

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Jan 12, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, January 12th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Spark R&D](#) and [Klim](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

There are 2-4" of new snow near Big Sky, West Yellowstone, Island Park, and Cooke City. The mountains around Bozeman have 1" of new snow. Winds are 10-25 mph out of the southwest and west, with gusts of 30-45 mph (and up to 75 mph near Island Park). Temperatures plummeted overnight near Bozeman into the negative teens and 20s F. Temperatures elsewhere are in the single digits this morning, but will drop into the negatives through the day. Winds will remain westerly today and be light in Bridger Range and moderate-strong elsewhere. Snowfall will finish up this morning with only an additional trace to an inch expected.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Madison Range Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

Human triggered avalanches are likely today. A very weak snowpack has been loaded by snow and wind over the last week and is avalanching, including being triggered from a distance.

Yesterday, in the Taylor Fork, I triggered an avalanche that broke 30 ft away on the first steep slope I got near, while walking on a flat ridgeline ([video](#)). Throughout the day we got cracks shooting out 50-100 ft on every slope with even a hint of wind effect and triggered another small slide that broke 2.5 ft deep on a short slope. Doug and his partner triggered a 1,000' wide avalanche on Tuesday at Lionhead ([video, pics and observation](#)). These are clear demonstrations of how weak and touchy the snowpack is right now. These slides were breaking on surface hoar beneath the new snow, but slides could also break on the weak faceted layers throughout the lower snowpack.

We've known for weeks and months that the snowpack was remarkably weak and it was going to avalanche once we built a cohesive slab on top ([weak snow recap video](#)). We've now built that slab. Don't push your luck today. Avalanches can break wide and be triggered from afar. Avoid traveling on or beneath any steep slope.

The avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#).



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin

The northern Gallatin Range has received less new snow than elsewhere and despite lots of new snow yesterday in the Bridger Range it was very low density and noncohesive ([Bridger Range video](#)). There are still a variety of avalanche concerns to watch out for. Dangerous sluffs can be triggered in areas with more new snow or gouging into the unconsolidated lower snowpack on very steep slopes ([Buck Ridge video](#)). Also watch out for cohesive slabs of wind drifted snow, because they are almost assuredly sitting over weak layers. Seeing shooting

cracks, collapses, or recent avalanches are all bullseye evidence of unstable conditions and should lead to a quick retreat from steep slopes. Do a quick snowpack test to double check that you're not missing something. Give yourself a big safety margin with these dangerously frigid temperatures.

Human triggered avalanches are possible and the avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

Every weekend in Cooke City: Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.

We offer *Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Session* courses targeted towards non-motorized travelers in [January](#) and one geared towards [motorized users](#). Sign up early before they fill up.

January 16, at 4 p.m., **Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund - Movie Night**, The Waypoint, Big Sky. Information [HERE](#).

January 18, 4 p.m., **Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund - Pint Night**, Beehive Basin Brewery, Big Sky. Information [HERE](#).

[King & Queen 2024](#), **3 February 2024**. Form a team or sign up individually to hike laps on the Bridger Bowl ridge to fundraise for the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

[Loss in the Outdoors](#) is a support group for those affected by loss and grief related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 3rd

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for the top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes*. Info is [HERE](#). Race participants for the February 4th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#).