GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Nov 14, 2020

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Saturday, November 14th at 7:30 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Blitz Motorsports and Yamaha** and **Gallatin County Search and Rescue**. We will issue the next bulletin as conditions warrant.

*Note: Bridger Bowl Ski Area is closed and there is no avalanche control or ski patrol services. Backcountry conditions exist. Workers are setting up for the season and making snow. Please stay clear of work areas, snow guns, chair lifts and other equipment.

Mountain Weather

By 5 a.m. 10-12" fell around Cooke City, West Yellowstone and the southern ranges, 4" around Big Sky and 1-2" in the Bridger Range and Hyalite. In the last 24 hours westerly winds averaged 30 mph and gusted into the 70s. The storm will drop another inch or two in the south before it ends this morning. The sun may poke out today and mountain temperatures will rise into the high 20s with strong westerly wind blowing 20-30 mph and gusting to 50 mph. A few more inches of snow will fall on Sunday around West Yellowstone and Cooke City.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Wind has been blowing strong out of the west and will continue this weekend. Up to 4" of snow fell around Bozeman and Big Sky which will be drifted into wind slabs at all elevations. On Thursday skiers triggered a 50 foot wide and 6" deep wind slab near Fairy Lake in the Bridger Range (**photo**). Last night's snow and wind will create more opportunities to trigger avalanches. Although these may be thin and small, don't be fooled, they can beat you up on the rocks, sweep you off your feet and bury you.

The southern ranges including the mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City got a foot of snow (1" snow water equivalent) with strong west wind. The snow fell on dirt around West Yellowstone while Cooke City has over 40" above 9,000' (Fisher Creek Snotel). Slabs of wind blown snow will be widespread and a couple feet thick. I expect a skier or sledder could easily trigger these slopes this weekend. Shooting cracks, collapses and recent avalanche activity, no matter how small, are signs of avalanche danger. Heed the obvious and be extra careful crossing steep, snow covered slopes no matter if you are on foot, skis or snowmobile.

Early season sliding and riding has a unique set of issues: colliding with thinly buried obstacles, being rusty in evaluating snow stability, and not maintaining or being practiced with our rescue gear. I recommend watching Dave's new 3-minute video where he demonstrates how to do a quick beacon drill (**video**). If you are hungry for more you can watch my 1-hour lecture on Early Season conditions **here**.

Every day we will update the **weather log**, **photos page** and **avalanche activity list**. We will continue issuing early season updates and transition to daily avalanche forecasts when we get more snow. 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:

Monday, November 16, 7-8:30 p.m. The **6th Annual MSU Snow and Avalanche Workshop** Research Roundup: New and expanded research. This is a free online event.

Thursday, November 19, 6-7 p.m. The Friends of the Avalanche Center will offer a **FREE 1-hr Avalanche Awareness Talk**. The talk will be a live, ONLINE event. Register here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Yc801Jm8SE6hfX9O09B1Mw

December 7-8: **Intro to Avalanches w/ Field** in West Yellowstone. The 7th is online lectures from 1-5 p.m. and separate snowmobile and ski field days on the 8th. Info and sign up is **HERE**.

The December **Avalanche Fundamentals with Field Course** has SOLD OUT, but **there will be a second course on January 23 and 24**. There are separate field sessions tailored for both skiers and splitboarders (Bridger Bowl) and snowmobilers (Buck Ridge).

Doug spoke with the Last Best Ski Podcast about avalanche fundamentals, some climbing history, and the workings of the GNFAC. The 25-minute podcast is available **here**.

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.