

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Jan 9, 2018

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Tuesday, January 9th at 6:45 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Community Food Co-op](#) and [Yellowstone Club Community Foundation](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. mountain temperatures are in the 20s with southwest winds (west in the Bridger Range) averaging 10-20 mph, gusting 35-45 mph. Today, a moist southwest flow will bring snow and winds of 20-30 mph with mountain temperatures hovering near 20F. The storm will arrive this morning around Lionhead and slowly move north throughout the day. By tomorrow morning the mountains around West Yellowstone will have 6-8" of new snow with 4-6" elsewhere.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Madison Range Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City

From Big Sky to West Yellowstone and Cooke City the snowpack is gaining strength at different rates. Yesterday, snowmobile guides found instability in their tests in Teepee Creek in the southern Madison Range when faceted snow broke clean 2' deep ([photo](#)). In the northern Madison Range we have reports of stable snow, most notably in Beehive Basin, yet on Sunday on Buck Ridge, Alex had a mixed bag with one pit stable and another not ([video](#)), while nearby, a skier on Cinnamon Mountain had collapses in a shallow snowpack. Cooke City has the deepest snow and largest avalanches last week, some 4' deep ([photo](#)). Skiers were still getting collapses there on Saturday and it's not out of the question to get another today. Think of collapses as avalanches on flat terrain; these are major red flags.

The Lionhead area near West Yellowstone has the weakest and thinnest snowpack in our advisory area and will not withstand a punishing storm. Just a little weight, such as 1" of [snow water equivalent](#), could tip the scales and create dangerous avalanche conditions. A week ago I had lots of collapsing, cracking and poor stability test scores above Hebgen Lake on a layer of facets 2' deep ([video](#), [pit profile](#)). I expect today will not be as reactive, but I know better than to trust the poor structure holding the weight of much new snow. Eric and I are headed to Lionhead today since this area concerns us the most with the approaching storm.

For today, stay out of avalanche terrain if you get collapsing, cracking or poor test scores. Avalanches are still possible and the danger is rated **MODERATE**. If the storm arrives as predicted, around West Yellowstone the avalanche danger will rise with new snow and wind.



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin

Skiers and climbers are reporting good conditions which is similar Alex's assessment from Saturday on Mount Blackmore ([video](#)). Although avalanches are unlikely, they are not impossible on slopes that are shallower. For example, on Sunday, skiers on Divide Peak backed off a thinly covered slope when they got facets breaking

under an ice crust 1.5' deep in their stability test. I love hearing stories like this, because digging saves lives. For today, avalanches are unlikely and the danger is rated [LOW](#).

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, drop a line via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram ([#gnfacobs](#)).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

[Events and Education Calendar](#)

BOZEMAN

TONIGHT, Jan. 9, **Women's Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Clinic**, 6-8 p.m. at Beall Park

Jan. 12 and 13, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, [Info and Register](#)

Jan. 15, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. at Yellowstone Motorsports

Jan. 17, 18 and 20 or 21, **Introduction to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#)

Jan. 24, 25 and 27, **Advanced Avalanche Workshop w. Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#)

Feb. 9 and 10, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, [Info and Register](#)

WEST YELLOWSTONE

Jan. 20, **Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn Conference Center

BIG TIMBER

Jan. 11, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. at Sweet Grass County High School

BUTTE

Jan. 13, **Rescue Clinic**, 10 a.m. at Homestake Lodge

Dillon

Jan. 16, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6:30-8 p.m. at U.M. Western Library

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday, **Current Conditions Update and Avalanche Rescue**, Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at The Antler's Lodge in January. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.