

## GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Jan 28, 2025

This is Dave Zinn with the avalanche forecast for Tuesday, January 28th, at 7:00 a.m. sponsored by [Polaris](#) and [Cooke City Super 8/Bearclaw Bob's](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

**This morning**, mountain temperatures are in the 20s F with valley temperatures in the single digits to teens F. Winds around Bozeman and Big Sky are 15-25 mph from the west and northwest. Winds farther south in West Yellowstone, Island Park and Cooke City are 5-10 mph.

**Today**, under clear skies, temperatures will climb into the 30s F with 10-25 mph winds in the northern forecast area and calm conditions in the southern forecast area.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

**Wind slab instabilities** are often sensitive to human triggers one day and stubborn the next. However, in the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky, recent drifts of snow rest on weak layers that will slow their stabilization on some slopes.

Yesterday, skiers saw a natural wind slab avalanche in Hyalite Canyon ([info and photo](#)), and Sunday, skiers north of Bridger Bowl triggered an avalanche on a wind-loaded slope that broke a foot deep and twenty feet wide. Others noticed shooting cracks in wind-drifted snow ([observation 1](#), [observation 2](#)). Recent avalanche activity and cracking are clear signs of instability. Avoid wind-loaded slopes or assess the upper few feet of the snowpack for instability related to drifted snow sitting on top of weak layers.

Temperatures in the 30s under sunny skies this afternoon may result in **wet loose snow avalanches**. These are most likely on south-facing slopes (SE, S, SW). Shift your travel to cooler, northerly aspects if you notice the snow surface getting wet, pinwheels or wet loose avalanches.

Seek out slopes protected from the wind and sun for the best and safest conditions and assess the upper few feet of the snowpack for instability before traveling in steep terrain. The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#).



Southern Madison Southern Gallatin Lionhead Range Cooke City Island Park

In Island Park, West Yellowstone, Cooke City, and the Southern Gallatin and Madison Ranges, temperatures will climb above freezing under sunny skies. This afternoon, on southerly aspects, **wet loose snow avalanches** will start at a point and entrain snow as they slide. Move to cooler aspects if the snow surface gets wet and gloppy or you observe pinwheels start to come off rocky bands or trees.

*Dry snow* avalanches are unlikely but not impossible ([Lionhead video](#), [Cooke City video](#)). Yesterday, Alex and I discussed in our [video](#) how people often begin to push into steeper terrain when the danger drops. While this is

reasonable during periods of low danger, steep and extreme terrain is also where you may encounter isolated instability. Yesterday, we saw a small avalanche in the Republic Creek drainage that failed when a cornice fell on very steep, rocky terrain ([photo](#)). The idea of getting tumbled by a similar slide is concerning at best.

Persistent weak layers still lurk near the base of the snowpack, slides failing on these layers as **persistent slab avalanches** are currently unlikely, but the danger will return with the next snowstorm. Large slides south of Cooke City in the last two weeks demonstrate their potential ([observation](#), [photo](#)).

Follow safe travel protocols, remain observant of indicators of isolated instability and shift to more northerly aspects in the afternoon if snow surfaces get wet.

The avalanche danger is rated [LOW](#) in the morning and will increase to [MODERATE](#) for wet snow danger in the afternoon.

## **KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE**

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski/ride? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge on 2/1 is for you. Hike, ride and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center at Bridger Bowl this year! Join this fun event to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for the top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes.* Info to fundraise is [HERE](#) or [donate here](#).

\*\*\*Race participants for the King and Queen of the Ridge must register separately with Bridger Bowl [here](#)\*\*\*

## **Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events**

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

**February 20, 4-7 p.m.** Beacon BBQ at Uphill Pursuits in Bozeman. Come try out different brands of avalanche transceivers (or practice with your own!) with coaching from Friends of GNFAC instructors and free hotdogs.

**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.