

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Fri Jan 6, 2017

Good Morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Friday, January 6th at 6:30 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

Temperatures are frigid this morning, but not nearly as cold as yesterday. At 5 a.m. temps range from the single digits above or below zero F under mostly cloudy skies. Winds are blowing 10-25 mph out of the W-NW. Today, highs will climb into the single digits to low teens F and winds will remain light to moderate out of the W-NW. A general warming trend with increased moisture will impact the area over the next few days. The next chance for snow looks to be Saturday night into Sunday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

Weather is the architect of avalanches. Although little snow has fallen over the past week, strong winds have formed small but touchy wind slabs in isolated areas. Yesterday, Alex and I experienced these touchy conditions first hand while skiing around Bridger Bowl. We observed two small natural avalanches on the Football Field and backed off our main objective – Saddle Peak ([video](#)). Bridger Bowl Ski Patrol also triggered numerous wind slabs during control work.

The main cause of this activity is wind-blown snow sitting over near surface facets that formed during the recent cold weather. This setup has the potential to produce more human triggered avalanches today. The best way to avoid slides will be avoid all areas of wind drifted snow.

While most slides will stay confined to the upper layers of the snowpack, triggering a slide on facets near the ground is not out of the question. It has been close to a week since the last reported slide occurred on this layer, but I still don't trust it. Watch for and avoid non-uniform terrain where slab thickness varies over a short distance ([video](#)). In addition to terrain management, I recommend digging a quick snowpit and testing the strength of this layer before committing to steeper slopes.

Today, wind slabs and weak layers make human triggered avalanches possible on wind loaded slopes and slopes steeper than 35 degrees which have a **[MODERATE](#)** avalanche danger. Less steep, non-wind loaded slopes have a **[LOW](#)** avalanche danger.

Alex will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m.

We rely on your field observations. Send us an email with simple weather and snowpack information along the lines of what you might share with your friends: How much new snow? Was the skiing/riding any good? Did you see any avalanches or signs of instability? Was snow blowing at the ridgelines? If you have snowpit or test data we'll take that too, but this core info is super helpful! Email us at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 406-587-6984.

Upcoming Events and Education

Month of January: Montana Ale Works has chosen the Friends of the Avalanche Center as January's "Round It Up America" recipient. Every time you round-up your bill the change gets donated to the Friends. Pennies equal dollars!

BOZEMAN

Tuesday, January 10, **Women's Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice**, 6-8 p.m., Beall Park.

Wednesday, January 11, **Avalanche Conditions and Awareness for Snowmobilers**, 6:30-7:30 p.m., Gallatin Valley Snowmobile Association groomer shed at 4-corners.

Friday and Saturday, January 13 and 14, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, REI Friday 6 p.m., field Saturday TBA. Register here: <https://events.ticketprinting.com/event/21313>.

Tuesday, January 17, **Avalanche Center Forecaster's Social** at Montana Ale Works. A small-plate fare and beer tasting fundraiser for the Friends: \$40.00/person; 2 seatings (5:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.). Get your tickets [HERE](#).

COOKE CITY

Weekly rescue training and snowpack update, 6-7:30 p.m., The Antlers Lodge on Friday, field location Saturday TBA.

GREAT FALLS

Friday, January 6, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., Hi-Line Climbing Center.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

Saturday, January 7, **Avalanche Awareness**, 7-8 p.m., Holiday Inn West Yellowstone.

DILLON

Tuesday, January 10, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., UM-Western Library.