GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Wed Mar 26, 2025

This is Dave Zinn with the avalanche forecast on Wednesday, March 26th, at 6:45 a.m., sponsored by **Klim** and **Bridger Bowl**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning, temperatures are in the upper 20s to low 30s F with 5-15 mph wind from the northwest to southwest. There is no new snow.

Today will be similar to yesterday, but warmer and sunnier, with high temperatures in the upper 40s to upper 50s F. Winds will be 5-15 mph from the south and southwest under sunny skies.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

It will feel like spring today (if not early summer) with temperatures 10 degrees warmer than yesterday and fewer clouds in the sky to block the incoming rays. These conditions will accelerate snow surface warming, and **wet loose avalanches** will pack a serious punch, increasing in volume and traveling farther than yesterday. Southeast through west-facing slopes, and terrain with exposed rocks or cliff bands, will be particularly susceptible as they are exposed to and absorb more heat (**Bradley's Meadow avalanche**, **Gallatin Canyon avalanches**). Yesterday, local ski patrol snow safety teams closed terrain to manage the threat within ski area boundaries. In the backcountry, limit your exposure to problematic aspects and slopes as the snow transitions from frozen and mostly stable to wet and unstable. Move to shadier, northern aspects when the snow surface becomes saturated or you notice warning signs, such as pinwheels or small wet avalanches nearby.

Concern about **wind slab avalanches** has decreased since the last storm ended. However, triggering an unstable drift remains possible, especially on higher elevation slopes below cornices and where the snow remained cool yesterday. Look at photos of wind slab avalanches that broke naturally on Saddle Peak (**photo**) and in Cooke City yesterday and the day before for examples (**photo and details**, **details and photo**). Avoid obviously wind-loaded slopes or evaluate the upper snowpack for instability. Signs like cracking will not be forthcoming before an avalanche occurs.

Persistent slab avalanches are less likely, but remain a concern, particularly in the Lionhead, Southern Gallatin, and Southern Madison Ranges, and to a lesser extent, the Cooke City area. Several avalanches broke 2-3 feet deep on buried weak layers within the last week in the Taylor Fork area (**avalanche 1**, **avalanche 2**) and north of Cooke City (**avalanche 3**). Reduce your risk by selecting smaller slopes without terrain traps and following safe travel practices. Testing the snowpack before entering steep terrain will help you identify instability.

Each avalanche problem demands distinct management strategies, so be mindful of the most pressing threat at any given time. The avalanche danger is MODERATE in the morning but will quickly rise to CONSIDERABLE as wet snow instability intensifies.