

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Jan 16, 2015

Good morning. This is Mark Staples with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Friday, January 16, at 7:30 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Cooke City Motorsports & Yamaha](#) in partnership with the Friends of the Avalanche Center. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Ahead of an approaching storm, winds increased this morning and were averaging 10-20 mph gusting 30-40 mph from the SW. Temperatures were in the teens to low 20s F. Winds should stay strong through the morning and ease some this afternoon when it should start snowing mostly in the southern half of the advisory area. By tomorrow morning the mountains near Cooke City and West Yellowstone should get 2-4 inches while further north the mountains may only get about an inch. The sun should appear Saturday morning before more snow comes Saturday evening.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

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

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

The most recent avalanche activity has been newly formed wind slabs resting on low density new snow. Skiers in the Bridger Range triggered some on Tuesday and I triggered one on Wednesday in Hyalite Canyon ([photo](#)) just south of Bozeman. Although winds increased this morning, there is little snow left for them to transport. Wind slabs from early this week should have bonded to the underlying snow and be harder to trigger today. Because they are easy to see and some could still slide, it's best to simply avoid them.

Weak layers in the snowpack have produced few avalanches. Ones that did occur, happened just after the snowpack received a heavy load of snow - early this week for the Bridger Range ([photo](#)), and 2 weeks ago everywhere else ([photo1](#), [photo2](#)). Yesterday on the west side of the Bridger Range and on Saddle Peak, Doug and Eric found a stable snowpack and layers would hardly break in stability tests. My partners and I found similar conditions riding in the southern Madison Range near the Taylor Fork and Cabin Creek drainages.

Today the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE** on slopes steeper than 35 degrees and **LOW** on less steep terrain. Heads up: The surface snow has another layer of surface hoar on it ([photo](#)). This layer has been seen near Cooke City and West Yellowstone. Strong winds today will hopefully knock down these crystals before they are capped and preserved by the new snow tonight.

Eric 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.

AVALANCHE EDUCATION and EVENTS

Take a look at our [Education Calendar](#) for all our classes being offered.

Companion Rescue Clinic, Cooke City, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. on Sunday, January 18. More details and registration: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/13990>

Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course, MSU Bozeman, evening lectures 7-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, January 21 and 22, with an all-day field session on Saturday or Sunday (your choice). Get more information and register here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/13090>

Advanced Avalanche Workshop with Field Course, MSU Bozeman, evening lectures 7-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, January 28 and 29, with an all-day field session on Saturday. Get more information and register here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/12445>

The **Friends of the Avalanche Center** and **Montana Ale Works** are hosting an *Avalanche Forecaster's Beer Social Fundraiser* the evening of January 27th. Get more information and buy tickets here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/14010>