GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Oct 24, 2020

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Saturday, October 24 at 7:30 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Grizzly Outfitters** and will be updated tomorrow morning.

Mountain Weather

Since Thursday morning 3-6" of snow fell in the mountains, most of it last night. At 5 a.m. temperatures are in the high teens to 20s with west to southwest wind at 20 mph and gusts to 45 mph. Today will be stormy with temperatures in the 20s and ridgetop winds 20-40 mph from the west to southwest. By tonight another 6-8" will fall in the northern mountains and Cooke City, with 3-6" falling in the southern ranges and mountains around West Yellowstone. Sunday looks to be sunny.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Today's storm will create avalanches. In the last 48-hours ridge winds increased (**photo, photo**) and loaded slopes resulting in cracking and a few small avalanches. These were seen in the Bridger Range (**photo, photo**) and Mt Blackmore in the northern Gallatin Range (**photo**). I was able to trigger a 4" wind slab yesterday on Sphinx Mountain. Shooting cracks in the snow as we walked warned us of the danger (**photo**), and sure enough, I was able to intentionally trigger a slide on a steep, small slope with a whack of my ice-tool (**video**). Although thin, the avalanche released 75' up the hill and raced past us over a 100' cliff. We made an easy decision to turn around.

Last night and today's snowfall will make slopes more unstable. Be aware that cracking or avalanche activity, no matter how small, are signs to avoid avalanche terrain. On average, snow depth on the ground is about 12-16" with Cooke City having 38". Skiers, boarders and snowmobilers should treat early season as they would mid-winter. Travel one at a time in avalanche terrain and carry rescue gear (beacon, shovel and probe). Hunters need to be extra careful as they cross slopes or gullies that are filled with wind-blown snow. Hunters have been caught in years past and this weekend's rising avalanche danger is coinciding with opening day.

Triggering a small avalanche yesterday was a reminder to get my act together. My rescue skills are not up to par, my gear is a bit of a junk show, and I'm not feeling as sharp as I want in my snow assessment. I imagine most of you can relate and this weekend is a great opportunity to tighten our scene. Put fresh batteries in your beacon and practice with it, double check your air bag canister, and get in the habit of looking at the daily **weather log**, **photos page** and **avalanche activity list**.

Ian will issue an updated avalanche bulletin tomorrow morning. If you have avalanche, snowpack or weather observations to share. Please submit them via our **website**, email (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our **education calendar** for an up to date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

On Thursday, November 5 at 6 p.m. Uphill Pursuits is hosting a GNFAC Forecaster Chat with Doug Chabot who will discuss early season snowpack and avalanche accidents. Anyone can attend **via this link**.

The **6th Annual MSU Snow and Avalanche Workshop** will be an hour of live online talks each Monday evening in November.

Our popular **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course** will have online lectures the evening of December 2 and 3 with a choice of field days over the following two weekends. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge).

Last year, the "Avalanche Hour" podcast interviewed **Alex** and **Doug** individually. Besides acting as a helpful refresher for the coming season, there's good information about our work at the GNFAC. Check out the Avalanche Hour's long list of other great interviews as well.

Support the Friends of the GNFAC

This year, The Friends of the Avalanche Center are unable to host an in-person Powder Blast due to COVID. In place of their biggest fund-raiser, the Friends of GNFAC launched an online **GoFundMe campaign**. Please consider a donation, and we look forward to having an in-person event again in the future.