpack is telling us it needs time to adjust and stabilize. With snow this weak, stabilization is a slow process. For now, the snowpack remains touchy. Stay off of and out from under steep slopes. You can trigger slides from the bottom and they may break wider than you'd expect.

Human triggered avalanches are likely and the avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE.

Northern Gallatin

The overall story is the same in the northern Gallatin Range, aside from recent snowfall totals. There is weak snow at the ground capped by recent snowfall. With less new snow, the snowpack is not as widely reactive, but if triggered a slide will be just as dangerous. Watch for and search out signs of instability before exposing yourself to steep slopes. The avalanche danger is MODERATE today.

Cooke City

Yesterday, a group of skiers triggered an avalanche on The Fin, near Cooke City (**photo**, **details**). Three people were caught and partially buried. One skier was buried face down and briefly lost consciousness while another was injured severely enough to require a helicopter evacuation. In a separate incident, a skier triggered and was carried by a slide that broke 2 ft deep and ran 500 vertical ft on the south face of Meridian Peak (**details**). While weak snow is not widespread, clearly some slopes harbor an unstable recipe. These avalanches are good reminders to stay conservative in your terrain selection, vigilant in your snowpack assessment, and diligent with your safe travel protocols. Only expose one person at a time to steep slopes. Today, human triggered avalanches are ***possible*** and the avalanche danger is rated MODERATE.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our **education calendar** for an up to date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

Every Saturday in Cooke City, FREE snowpack update and rescue practice at the Round Lake Warming Hut between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. **Poster with More Info**.

Monday, January 11, 6-7 p.m. The Friends of the Avalanche Center will offer a FREE 1-hr Avalanche Awareness Talk in partnership with Uphill Pursuits. The talk will be given via a live ZOOM session. Please click the link below to join the webinar: Join HERE.

Tuesday, January 19, 6-7 p.m. The Friends of the Avalanche Center will offer a FREE 1-hr Avalanche Awareness Talk in partnership with the University of Montana Western School of Outreach. The talk will be a live, ONLINE event. Join us HERE.

January 20 & 21 (plus field sessions the following weekends), **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course**. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge). Register **here**.