

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Tue Mar 8, 2016

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Tuesday, March 8, at 7:00 AM. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's](#) and [Mystery Ranch](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. skies are mostly cloudy, mountain temperatures are in the high teens and winds are light, measuring 10 mph out of the west. There's been no new snow, but snow showers are expected this afternoon. Temperatures are warm enough that precipitation may begin as rain and the National Weather Service is even warning of a few thunder claps. By morning I expect 1-3 inches of new snow in the mountains.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison Range Southern Gallatin Range

Lionhead area near West Yellowstone Cooke City

The southern mountains have buried weak layers. The snowfall from Friday and Sunday created a few avalanches outside Cooke City this weekend: one was skier triggered on Scotch Bonnet near Lulu Pass ([photo](#)) and another was naturally triggered on The Fin ([photo](#)) and a few smaller avalanches were also seen in Pebble Creek ([photo](#)). A layer of buried surface hoar is 2-3 feet deep on some slopes while others have small, sugary facets sitting on an ice crust. Both are easily spotted if you dig down into the snow. Alex skied and sledged around Cooke City and made a [video](#) pointing out our avalanche concerns. In it, he advised us to not worry about identifying the exact crystal types, because in this instance it does not matter. Instead we need to be aware that unstable snow is still found on some slopes. This is true for all the southern ranges which points to a [MODERATE](#) avalanche danger today.

Bridger Range Northern Madison Range Northern Gallatin Range

Yesterday morning's snowfall was 4-5 inches (.5" [SWE](#)) in the northern mountains. By the end of the day we got reports of a few soft slab avalanches confined to the new snow, some occurring naturally (Fan Mountain), others by ski cut (Big Sky Ski Patrol). I do not expect this continuing today. The snowpack is generally stable; however, there is still the occasional slope with weak and potentially unstable snow. Skiers found this on a N-NW facing slope by Ross Peak in the Bridger Range. Their stability tests showed clean fractures ([photo](#)) and they decided to not ski a steep couloir. This is an example of why digging and knowing what is under our feet is a good idea. We may *think* we know, but only digging confirms. Overall, human triggered avalanches are unlikely today and the avalanche danger is rated [LOW](#).

I will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations to share, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 587-6984.

EVENTS and AVALANCHE EDUCATION

A complete calendar of classes can be found [HERE](#).

TOMORROW Bozeman: Wednesday, March 9, 6-7 p.m. ***1-hr Avalanche Awareness***, REI.