GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Oct 22, 2020

Good Morning. This is Alex Marienthal with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Thursday, October 22nd. This information is sponsored by **The Friends of the Avalanche Center.**

Mountain Weather

Cold and snowy weather is here and will stay through the weekend. Last night the mountains near Bozeman and Cooke City got 4-8" of snow, and 2-3" fell near Big Sky and West Yellowstone. This morning temperatures are single digits to teens F and wind is 5-15 mph out of the west-northwest. Today temperatures will be in the teens F with east to northeast wind at 5-15 mph. Skies will be partly sunny through Friday afternoon. Heavy snow is expected Friday night with 8-12" possible by Sunday morning, and temperatures will be in the single digits to teens F with gusty west-southwest winds.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Most avalanches and avalanche accidents occur during and immediately following new snow. This early season storm is no exception. The mountains already have a settled snow depth of 10-30", and last weekend we received reports of avalanche activity after a few inches of new snow (**photos**, **weather and avalanche log**). Today, new snow means avalanches can be triggered and steep slopes should be carefully assessed before skiing, riding or crossing underneath. Be extra cautious of slopes with fresh, pillowy drifts of snow. Look for cracking of drifts as a sign they are unstable.

This weekend if you are skiing, snowmobiling, ice climbing or hunting carefully assess the terrain you plan to travel in and avoid steep slopes during intense snowfall and wind. Moderate winds will accompany the new snow and grow thick slabs that could naturally avalanche or be triggered by a person. Be aware of steep terrain above you where natural avalanches (or avalanches triggered by other people) could come down from.

If you go in the mountains you need to prepare to minimize the risk of being injured or killed by an avalanche. First, review these reports from accidents that occurred in previous Octobers: **One accident in the familiar northern Bridger Range** resulted in injuries to multiple skiers. **The other was a tragic fatality** three years ago, and reminds us to be diligent and stay safe. Second, look at our **education calendar** for a class to attend this fall or winter. Whether it is your first class or you have taken a level 2, any class will better prepare you for winter.

Check our forecast page before you leave for the mountains this weekend. We will update it with early season information Saturday morning. Bring a partner, carry avalanche rescue gear (beacon, shovel and probe) and expose no more than one person at a time in avalanche terrain.

We are preparing for winter, scheduling avalanche classes, and setting up weather stations. If you have avalanche, snowpack or weather observations to share. Please submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our **education calendar** for an up to date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

Doug will do an online Forecaster Chat about early season snowpack and avalanche accidents on Thursday, November 5 at 6 p.m. It is hosted by Uphill Pursuits and details will be posted soon.

The **6th Annual MSU Snow and Avalanche Workshop** will be an hour of live online talks each Monday evening in November.

Our popular **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course** will have online lectures the evening of December 2 and 3 with a choice of field days over the following two weekends. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge).

Last year, the "Avalanche Hour" podcast interviewed **Alex** and **Doug** individually. Besides acting as a helpful refresher for the coming season, there's good information about our work at the GNFAC. Check out the Avalanche Hour's long list of other great interviews as well.

Support The Friends of the GNFAC

This year, The Friends of the Avalanche Center are unable to host an in-person Powder Blast due to COVID. In place of their biggest fund-raiser, the Friends of GNFAC launched an online **GoFundMe campaign**. Please consider a donation, and we look forward to having an in-person event again in the future.