

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Feb 2, 2022

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Wednesday, February 2nd, at 7:15 a.m. This information is sponsored by the [Upper Yellowstone Snowmobile Club](#), the [Community Food Co-op](#) and [Montana Backcountry Alliance](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

It is cold this morning with temperatures ranging from -17 F in the Bridger Range to a balmy -4 F outside of West Yellowstone. Light 5-15 mph winds are swirling around the northern half of the map from the east to west. Most of the advisory area received 4-6" of cold snow with West Yellowstone and Cooke City coming in at 2". Temperatures will climb into the mid to high single digits F and light winds will continue to swirl during the day before settling back to the southwest to the west by tomorrow. Lingering snow showers will end this morning with no real accumulation.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range

In the last two days, 6-10" of low-density snow equal to 0.3-0.7" of [snow water equivalent](#) (SWE) fell onto a variety of weak layers within the top 18" of the snowpack in the Bridger, Madison and Gallatin Ranges. The new snow will not be enough to tip the scales toward widespread instability. Consider recent avalanche activity to understand the concerns for the day. On the less likely end of this spectrum was a shallow but wide avalanche of hard windblown snow on Saddle Peak that occurred on January 25th ([details, photos and video](#)) and on the more likely end was a windslab triggered near Big Sky by a cornice collapse on Friday ([details and photo](#)) and small loose snow avalanches south of Bridger Bowl last Thursday ([details and photo](#)). Today, slab avalanches could be large enough to injure or bury a skier or rider and loose snow avalanches could result in an unpleasant tumble in technical terrain.

Dig down a couple of feet and perform a quick stability test to assess the upper levels of the snowpack before skiing and riding any steep slope ([how to test in less than 1-minute](#)). If you don't see signs of instability during your travel or in your stability test, stay warm and enjoy the new snow.

Today, human-triggered avalanches are possible and the danger is **MODERATE**.



Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

The mountains around West Yellowstone and Cooke City picked up 4-5" of snow equal to 0.2-0.3" of SWE. This will soften the surface but will not significantly increase the avalanche danger. Yesterday in Cooke City, Doug noted that new snow was falling on weak facets at or near the surface and he would not be surprised if folks started triggering slides *if* the snow kept up ([video](#)). Well, fortunately for stability and unfortunately for riding and skiing conditions, the snow did *not* keep up. Dig a snowpit to assess the top couple of feet of the

snowpack and watch for signs of isolated instability as you travel. Pull back if you find localized areas with weaker snow. The fundamentals don't change with the avalanche danger rating. Carry and be familiar with avalanche rescue gear and expose only one person at a time to avalanche terrain.

Human-triggered avalanches are unlikely and the danger is [**LOW**](#).

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Education Opportunities

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:

February 4th, Dillon Montana Avalanche Fundamentals, three-part series of pre-recorded lectures, virtual Q&A and an in-person field session. Pre-registration and more information [HERE](#).

February 5th, King and Queen of the Ridge at Bridger Bowl. Come hike and ski with your friends for avalanche awareness and fun! Details below.

February 10th at 6:30 p.m., Forecaster Chat at Uphill Pursuits, "Beyond the Beacon" with GNFAC Forecaster Dave Zinn

Every Saturday near Cooke City, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. FREE snowpack update and transceiver/rescue training. Stop by for 20 minutes or more at the Round Lake Warming Hut.

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE, FEBRUARY 5TH

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 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 5th event must register separately with Bridger Bowl [HERE](#).