

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 20, 2024

Good morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, January 20th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is dedicated to **Tyler Stetson**. Tyler was killed in an avalanche in Beehive Basin on this day sixteen years ago. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

A dusting of snow fell yesterday, but no more than an inch accumulated. Winds are 5-15 mph out of the southwest to northwest with gusts of 15-30 mph. Temperatures are in the 20s and low 30s F this morning. High temperatures today will be in the 30s F. Winds today will be 5-15 mph out of the south and southwest. Skies will be partly sunny to mostly cloudy with a few snow showers possible. 2-4 inches of new snow are possible tonight near West Yellowstone and Island Park, with only a dusting expected elsewhere.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Southern
Madison

Southern
Gallatin

Lionhead
Range

Cooke
City

Island
Park

Large, dangerous human triggered avalanches are likely today. Don't let the expiration of yesterday's avalanche warning for Cooke City lull you into any sort of complacency, conditions remain quite dangerous. Avalanches can be triggered from far away and from the bottom of slopes. Yesterday was quieter, but look to all the remotely triggered avalanches on Thursday for examples of what we're concerned about ([Cooke City video](#), [Lionhead photos](#), [Taylor Fork photos](#)). Recent avalanches are the best clue that you can trigger more avalanches ([Island Park video](#)). These slides are being triggered from hundreds of feet away and breaking 1-2 ft deep on weak layers of surface hoar and facets. With these types of weak layers, stability does not improve quickly. Avalanches can be triggered days and even weeks after the last loading event. Winds have been pretty moderate, but particularly watch for slopes where drifting snow has continued to load the weak layers. Continue to avoid slopes steeper than 30 degrees and be skeptical crossing beneath them as well.

The avalanche danger is [CONSIDERABLE](#) in the mountains around Cooke City, West Yellowstone and Island Park.



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

Triggering dangerous avalanches, perhaps from a distance, remains very possible. The danger rating came down a step only because these slides are just a little bit less likely than yesterday. Thursday's remarkably wide avalanche on Buck Ridge ([video](#)) and slides triggered from 150 ft away in [Hyalite](#) are good examples of the dangerous and surprising avalanches that are possible today.

Wind loaded and wind effected slopes are the most concerning. A skier triggered an avalanche on a windloaded slope just below the ridgeline on the E face of Mt. Blackmore yesterday ([observation](#)). It broke around 8" deep, 50 ft wide and ran almost all the way to the typical skin track. Skiers near Big Sky and in the Bridger Range

noted cracking and collapsing, indications that the weak layers in the snowpack remain ready to avalanche ([Big Sky observation](#)).

Continuing to avoid riding on or under slopes steeper than 30 degrees is a reasonable tactic for a low stress day. If you are going to travel in avalanche terrain, be highly alert for signs of instability and doubly wary of any slope where the snow has been affected by the wind.

The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#) near Bozeman and Big Sky.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

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.

We offer *Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Session* courses targeted towards non-motorized travelers in [January](#) and one geared towards [motorized users](#). Sign up early before they fill up.

[King & Queen 2024](#), 3 February 2024. Form a team or sign up individually to hike laps on the Bridger Bowl ridge to fundraise for the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

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

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 3rd

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge is for you. Hike, ski and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center in their 2nd biggest fundraiser of the year. Join the effort 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 is [HERE](#). Race participants for the February 4th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#).