

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 2, 2021

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on January 2nd at 7:00 a.m. This forecast is sponsored by [Summit Motorsports and Ski-Doo](#) and [Bridger Bowl](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

One to 2" of new snow fell overnight. Winds are southwesterly at 10-20 mph with gusts up to 35 mph. Temperatures are in the high single digits to low 20s F. Winds will continue to blow out of the southwest at 10-20 mph with stronger gusts. Temperatures will rise into the 20s and low-30s F. Light snowfall today and tonight will leave a trace to 2" by tomorrow morning. A stronger pulse of moisture tomorrow will favor the southern areas.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range

Yesterday afternoon, a solo skier triggered a large avalanche on Saddle Peak south of Bridger Bowl ([photo](#), [photo](#), [details](#)). The slide broke 3 ft deep and ran 1700 vertical feet over large cliffs. Luckily the skier was not caught. Saddle Peak has only seen a handful of riders this year and this is the second large avalanche that has been triggered on it ([details](#)). These slides are clear evidence that the snowpack this year is weaker and more reactive than usual. The weak snow at the ground has been waiting all season for a slab to develop ([video](#)). New snow and strong winds have now built a substantial slab and pushed those weak layers to their breaking point. Avalanches will be easily triggered today. Avoid steep wind-loaded slopes entirely and be extremely skeptical of any avalanche terrain. The avalanche danger is **CONSIDERABLE** on wind-loaded slopes in the Bridger Range and **MODERATE** on other slopes.



Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Island Park

Yesterday, we got numerous reports of unstable test results, large collapses, and shooting cracks across the rest of the mountains from Bozeman to West Yellowstone ([photo](#)). These are all signs that the weak snow near the ground remains unstable and shouldn't be trusted ([video](#)). With slightly less new snow and wind-loading the snowpack is not on a hair trigger, but triggering a large and dangerous avalanche is very much a possibility. Watch for signs of instability and carefully assess the snowpack before committing to any steep slopes. With human triggered avalanches possible, the avalanche danger is **MODERATE** today.



Cooke City

Cooke City generally has a stronger snowpack and you are unlikely to trigger an avalanche today. The standard travel advice applies: ride with a partner, carry rescue gear, and only expose one person at a time to steep slopes. Wednesday's snowmobile triggered slide on Crown Butte is a good reminder to stay vigilant and always be ready in case you get unlucky and trigger a slide ([video](#)). The avalanche danger is **LOW** today.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can 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:

Every Saturday in Cooke City, FREE snowpack update and rescue practice at the Round Lake Warming Hut between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. [Poster with More Info](#).

Tuesday, January 5, 6-7 p.m. The Friends of the Avalanche Center will offer a FREE 1-hr Avalanche Awareness Talk in partnership with The Basecamp and Alpine Orthopedics and Sports Medicine. The talk will be a live, ONLINE event. Join us [HERE](#):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86838750943?pwd=TU8wczdxaGZyQ2tRNmtRZWlYcHBpQT09>

Monday, January 11, 6-7 p.m. The Friends of the Avalanche Center will offer a FREE 1-hr Avalanche Awareness Talk in partnership with Uphill Pursuits. The talk will be given via a live ZOOM session. Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81605082929?pwd=ZDZEN0U3ditXUjNtMFh3c2lWQ1hZdz09>

Tuesday, January 19, 6-7 p.m. The Friends of the Avalanche Center will offer a FREE 1-hr Avalanche Awareness Talk in partnership with the University of Montana Western School of Outreach. The talk will be a live, ONLINE event. Join us [HERE](#):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82995072428?pwd=YzNvL2RtdWNWZU1sNFYvRlFERnRFZz09>

January 20 & 21 (plus field sessions the following weekends), **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course**. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge). Register [here](#).