GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 19, 2019

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast issued on Saturday, January 19th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Yellowstone Arctic Yamaha** and the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning, the mountains south of Bozeman picked up a trace to 1" of new snow. This morning, skies range from partly to mostly cloudy and temps are in the teens F. Winds are blowing 15-30 mph out of the west-southwest. Today, no real accumulation is expected and temps warm into the low to upper 20's F. Winds will increase out of the west-southwest with ridgetop gusts pushing 40 mph by this afternoon. Light snow is expected across the forecast area this evening with 1-3" possible by morning. Sunday night into Monday looks promising for a heavier shot of snow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Island Park

The snowpack has had some time to adjust to the recent loading event. This does not cancel the fact a poor snowpack structure exists on all aspects and elevations (**video**). Slopes that received wind drifted snow the past few days will be the most likely to hold unstable conditions. Slides have to potential to break 2-3' deep and propagate wider than you might expect (**photo**, **details**). Watch for areas of wind drifted snow below ridgelines, cliff bands, and cross loaded terrain features.

While big slopes have the potential to create big slides, small slopes can also be dangerous. Be extra cautious when riding small steep slopes in the woods or near gullies where the consequences of triggering a slide are amplified. Always travel one at a time in steep terrain and make sure you have a close eye on your partners.

Today, human triggered avalanches are likely on wind loaded slopes which have **CONSIDERABLE** avalanche danger. Non-wind loaded slopes have a **MODERATE** avalanche danger.

Cooke City

Yesterday, Alex and his partner rode north of Cooke City and found 8" of new snow resting over a variety of old snow surfaces. On slopes where the new snow was deposited on a strong snowpack, conditions were generally stable. In areas where the pack was shallow and weak, they got unstable results in stability tests. As Alex describes in his video, wind loaded slopes are the most concerning since they have the heaviest load (**video**). Non-wind loaded slopes are more stable, but still hold the potential to produce slides (**photo**). Make sure and put the shovel in the snow to assess the snowpack structure before committing to avalanche terrain.

Today, dangerous avalanche conditions exist on wind loaded slopes which have a **CONSIDERABLE** avalanche danger. Non-wind loaded slopes have **MODERATE** avalanche danger.

Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Yesterday, a lone skier on the summer trail above Fairy Lake was caught and partially buried in an avalanche. The skier triggered the slide from low on the slope and was swept 100’ downhill. He came to rest near some trees and was buried up to his chest. Fortunately, the skier was uninjured and able to self rescue. This was a close call that could have ended much worse.

This slide occurred during the loading event, a time when slopes are typically most reactive. Today, conditions won’t be as touchy, but wind loaded slopes still need to be approached with caution. In most cases, avalanches will stay confined to the new snow, but could potentially step down to weak layers buried deeper in the pack (**video**). Areas where the snowpack is less than 3’ deep are the most likely to harbor buried weak layers capable of producing larger more dangerous slides (**video**).

Today, wind slabs and weak layers make human triggered avalanches possible and the avalanche danger is rated **MODERATE**.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: **Events and Education Calendar.**

BOZEMAN

January 23, 24 and 26, **Advanced Avalanche Workshop w/ Field Day**, Info and Register Here.

February 2, **King and Queen of the Ridge** at Bridger Bowl (fundraiser). Register with Bridger to hike in the event, and create a pledge page to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

BIG SKY

January 22, **Pint Night at Beehive Brewery**, 4-8 p.m. A fundraiser for the Darren Johnson Avalanche Education Memorial Fund.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

January 26, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers**, 7-8 p.m. Holiday Inn West Yellowstone.

DILLON

January 22, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6:30-7:30 p.m. U.M. Western Library.

BILLINGS

January 22, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7 p.m. The Base Camp, Billings.

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday**, Rescue Training and Snowpack Update.** Friday 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.