

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Sun Mar 27, 2011

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Sunday, March 27, at 7:30 a.m. Northern Lights Trading Company, in cooperation with the Friends of the Avalanche Center, sponsors today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning 2-3 inches of snow has accumulated in the mountains around Cooke City and West Yellowstone. The mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky picked up a trace to one inch. This morning temperatures are in the high teens to mid 20s F and will climb into the 30s by this afternoon. Winds are light out of the SSE at 5-15 mph with the exception of Hyalite where they are blowing 20-30 mph out of the SSW. Today, a southerly flow will deliver snow showers to the southern mountains where an additional 1-2 inches are possible; the northern ranges could pick up around an inch.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

A lack of significant snowfall over the past six days has allowed the snowpack to work closer to equilibrium, helping reduce avalanche activity. The scales could still be tipped - if a skier or rider found the right spot - on the right slope - at the right time; however, the possibility of triggering a slide is decreasing with every passing day. A more immediate concern is the wide variety of surface conditions that have developed over the past few days. Yesterday, I toured on the west side of the Bridger Range and experienced everything from frozen sastrugi to wind crusts, sun crusts and condensed powder. A plus to the rather adventurous conditions was the deep, stable snowpack we found in our snowpit ([video](#)). Typically the snowpack on the west side of the Bridger Range is shallow and weak, so I was encouraged by what we found ([profile](#)).

Stable conditions are allowing skiers and riders to venture deeper into avalanche terrain. Although the likelihood of triggering a slide is small, the possibility does exist. Avoiding steep rocky slopes and slopes directly under cornices will be the best way to avoid triggering a slide. No matter how stable conditions get – following safe backcountry protocol is essential. Now is no time to let your guard down, accidents have a tendency to happen when you least expect them.

Today, small avalanches in isolated areas or extreme terrain are possible, but generally safe avalanche conditions exist and the avalanche danger is rated [LOW](#).

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.

Ride in honor of Steve Green

Next weekend on Saturday, April 2nd, ride Buck Creek Ridge in honor of Steve Green who died in an avalanche last April in McAtee Basin. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the Buck Creek parking lot near the Corral.