GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Oct 24, 2024

This is Ian Hoyer with pre-season avalanche, weather and event information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Thursday, October 24. This information is sponsored by **The Friends of the Avalanche Center.** We will update this bulletin as conditions warrant.

You can support the Friends of the Avalanche Center by attending the **POWDER BLAST FUNDRAISER** on October 25, donating to the online fundraiser and bidding on silent auction items (more information, donate, auction and tickets HERE).

Mountain Weather

Over the last week, the mountains have gotten a few light dustings of snow intermixed with warm and sunny weather. This trend looks to continue over the next week. Warm and sunny weather are expected this weekend before chances for snowfall return on Monday and continue through the following work week.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

While most slopes are still bare ground and have no avalanche hazard, there is now some snow in the mountains and that requires considering the potential for avalanches. Treat every steep, snow covered slope as suspect until proven otherwise.

Slides are most likely where wind-loaded snow drifts more deeply in gullies and near ridgelines. Getting caught and carried at this time of year has the added consequence of bouncing off rough underlying surfaces, including rocks and stumps. Early season avalanches in southwest Montana have seriously injured and buried skiers (**2012 Incident Report**), caught and injured hunters (**2015 Incident Report**), and resulted in tragic fatalities (**2017 Incident Report**).

Remember the basics of avalanche safety as we begin traveling on snow-covered slopes.

- Beacons, shovels and probes are requisite equipment for each party member. Helmets and airbags are excellent additions.
- Only expose one person at a time to avalanche terrain (slopes steeper than 30 degrees) while partners look on from a safe area nearby.
- Watch for red flags that indicate instability, such as recent avalanche activity, cracking and collapsing. If these are present, avoid steep slopes.
- If there is enough snow to ride, there is enough snow to slide. Dig down and test the snowpack for instability before considering travel in avalanche terrain.

Before you get out this season, check over your avalanche gear (**video**), refresh your skills by practicing avalanche rescue with your backcountry partners (**video**) and sign up for an avalanche class. Our **education calendar** lists local courses the Friends of the Avalanche Center and other regional providers offer.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out: **Events and Education Calendar.**