

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Fri Apr 7, 2017

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Friday, April 7th at 6:30 a.m. Today's advisory is in **memory of Jens Anderson**, a skier who died in an avalanche on Beehive Peak on April 11, 2015. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas. Bridger Bowl is closed for the season and has backcountry conditions.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. there's no new snow to report, only warm temperatures and wind. Freezing level is near 10,000' and mountain temperatures are in the high 30's F to mid-40s. Winds are from the southwest at 20-30 mph with gusts of 50 mph. This afternoon skies will be cloudy and thunderstorms may occur with an approaching cold front. Tonight, freezing level drops to 7,000' and winds will remain strong from the southwest. Rain will turn to snow and by morning I expect 2-4" in the southern mountains.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Bridger Range Madison Range Gallatin Range Lionhead area near West Yellowstone Cooke City

Clouds won't cover all of southwest Montana until this afternoon. With temperatures in the mid-40s in the northern ranges, a few hours of sunshine would be enough to create wet loose avalanches, even with a "cooling" wind. Pinwheels rolling downhill is a sign of the surface snow becoming unstable. Winds last night were strong and will remain so through tonight. Most snow has either been glued in place by the warm temperatures or blown into wind drifts ([photo](#)). These drifts are not widespread and most are stable, but in the high alpine, a small pocket breaking under your feet is not out of the question.

A cold front will drive in from the southwest later today and might create a thunderstorm or two. Nothing says "spring" quite like a thunderstorm. With freezing levels so high, rain will fall and may trigger avalanches.

As the weather changes, so do our avalanche concerns ([video](#)). Usually we talk about changes occurring daily, but today it could be hourly. For today, the avalanche danger is rated **LOW**, but could elevate to **MODERATE**: 1) if the sun shines (wet loose avalanches), 2) if winds move snow (wind-loading), or 3) if it rains (a trigger). That's a lot of "ifs", but that's what we got. Thankfully the dangers are easy to see and avoid.

Alex will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m. Our last advisory of the season will be this Sunday, April 9th.

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.

Water Supply Outlook Report

NRCS just released their monthly water report. On March 31 the Gallatin River Basin was 87% of average, the Madison was 104% and the upper Yellowstone was 117%. You can download the full report [HERE](#).

MAY 4: Give Big Gallatin Valley

The **Friends of the Avalanche Center** are one of the recipients of the Give Big Gallatin Valley campaign. It is a 1-day fundraising event for local non-profits on May 4, so mark your calendars. The Friends will send reminders as the day approaches: <https://www.givebiggv.org/organizations/friends-of-the-gallatin-national-forest-avalanche-center>

MAY 20: SPRING SLED FEST in Cooke City

A fundraiser for the Friends of the Avalanche Center. \$20 raffle tickets for sweet prizes; free BBQ on the mountain; raffle and party at Soda Butte Lodge 8 p.m. Check out the [poster](#)!