

## **GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Feb 18, 2018**

Good Morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 a.m. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Grizzly Outfitters](#) in partnership with **The Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning the mountains near Cooke City got 14" of new snow. Near Big Sky, Hyalite, and West Yellowstone got 7-10", and the Bridger Range got 4". Wind was southwest at 25-40 mph with gusts of 60-80 mph yesterday, and decreased to 20-30 mph out of the west this morning. Temperatures this morning are teens F and will drop to single digits and negatives F through the day. This afternoon, wind will shift east at 5-15 mph. Continued snow showers through tonight will drop 3-6" in most locations with 8-12" near Cooke City by morning.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



#### Cooke City

The mountains near Cooke City got 2-3 feet of snow equal to 2.5" of snow water equivalent ([SWE](#)) since Friday. Strong, gusty wind yesterday created consistent whiteout conditions and drifted snow into 1-4' thick wind slabs at all elevations. This rapid, heavy loading event created dangerous avalanche conditions and large avalanches are likely today. Moderate wind and snowfall through today will continue to stress the snowpack and make large avalanches easy to trigger, especially on wind loaded slopes. Be cautious of smaller terrain, such as the steep edges of creek beds and gullies, where smaller slides are deadly because snow and debris will pile deep. Avoid ALL steep slopes and minimize time spent underneath them. Avalanche danger today is [HIGH](#) on wind loaded slopes and [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all other slopes.



#### Gallatin Range   Madison Range   Lionhead Range

The mountains south of Bozeman, near Big Sky, and near West Yellowstone got over a foot of snow equal to 1.5" of snow water equivalent ([SWE](#)) since Friday with 1" of that SWE since yesterday. Strong wind yesterday drifted snow into wind slabs 1-3' thick that are easy to trigger today ([video](#)). These slabs are found near ridgelines and at all elevations on steep, convex rollovers and cross-loaded gullies. On non-wind loaded slopes, dry loose avalanches and slabs of new snow are possible to trigger. Avoid wind loaded slopes, and avoid all steep slopes if you see signs of instability like shooting cracks, collapsing, or fresh avalanches. Avalanche danger today is [CONSIDERABLE](#) on wind loaded slopes and [MODERATE](#) on all other slopes.



#### Bridger Range

The Bridger Range saw the least of the storm, and since yesterday received 4" of new snow equal to .4" of SWE in the northern part of the range and a trace to 1" of snow at Bridger Bowl. I went to Fairy Lake yesterday where strong winds were drifting recent snow and growing 1-2' thick slabs that were easy to trigger ([video](#)). We found lower density snow underneath hard wind slabs, which made them more unstable and slower to gain strength. Moderate wind and snowfall today keeps wind slabs on edge and easy to trigger. These slabs will gain strength with time, but assessing their stability is tricky today. They may appear glued on with an initial ski cut, and then come loose on the second or third turn. Avoid wind loaded slopes today. Avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#) on wind loaded slopes and [MODERATE](#) on all other slopes.

## Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

### [Events and Education Calendar](#)

#### BOZEMAN

Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>, **Know Before You Go** avalanche awareness, 7:00 p.m. @ Procrastinator Theater, MSU

March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, **SheJumps Companion Rescue Clinic**, [Info and Register HERE](#)

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, **Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8:00 p.m., MAP Brewing [Bozeman Split Fest](#)

March 7<sup>th</sup>, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. @ REI

#### DILLON

Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, **Snowmobile intro to avalanches w/ field course**. More info:  
<https://msuextension.org/conference/>.

#### COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday, **Current Conditions Update and Avalanche Rescue**, Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at The Soda Butte Lodge in February. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.