

# **GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 12, 2019**

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast issued on Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Alpine Orthopedics](#) and [Swiss Fit](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

## Mountain Weather

High pressure continues to dominate the weather pattern. As a result, strong temperature inversions exist across the forecast area. Currently, the top of Bridger Bowl is ten degrees warmer than the base area. At 5 a.m., mountain temps are in the 20's F and winds are blowing 5-15 mph out of west-northwest. Today, clear skies and plenty of sunshine will allow temps to warm into the 30's F and wind will stay light to moderate out of west-northwest. High pressure continues through the weekend.

## Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



**Southern Madison   Southern Gallatin   Lionhead Range   Island Park**

Yesterday, Alex and his partner rode in the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone and observed numerous avalanches that occurred earlier in the week ([avalanche activity page](#)). Some failed naturally while others were human triggered. Avalanche activity has started to taper off, but a frighteningly weak snowpack structure continues to make human triggered avalanches possible ([photo](#)).

Weak, sugary facets make up the foundation of most slopes in the southern ranges, in turn creating poor stability and tough riding conditions ([video](#)). All steep slopes should be considered suspect and approached with caution. Terrain management is the best approach to safe riding today. Keep slope angles less than 35 degrees and avoid riding on low angle slopes connected to steeper slopes above.

Stability is gradually improving, but a weak snowpack structure makes human triggered avalanches possible and the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE**.



**Bridger Range   Northern Gallatin   Northern Madison   Cooke City**

Stability is improving but not perfect in the northern mountains and Cooke City area. Reports of cracking/collapsing and unstable test results continue to trickle in. Yesterday, skiers in Hyalite got unstable test results with an ECTP6 ([photo](#)), and also observed localized collapsing. Another group in the Northern Bridgers found a thin, weak snowpack on a north-facing slope which propagated in stability tests ([photo](#)). Although we haven't received reports of avalanche activity in the last few days, these observations are a good reminder a poor snowpack structure exists on some slopes in the northern mountains.

The weakest snow can be found in areas where the snowpack is less than 3' deep ([video](#), [video](#)). Before committing to avalanche terrain, put your shovel in the snow and do a quick stability test to assess the snowpack structure.

Today it may be possible to trigger avalanches in steep terrain on slopes with buried weak layers. For this reason the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE**.

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

## **Avalanche Fatality, Togwotee Pass Wyoming**

On Wednesday, a snowmobiler was killed in an avalanche on Togwotee Pass northeast of Jackson Hole. Preliminary details from the Bridger Teton Avalanche Center can be found [here](#). The BTAC will have an updated accident report in the near future. This is the third U.S. avalanche fatality in the past week. Our condolences go out to the friends and family of the victim.

## **Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events**

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#).

### **BOZEMAN**

January 16, 17 and 19 or 20, **Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#).

January 23, 24 and 26, **Advanced Avalanche Workshop w/ Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#).

February 2, **King and Queen of the Ridge** at Bridger Bowl (fundraiser). [Register with Bridger](#) to hike in the event, and [create a pledge page](#) to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

### **WEST YELLOWSTONE**

January 12 and 26, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers**, 7-8 p.m. Holiday Inn West Yellowstone.

### **DILLON**

January 22, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. U.M. Western Library.

### **BILLINGS**

January 22, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. The Base Camp, Billings.

### **COOKE CITY**

Every Friday and Saturday, **Rescue Training and Snowpack Update**. Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.