

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Wed Dec 27, 2017

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, December 27th at 7:00 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Gallatin County Search and Rescue](#) and [Community Food Co-op](#). This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

In the last 24 hours 1-2" fell in the southern mountains and Cooke City. Under cloudy skies, ridgetop winds are SW at 20-35 mph and mountain temperatures are 10F. The next 3 days will be snowy with the heaviest amounts falling in the southern mountains. Winds will remain SW at 20-35 mph as temperatures reach 20F during the day and low teens at night. By tomorrow morning the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky will have 2-4", the southern ranges will have 4-6" and Cooke City 8-12".

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Lionhead Range Cooke City

A southwest flow is bringing snow to Cooke City and the Lionhead area today. In the last week, 2-3' of new snow outside Cooke City has been blown into wind drifts, with a few wind-loaded slopes triggered by skiers ([photo](#), [photo](#)). On some slopes, underneath this new snow is a weak layer of unstable facets. Skiers on Christmas Day triggered a small soft slab avalanche on a SW facing slope below treeline on this layer ([photo](#)). Last Friday and Saturday Alex investigated the snowpack and outlined these concerns in his [video](#), which is still relevant today.

In the Lionhead area, 2' of snow in the past 7 days fell onto weak, sugary facets that are showing signs of instability ([video](#)). Forecasted snowfall and wind will make this layer reactive to human triggering.

Most avalanches occur during or immediately after a storm and the next few days will be unstable; wind-loaded slopes especially so. Turn around at the first signs of cracking or collapsing and be aware that recent avalanches are Mother Nature's warning sign that nearby slopes are also unstable. For today, the avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#) on wind-loaded slopes and [MODERATE](#) on all others, but will rise to [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all slopes if/when the storm hits.



Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range

In the last week close to 2' of snow fell in the Bridger, Gallatin and Madison Ranges. Strong ridgetop winds loaded slopes, but overall avalanche activity was minimal and the snowpack was strong enough to handle the new load, which Eric found last Thursday in Taylor Fork ([video](#)). Skiers up Mt. Blackmore yesterday only saw loose snow slides and found no deeper instabilities ([photo](#)). There are always exceptions, and on Sunday I found a thin layer of weak facets breaking in my stability tests ([video](#)) and I could see an avalanche far to the south on a wind-loaded slope ([photo](#)). These instabilities are isolated, but worth looking for. Dig 2-3' deep to the prominent ice crust and test the snow because just one unstable slope would ruin your day.

Human triggered avalanches are possible today, most surely on wind-loaded slopes, but also on slopes that harbor a weak layer of facets 2' under the new snow. The danger is rated **MODERATE** on all slopes today.

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, drop a line via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Events and Education Calendar

BOZEMAN

Jan. 3, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. at REI Bozeman

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](#)

WEST YELLOWSTONE

Jan. 6, **Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn Conference Center

BIG TIMBER

Jan. 11, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. at Sweet Grass County High School

BUTTE

Jan. 13, **Rescue Clinic**, 10 a.m. at Homestake Lodge

Dillon

Jan. 16, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6:30-8 p.m. at U.M. Western Library

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday, **Current Conditions Update and Avalanche Rescue**, Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Super 8 this week, and Antler's Lodge in January. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Lulu Pass road.