

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Feb 3, 2014

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Monday, February 3 at 7:30 a.m. The [Outlaw Partners](#) and [Beartooth Powder Guides](#) sponsor today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Overnight 1-2 inches of snow fell in most mountain locations. Snow has tapered off this morning but will pick back up this afternoon. The mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky will see 2-4 inches and the southern mountains will likely receive 4-6 inches by tomorrow morning.

Currently, temperatures are in the single digits F and winds are light out of west-southwest. Today, temps will warm into the upper teens to low twenties F under cloudy skies. Winds will continue to blow 5-15 mph out of the west-southwest. Today will be a good day to get out and enjoy the balmy weather. The mercury will plummet this evening with Tuesday/Wednesday looking to be the coldest days we've seen in over a month.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

If the snowpack was given even half the pounding that Seattle gave to Denver last night, it would likely produce an avalanche. It was expected to be a much closer game, but the actual outcome was far different than what was predicted. Our snowpack shares similarities to this in that it is capable of delivering unexpected results.

Today, there are two main avalanche problems to look out for. The more recognizable and predictable problem will be wind slabs. A brief period of moderate west-southwest winds twenty four hours ago produced isolated wind drifts on upper elevation leeward slopes. Yesterday, the Big Sky Patrol triggered numerous recently formed wind slabs during control work. This problem will be most prevalent in alpine terrain.

A trickier problem will be a layer of facets buried under the new snow. This layer exists on some slopes, but not all. The variable distribution of this layer can make stability assessment tricky.

Yesterday, skiers outside of Cooke City experienced cracking-collapsing and triggered a few small slides on north and east facing slopes that failed on the new snow-old snow interface ([photo](#)). Just a couple of days ago, my partner and I found similar results on south and west facing slopes near Lulu Pass ([video](#), [photo](#)). On Saturday, a skier north of Bridger Bowl triggered a small slide near the Dog Leg Chute that failed on this layer. Yesterday, the Big Sky Ski Patrol also observed a natural avalanche in the upper A-Z chutes. This slide broke 100 ft. wide, 1-2 feet deep and failed on a thin layer of facets under the new snow.

On a positive note – assessing the strength and distribution of this layer is not difficult. It only takes a few minutes to dig 1-2 feet down and conduct a quick stability test. If this layer is present, it would be best to ride in low angle terrain or move to another area.

Isolated slopes may have facets near the ground that still hold the potential to produce large avalanches. This layer has not been active lately, but should not be entirely ruled out.

Today, human triggered avalanches are likely on wind loaded slopes and slopes steeper than 35 degrees which have a **CONSIDERABLE** avalanche danger. All other slopes have a **MODERATE** avalanche danger.

Doug 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.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Saturday, February 15th is the **12th Annual King and Queen of the Ridge** Hike/Ski-a-thon fundraiser to support avalanche education in southwest Montana. Collect pledges for one, two or the most ridge hikes you can do in the five hours of competition. 100% of the proceeds go to the Friends of Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center. Kids and families are encouraged to hike too! Hike as an Individual or Team. **[Make a Pledge](#)**. **[Sign Up](#)**. **[More Info](#)**.

EVENTS/EDUCATION

February 6, BOZEMAN: Thursday, 6-8 p.m., Beall Park; **Women's Specific Avalanche Awareness Class and Transceiver Practice**.

February 8, BUCK RIDGE: Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., **Companion Rescue Clinic for Snowmobilers**, Pre-Registration is required. **<https://www.ticketriver.com/event/9446>**

February 8, WEST YELLOWSTONE: Saturday, 7-8 p.m., Holiday Inn, **1-hour Avalanche Awareness** lecture.

February 12, BOZEMAN: Wednesday, 6:30-7:30 p.m., MSU Procrastinator Theater, **Sidecountry IS Backcountry** lecture.

February 22, BIG SKY: Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., Beehive Basin Trailhead, **Companion Rescue Clinic**. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. **<https://ticketriver.com/event/9964>**

More information our complete calendar of events can be found **[HERE](#)**.