

# **GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Oct 12, 2017**

## **AVALANCHE FATALITY**

On October 7, two skiers were caught, one was fully buried and killed, in an avalanche on Imp Peak in the southern Madison Range. They triggered an avalanche near the north [couloir](#) at 10,000' while ascending on skis with skins. The avalanche was 1-2' deep, approximately 150' wide, and 300' long. The slope where the avalanche released was 38-45° steep with a north-northeast [aspect](#) ([photo](#), [photo](#)).

This area received one foot of snow since October 1<sup>st</sup>, which was on top of 3-4 feet of dense snow that fell since September 15<sup>th</sup>. The avalanche was a hard [slab](#) of wind-drifted snow that collapsed on a layer of soft old snow underneath, and slid on the old snow from late September ([photo](#)).

Both skiers were caught, skier 1 was partially buried and skier 2 was fully buried. Skier 1 searched for skier 2, was unable to locate her, and then hiked himself out from the area. On Monday, Gallatin County Search and Rescue recovered the body of skier 2. They located her with avalanche probes, buried 3' deep. Our deepest condolences go out to the family and friends of the skiers involved.

Video of the accident investigation: <https://youtu.be/OhTV6YMPOZc>

A full report will be released very soon.

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Good Morning. This is Eric Knoff with pre-season avalanche, weather, and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center issued on Thursday, October 12<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m. This bulletin is sponsored by [The Friends of the Avalanche Center](#) and sponsors of the [Powder Blast on October 27, 2017](#).

### Mountain Weather

Cool, wet weather continues to impact southwest Montana. Overnight, the mountains around Bozeman received 3-5" of new snow totaling .3-.4" of SWE. The mountains around Big Sky and West Yellowstone picked up 1-3" of new snow totaling .1-.2" of SWE while the mountains around Cooke City got missed. At 9 a.m. mountain temps range from the upper teens to mid-20s F and winds are blowing 15-25 mph out of the W-SW. This morning, snow showers will linger in the mountains, but no real accumulation is expected. By this afternoon, skies will become partly cloudy and temps will warm into the 30s F. Winds will continue to blow 10-25 mph out of the W-SW. Another weak storm system is scheduled to impact the region Friday into Saturday. The mountains could see another 2-4" of new snow by Saturday morning.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#)   [Gallatin Range](#)   [Madison Range](#)   [Lionhead Range](#)   [Cooke City](#)

All the necessary ingredients for avalanches currently exist in the mountains. New snow combined with moderate to strong wind out of the W-SW will elevate the avalanche hazard over the next few days. Wind loaded slopes will be the most avalanche prone and should be approached with caution. Areas of wind deposited snow likely exist below upper elevation ridgelines or on the leeward side of cross-loaded terrain features ([photo](#)). This

presents a quandary because wind-loaded slopes offer the best skiing, but are also the most likely to produce a slide.

It's important to remember that even small avalanches can injure or kill. It doesn't matter if you're a beginner or expert, a skier or hunter, avalanches don't discriminate. With an existing avalanche danger present in the mountains, it's necessary to follow the three simple rules of backcountry travel:

- Carry rescue gear (beacon, shovel and probe) and know how to use it.
- Only expose one person at a time in avalanche terrain, both heading up and sliding down.
- Always watch your partner from a safe location.

With snow on the ground, now is a good time to sharpen our minds and check our gear. Replace batteries in your beacon, recharge your airbag, make sure probe poles and shovel parts fit together smoothly. There are many avalanche education opportunities this fall. Check out the full education offerings [HERE](#).

This month we are preparing for winter, scheduling avalanche classes, and setting up weather stations. If you get outside send us an observation via our website, email ([mtavalanche@gmail.com](mailto:mtavalanche@gmail.com)), phone (406-587-6984), or tag us on Instagram (#gnfacobs).

### **Powder Blast Fund-raiser**

Friday, 27 October, 6:30 p.m. at the Emerson Cultural Center. [Tickets and Info](#)

**Grizzly Outfitters** of Big Sky is title sponsor of this year's 19th Annual Powder Blast. **Mystery Ranch, World Boards, Community Food Co-op, and Spark R&D** are key sponsors along with **Alpine Orthopedics, Stronghold Fabrication, Highline Partners, and Marcie Hahn-Knoff Real Estate. Javaman, Edward Jones and Buck Products** are other long-time PB supporters.

Join us for the best fundraiser of the year! All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Avalanche Center which supports avalanche awareness, education and information throughout southwest Montana.

Your \$30 donation gets you an unforgettable evening at the Emerson Cultural Center.

Beer from **Katabatic Brewing Company**; Wine from **Montana Ale Works**; Dinner by **Bountiful Table**; Music by **DJ Missy O'Malley**

**And the best silent auction of outdoor gear in the valley!**

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[Events and Education Calendar](#) - Stay tuned as we will update our calendar with more classes over the next few months.

1 November, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at REI Bozeman

6 December, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at REI Bozeman

7 December, **Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice**, 6-8 p.m. at Beall Park, Bozeman

Nov. 29, 30 and Dec. 2, 3 or 9, **Introduction to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#)

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

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](#)