

## GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Jan 26, 2025

This is Alex Marienthal with the avalanche forecast for Sunday, January 26th, at 7:00 a.m. sponsored by [Bridger Bowl](#), [Cooke City Motorsports](#) and [Bozeman Splitfest](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

This morning there is 1" of new snow near Island Park and none elsewhere. Temperatures are single digits F. In the Bridger Range wind is out of the west and southwest at 15-25 mph with gusts to 30 mph. Elsewhere, wind is out of the north and northwest at 5-15 mph with gusts of 15-20 mph.

Today, temperatures will reach teens F, and wind will be calm to light (5-15 mph) from the north and west. This week will be mostly sunny with no snow expected and temperatures reaching mid to high 30s F.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



#### Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Snowfall on Friday favored the mountains near Bozeman and Big Sky with up to 8" of low density snow, and last Wednesday the Bridger Range had 16-20" of very low density snow (0.2-0.3" SWE). Even the lightest winds were able to transport this snow into thin soft slabs, and today's stiff wind in the Bridger Range will form thicker fresh drifts that will be easy to trigger. Be alert for these **wind slabs** across many elevations and mid-slope, not just near the prominent ridgelines.

The recent snow fell on weak layers of surface hoar and small sugary facets (Buck Ridge [observation](#), Divide Basin ([observation](#), Beehive Basin [observation](#)) which might make fresh wind slabs unstable for longer than usual. On Friday thin soft slabs broke naturally and were easily triggered ([observation](#)). Pay attention to how deep the new snow is and think about the consequences of that new snow avalanching before getting on a steep slope. Watch for shooting cracks and recent avalanches as signs the new snow is unstable.

Avalanches breaking deeper are unlikely. If you're happy with the stability of the most recent snow, dig down a couple feet to make sure older wind slabs are also well-bonded. The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#).



#### Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City

Near Cooke City and West Yellowstone a person can trigger avalanches that break many feet deep on weak snow near the bottom of the snowpack. A recent very large **persistent slab avalanche** broke south of Cooke City within the last 2-3 days, and shows these remain possible ([photo](#)). Although these huge slides have become difficult to trigger, they have unsurvivable consequences and require careful terrain selection. Additionally, wind slab avalanches 1-2 feet deep can be triggered where recent snow was drifted into stiffer or thicker slabs. Avoid big wind-loaded slopes with variable snow depth that might have thin spots as potential trigger points for deep avalanches. Choose smaller slopes with clean runouts generally free of trees, rocks or cliffs. The avalanche

danger is [MODERATE](#).



## Island Park

Near Island Park there has been less snow over the last couple weeks, allowing the snowpack to become more stable, and avalanches are unlikely. Unlikely does not mean impossible, so if you travel on slopes steeper than 30 degrees keep in mind weak layers that are buried near the bottom of the snowpack and below thin slabs of recently drifted snow. You can hedge your bets of not triggering deeper persistent slab avalanches by choosing slopes with minimal previous wind-loading and a generally uniform snow depth. Stay alert for fresh soft slabs that may be large enough to be harmful in isolated areas, and remember even a small slide can easily push you off a cliff or into trees. Carry rescue gear and expose only one person at a time to avalanche terrain. Human-triggered avalanches are unlikely and the avalanche danger is [LOW](#).

## KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski/ride? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge on 2/1 is for you. Hike, ride and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center at Bridger Bowl this year! Join this fun event to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for the top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes.* Info to fundraise is [HERE](#) or [donate here](#).

\*\*\*Race participants for the King and Queen of the Ridge must register separately with Bridger Bowl [here](#)\*\*\*

## Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: [Events and Education Calendar](#)

**February 20, 4-7 p.m.** Beacon BBQ at Uphill Pursuits in Bozeman. Come try out different brands of avalanche transceivers (or practice with your own!) with coaching from Friends of GNFAC instructors and free hotdogs.

**Every weekend in Cooke City:** Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.