

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Mar 3, 2024

Good morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Sunday, March 3rd at 7:30 a.m. Today's forecast is in memory of Ben Richards. [**Ben was killed in an avalanche on Yellow Mountain near Big Sky 17 years ago today.**](#)

AVALANCHE WARNING

The Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center is issuing a Backcountry Avalanche Warning for the **Bridger Range**. Since Friday morning 2-3 feet of dense snow has fallen onto a weak snowpack creating very dangerous avalanche conditions. Winds are [loading](#) slopes further. Human-triggered and natural avalanches are likely. Avoid avalanche terrain and avalanche runout zones. The avalanche danger is **HIGH** on all slopes. Contact the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center for more detailed information.

This warning will expire or be updated by 6:00 a.m. on Monday, March 4th.

Mountain Weather

In the Bridger Range it is snowing hard this morning and 20-25" of snow fell since yesterday morning. Elsewhere received 5-8" of dense new snow. Temperatures are zero to teens F. Wind has been out of the west-southwest at 15-30 mph with gusts of 30-60 mph. Today, temperatures will reach teens to low 20s F, and wind will be westerly at 10-20 mph. Light, scattered snow today and tonight could drop 1-2" by tomorrow morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range

Avalanche Warning

Human triggered and natural avalanches are likely. Since Friday morning 2-3 feet of snow equal to 2.2" of [snow water equivalent](#) (SWE) has fallen with a powerful storm happening this morning. Moderate to strong winds have drifted this snow into thicker slabs. Large avalanches breaking in the new snow are likely, and avalanches could break deeper and larger on weak layers at the bottom of the snowpack. Yesterday a skier triggered a 1-2' deep slide in a steep chute north of Bridger ([photo](#)). Avalanches will be deeper and wider today. Plan to stay out of avalanche terrain which includes slopes steeper than 30 degrees and flatter terrain below. Avalanche danger is [HIGH](#).



Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

Near Big Sky, Hyalite, Cooke City, Island Park and West Yellowstone, 1-3 feet of dense snow fell since Thursday (2.1-3.2" SWE), and up to 3-5 feet fell over the last week favoring Island Park and Cooke City. Yesterday, we issued an avalanche warning for Island Park which expired this morning, and near Cooke City there were many large natural and rider triggered avalanches ([avalanche activity log](#), [photos page](#)). Riders

watched an avalanche on Henderson Mtn. which broke 1000' wide and ran far into the runout covering multiple fresh snowmobile tracks ([observation](#), [photo](#)). Ian and I rode in Tepee Basin and saw two recent avalanches that broke 1-2 feet deep ([video](#)). Avalanches were also seen in the northern Gallatin Range ([photos](#), [photo](#)), Bacon Rind ([photo](#)), and Lionhead ([photos](#)).

Today, large to very large avalanches can easily be triggered by skiers or riders. Natural avalanches are possible on slopes being loaded by wind-drifted snow. Avalanches could break beneath the new and wind-drifted snow, or over 3-6 feet deep on weak layers deeper in the snowpack. Dangerous avalanche conditions exist, and conservative terrain selection is essential. Plan to avoid steep slopes and runout zones below. Carefully evaluate terrain for the potential to avalanche. The avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

March 8-10: Bozeman Splitfest. Check the [Bozeman Splitfest website](#) for event details and avalanche education opportunities offered by the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

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.

[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.