

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Oct 29, 2013

This is Mark Staples with early season snowpack information issued Tuesday, October 29 at 8:30 a.m. Today's information is sponsored by the Friends of the Avalanche Center. This information will be updated as conditions change.

THANK YOU

Last Friday's Powder Blast was a huge success with a great silent auction, music, drinks and food. We sold out and unfortunately had to turn people away at the door. Montana Import Group was the title sponsor for the fourth year in a row with Grizzly Outfitters and Mystery Ranch also providing significant support. Most importantly thank you to the Friends of the Avalanche Center for pulling it off and to all who attended and made it such a fun event.

Mountain Weather

Snow accumulated in places like Butte and Billings yesterday but left Bozeman and much of the advisory area with only a trace to one inch of snow. The exception was the Bridger Range which received 4 inches of snow. Mountain temperatures this morning were in the high teens to low 20s F. Easterly winds blew yesterday at 15 mph with gusts of 25 mph and calmed this morning to 5-10 mph. A few more snowflakes could fall today in the southern reaches of the advisory area. Drier conditions will last until Thursday when some snowfall is possible. More likely on Thursday will be strong NW winds and colder temperatures.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

We'll start with the bad news first. Early season snow is rarely a good thing for building a stable snowpack. The fledgling snowpack, which ranges from 6 inches to 2 feet deep, is getting weaker not stronger. Time will tell if it will be able to support snowfall from future storms. Near Cooke City on Saturday, I found two obvious faceted layers ([video](#), [snowpit](#)). This week's cold temperatures will only make matters worse creating more weak, faceted snow crystals. We're not yet doomed to unstable conditions in the near future, but I'm not too optimistic at this point.

The good news is that there are few stability concerns. Fresh wind slabs in the Bridger Range will be the main problem as a result of strong easterly winds. Another problem common to all areas will be the thin snowpack. Getting caught in an avalanche will hurt as it drags you over rocks. A great example is an avalanche that occurred in 2009 in the Tobacco Root Mountains on Halloween day. This group wrote an excellent accident report with good lessons that you can read [HERE](#).

While we wait for more snow to come, get your avalanche rescue gear ready. See Doug's [video](#) for how he prepares his gear each fall. If you get out riding, consider practicing with your gear as we show [here](#). Don't start your season with rusty avalanche rescue skills. Also, consider attending one of the upcoming classes.

EVENTS/EDUCATION

1-Hour Avalanche Awareness Classes

HELENA, November 13, 6:30 p.m. at the Basecamp.

BOZEMAN, November 19, 6:30 p.m. at REI

BIG TIMBER, November 19, 7 p.m. at Big Timber High School

BILLINGS, November 20, 6 p.m. at Basecamp

BIG SKY, November 20, 7 p.m. at Grizzly Outfitters

Go to our [EDUCATION CALENDAR](#) for details and more courses.

Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course, MSU; 4, 5 and 7 December

Info and registration: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/7112>

Snowmobiler Intro to Avalanches w/ Field Course, West Yellowstone: 19 and 20 December

Info and registration: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/7116>