

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Fri Feb 24, 2023

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Friday, February 24th at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue](#) and [Blitz Motorsports and Yamaha](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

The southern mountains, Lionhead and Cooke City picked up 2-3" of snow in the last 24 hours. Mountain temperatures are near zero F this morning and wind is blowing from the SW to SE at 10-20 mph with gusts of 35 mph. Today will be mostly sunny in the north and mostly cloudy in the south as temperatures warm into the teens and SW wind increases to 15-25 mph with 40+ mph gusts. By morning the southern mountains will have a trace to 1" of new snow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range Cooke City

All the mountain ranges have snow from the storm that ended on Tuesday. Today, winds will continue to get stronger and load slopes even more. East wind earlier in the week moved snow into unusual places and today's SW gusts will blow it around further. I expect newly formed wind-drifts to easily avalanche today.

The storm dropped 2-4 feet of snow, and for the most part, did not result in widespread avalanches. The exception is Cooke City where a few large avalanches ran with the storm or immediately after ([observations and photos](#)). Given the large load of 4.5" [snow water equivalent](#), I was pleasantly surprised to not find widespread avalanche debris as I rode around north of town yesterday ([video](#)). Throughout our forecast area, the storm's avalanche activity was limited, which is a sign of a strengthening snowpack (videos: [Taylor Fork](#), [Bridgers](#)).

Get ready, because here comes the caveat to a "strengthening snowpack": today's fresh wind-drifts will either avalanche naturally or be easily triggered. Strong wind and loose snow are a hazardous combination. Drifting snow adds weight to a snowpack that only had minimal time to adjust to the last snowstorm. Shooting cracks in a wind drift is a sign of unstable and dangerous conditions; it is Mother Nature tapping your shoulder and disapprovingly wagging her finger. Slopes that are spared wind-loading might harbor weak layers at the interface below this week's new snow that could avalanche.

The avalanche danger is rated [CONSIDERABLE](#) on wind-loaded slopes since human-triggered avalanches are likely. On all other slopes the danger is rated [MODERATE](#).

Please share avalanche, snowpack or weather observations via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram ([#gnfacobs](#)).



The mountains received 6" of snow yesterday and the wind is blowing strong. I expect newly formed wind-drifts to easily avalanche today. Shooting cracks in a wind drift is a sign of unstable and dangerous conditions; it is Mother Nature tapping your shoulder and disapprovingly wagging her finger. Slopes that are spared wind-loading might harbor weak layers at the interface below this week's new snow that could avalanche.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

TONIGHT! February 24 & 25, Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 3, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Bozeman Splitfest - Companion Rescue Clinic. Classroom session followed by a field session. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 3-5, Bozeman Splitfest. [More info and register here](#).

March 3 & 4, Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 9, 6 p.m.-7 p.m., 1-Hour Awareness - Spring conditions. FREE at REI Bozeman.

March 10 & 11, SheJumps - Women's Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

Every Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. ***Avalanche Rescue Training***, drop in for any amount of time. Round Lake Warming Hut, Cooke City. Free.

[***Loss in the Outdoors***](#), is a support group for those who have been affected by grief and loss related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.