

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Wed Jan 27, 2016

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Wednesday, January 27, at 6:45 AM. Today's advisory is sponsored by [Grizzly Outfitters](#) in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Under partly cloudy skies winds are blowing west-northwest at 30-40 mph in the Bridger Range and 10-15 mph with gusts of 30 elsewhere. There's been no new snow in the last 48 hours and temperatures this morning are in the mid 20s with mid-teens in the southern mountains. Today will be partly cloudy with temperatures in the low 30s. No snow is expected until Friday.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

[Bridger Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#)

[Lionhead area near West Yellowstone](#) [Cooke City](#)

Strong winds are blowing in the northern mountains, most notably in the Bridger Range where west winds moved snow at all elevations. Pillows of windblown snow were easily triggered by the Bridger Bowl Ski Patrol. My partner and I were in Hyalite yesterday and saw ridgelines stripped to dirt with leeward slopes loaded. We saw one large natural slide ([photo](#)) that likely broke on the weak snow (depth hoar) near the ground and [made a video](#) on a similar aspect explaining what happened. The same recipe exists in the northern Madison Range and the Big Sky Ski Patrol sent in [two pictures](#) of natural avalanches in the backcountry from Monday's snow and strong winds.

Avalanches were triggered by the weight of windblown snow and in some cases by cornices breaking. Weak snow at the ground is found everywhere and a layer of small facets 1-2 feet under the surface can be found randomly on a few others. [Eric's video from Bacon Rind](#) on Sunday explains the poor snow structure and its implications throughout our forecast area. In essence, these layers are getting harder to trigger, but are still not trusted. For example, yesterday I could not get columns to break consistently in my stability tests, yet ¼ mile away I was looking at a fresh avalanche.

Recent wind-loading in the northern ranges and a poor snow structure throughout southwest Montana mean triggering avalanches is still possible. For today, the avalanche danger is rated **[MODERATE](#)** on all slopes.

Alex will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning by 7:30 a.m. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations to share, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or leave a message at 587-6984.

EVENTS and AVALANCHE EDUCATION

A complete calendar of classes can be found [HERE](#).

TONIGHT: Advanced Avalanche Workshop w/ Field Course

January 27, 28, and 30: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/16862>

Course content includes: snowpack metamorphism, the mechanics of avalanche failure and fracture, and decision-making. Different topics are covered each evening session. The field session includes snowpack analysis and avalanche rescue scenarios.

West Yellowstone: Saturday, January 30, *1hr Avalanche Awareness*, West Yellowstone Holiday Inn, 7-8:30 p.m.

Cooke City: Saturday, January 30, *Companion Rescue Clinic for Snowmobilers*. Information and registration here: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/18078>

Lewistown: Saturday, January 30, 9:00 a.m., *1hr Avalanche Awareness for Snowmobilers*, Lewiston Honda-Polaris. More information can be found [HERE](#).

EVENT at BRIDGER BOWL: February 6, *King and Queen of the Ridge*. A day of hiking and skiing the Ridge as a fundraiser for the Friends of the Avalanche Center. Teams and individuals are welcome! More info here: <http://bridgerbowl.com/event/king-and-queen-of-the-ridge>