

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Dec 25, 2024

This is Mark Staples with the avalanche forecast for Christmas Day, December 25th, at 7:00 am. This information is sponsored by [Yellowstone Club Community Foundation](#) and [Montana State Parks](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday strong winds blew from the south 10-40 mph gusting to 60 mph at 11,000 ft.

This morning winds died off (averaging 3-10 mph from the W) and temperatures cooled considerably (mid 20s F). 3-4 inches of snow fell near Big Sky, 1-2 inches near West Yellowstone/Island Park, 1-2 inches in Hyalite, and the Bridger Range and Cooke City area remained dry.

Today a few more snowflakes could fall in the early morning hours, then skies will slowly clear and become mostly sunny. Winds will be light, and temperatures shouldn't warm more than a few degrees. Taylor Swift's boyfriend's team (aka the Chiefs) will beat the Steelers but it won't be easy overcoming the Steeler defense with Mahomes nursing a sore ankle.

Weather through the weekend will be snowy and cool with the heaviest precip occurring this weekend and favoring southern parts of the forecast area.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



All Regions

Watch out for **fresh wind slabs** that formed as yesterday's strong southerly winds whipped around the several inches of snow (up to 5" near Cooke) that had fallen over the last four days. [One person in Hyalite Canyon](#) south of Bozeman reported strong winds moving snow all day long yesterday, and Big Sky Resort had to close the summit because of strong winds.

HEADS UP - snowfall early this morning will camouflage these fresh drifts and make them hard to identify.

Persistent slab avalanches 1-2 ft deep remain possible across the entire forecast area. A weak layer of facets responsible for this problem is very easy to find in the snowpack. The odds of triggering one of these avalanches are higher on slopes loaded by yesterday's strong southerly winds.

Where to travel - The easiest option is to seek out slopes less than 30 degrees in steepness that are not steep enough to slide. Otherwise, if getting onto steeper terrain, choose slopes sheltered from yesterday's strong winds and have a clean runout with no trees, rocks, or terrain traps that make the consequences of an avalanche worse.

Looking ahead, with such a widespread persistent weak layer in the snowpack, the situation will have to get worse before it gets better. More snow coming through this weekend will make persistent slab avalanches more likely and larger, but in the long run can help to bury and heal this weak layer. Be patient and play it safe.

With two types of avalanches possible today the avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#) with heightened avalanche conditions on recently wind loaded slopes

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

Monday, December 30, 6-8 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Conditions Update, MAP Brewing.

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.

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.

Friends of the Avalanche Center: Fall Fundraiser!

We're still counting on your support and the online Fall Powder Blast fundraiser is 80% of the way to our goal. Please consider making even a small donation [HERE](#) or via [Venmo](#)