

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Jan 22, 2022

Good morning. This is Alex Marienthal with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, January 22nd at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Blitz Motorsports and Yamaha](#) and [Gallatin County Sheriff Search and Rescue](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

As snowfall ended yesterday morning the mountains got 4" in Hyalite and 1-3" near Cooke City and Big Sky. Elsewhere had no snow in the last 24 hours. Wind has been west-northwest at 5-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph, and in the Bridger Range wind at the ridgeline has been 15-20 mph with gusts to 40 mph. This morning temperatures are teens F. Today will be increasingly clear with temperatures in the 20s F and wind from the west-north at 10-20 mph. The next chance for light snow is Monday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range Gallatin Range Madison Range

Avalanches are possible to trigger where recent snow is drifted into slabs up to 1-2 feet thick. The brief storm that ended yesterday morning left 6-9" of heavy snow near Bozeman (0.8-1.3" [Snow Water Equivalent](#)) with 5-6" near Big Sky (0.5-0.6" SWE), and reports of over a foot in the southern Madison Range. Yesterday I skied north of Bridger Bowl out-of-bounds and saw no avalanche activity or cracking in the new snow. Riders on Buck Ridge near Big Sky reported similar signs that the new snow was bonding well. Remain cautious of steep, wind-loaded slopes, especially if you see wind transporting snow today, or other signs of instability like cracking across the snow surface or fresh avalanches.

A layer of surface hoar was buried prior to this storm in the southern half of our advisory area which could make avalanches easier to trigger ([Taylor Fork video](#)). Before riding steep slopes dig and do a quick stability test to look for unstable weak layers buried below the recent snow. Although unlikely, a much larger avalanche breaking on weak snow near the bottom of the snowpack could be triggered by a smaller wind slab or cornice fall. Today avalanches are possible, and danger is [MODERATE](#) on wind-loaded slopes and [LOW](#) on all other slopes.



Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

The recent storm dropped 3-4" (0.3" SWE) of snow near Cooke City and West Yellowstone with reports of a few more inches of low-density snow in areas north of Cooke City. This is minimal weight added to a generally stable snowpack ([video](#)), and without much wind to create thicker unstable slabs, large avalanches are unlikely today. Yesterday riders north of Cooke City reported a few small natural and human triggered loose snow avalanches ([photos and details](#)). Watch out for loose snow avalanches or isolated drifts in very steep terrain, above cliffs, or slopes where getting knocked off your feet by a small avalanche would have high consequences. Overall, large avalanches are unlikely and the avalanche 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

The [West Yellowstone Beacon Park](#) is up and running! Stop by to check it out and practice with your rescue gear.

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:

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.