GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sun Feb 4, 2024

Good morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Sunday, February 4th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Klim** and **Avalanche Alliance**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

AVALANCHE WARNING

We have issued a Backcountry Avalanche Warning for the Centennial Mountains in Island Park, the Lionhead area near West Yellowstone, and the southern Madison and southern Gallatin ranges. New snow is overloading an exceptionally weak snowpack, creating very dangerous avalanche conditions. Human-triggered avalanches are very likely. Avoid avalanche terrain and avalanche runout zones. This warning will expire or be updated by 6:00 a.m. on Monday, February 5th.

Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning the mountains received 3-6" of new snow. Wind has been 5-15 mph out of various directions, ranging from northwest to west to southeast. Temperatures are teens to mid-20s F this morning, and today will reach mid to high 20s F. Wind will be 5-10 mph from the southeast to southwest, and this evening will increase to 10-20 mph from the southwest. Snowfall will taper this morning with another 2-4" possible near West Yellowstone and Island Park and 1-2" elsewhere. Another round of snow will arrive early tomorrow morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Island Park

Avalanche Warning

New snow over the last 24 hours with more today is adding weight to an already unstable snowpack. Yesterday in the southern Madison Range skiers experienced collapsing and saw old avalanche crowns (**observation**). On Friday near Island Park a rider triggered an avalanche and was partially buried while riding solo. He was thankfully able to dig himself out unharmed (**observation**). Today conditions will be more dangerous. Natural avalanches will occur and human-triggered avalanches are very likely. Avalanches can be triggered from flatter terrain connected to steeper slopes above. Plan your day carefully. Choose routes that avoid travel on or underneath slopes steeper than 30 degrees. The avalanche danger is HIGH.

Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison Cooke City

The mountains near Bozeman, Big Sky and Cooke City received 3-5" of new snow (0.2-0.5" of snow water equivalent) which adds weight to an unstable snowpack and creates dangerous avalanche conditions. Snowfall is forecast to be less than elsewhere today, so conditions will not be as bad as where there is a warning, but large human-triggered avalanches are likely. Previous avalanche activity near Cooke City has been widespread and

shows the type of avalanches that a person is likely to trigger (**weekly update video**). Earlier this week, an avalanche was triggered on Daisy Pass (**photos**), ice climbers approaching a climb triggered a large slide from 150 feet away (**observation**), and a rider was partially buried near Round Lake (**video**).

Avalanches are failing on weak layers buried 1-2 feet deep, breaking hundreds of feet wide, and being triggered from lower angle terrain. This season's snowpack has been exceptionally weak, and we have seen avalanches every time there is even a couple inches of new snow. Today, human-triggered avalanches are likely on steep slopes, and slides can be triggered from flatter terrain below steep slopes. Cautious route selection is essential. Avoid slopes steeper than 30 degrees and be extra cautious crossing below. The avalanche danger is CONSIDERABLE.

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.

POSTPONED: King and Queen of the Ridge, February 3rd. Bridger Bowl's community event series events this weekend are postponed, including King & Queen - stay tuned, details coming soon.

9-10 February. Companion Rescue Course. More information and registration **HERE**.

9-10 February. Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals. More information and registration for the **MOTORIZED SECTION** and **NON-MOTORIZED SECTION**

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.