

GNFAC Avalanche Advisory for Mon Oct 23, 2017

Good morning. This is Alex Marienthal with early season weather and avalanche information for the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center on Monday, October 23rd at 11:30 a.m. This bulletin is sponsored by [The Friends of the Avalanche Center](#) and [Grizzly Outfitters](#), the title sponsor of [Powder Blast on October 27th](#). We will update early season information as conditions warrant, and update our weather log and conditions pages after storms.

Mountain Weather

Since Saturday morning, the mountains got 8" of new snow near Cooke City, 4" in the southern Madison Range and Lionhead area, 1" in Big Sky and Hyalite, and zero in the Bridgers. Temperatures this morning are in the 20s F, and wind is westerly at 15-25 mph with gusts to 35 mph. Wind yesterday was 25-35 mph with gusts up to 77 mph at the Hyalite weather station.

Temperatures today will be 30s to low 40s F. Expect warmer, breezy, dry weather through Wednesday. The next chance for snow is Wednesday night, when the passage of a cold front could leave 1-3" of snow in the mountains and bring high temperatures on Thursday in the 30s F. After Thursday, a strong ridge of high pressure over the region will create dry weather with temperatures up to 50 F through the weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



[Bridger Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Lionhead Range](#) [Cooke City](#)

Above average snowfall since mid-September has left 2-3 feet of snow on shady, high elevation slopes. Sunny aspects and lower elevations have little to no snow due to intermittent warm, sunny days ([photo](#), [photo](#), [snowpit](#)). Where there is enough snow to ride, there is enough snow to slide. Ice climbers, skiers, and hunters all need to prepare for avalanches this time of year.

Slopes where wind has drifted snow into thick slabs create the main avalanche concern. These wind slabs are more likely where the snowpack is deepest. This is also where skiing is most desirable due to smooth, rock free surfaces. Carefully assess the snowpack, and choose lower angle terrain if you're unsure, or see clear signs of instability such as collapsing or cracking of the snow. On Saturday, climbers on the Sphinx found waist deep snow, then retreated to safer terrain when they witnessed cracking of 8" thick slabs. Terrain traps such as cliffs, trees, rocks, and gullies increase the consequences of even the smallest slide, and are more prevalent right now due to thin snow cover.

Hunters often travel solo and don't carry avalanche rescue gear, so should completely avoid steep, snow covered avalanche terrain. Avoid deep, dense or hard drifts of snow near ridgelines and on the steep sides of gullies. If necessary, cross these features one at a time, at the top versus mid-slope, and watch each other from a safe area. Consider travel on slopes with shallow or no snow to minimize exposure to avalanches.

Ice climbers should completely avoid steep, high consequence terrain if it's loaded with snow, and turn around at the first sign of instability such as cracking of deep drifts. A small, 15' wide avalanche killed two climbers on the Sphinx in October 2004.

Skiers need to carry rescue gear as they normally would in the middle of winter (Beacon, Shovel, and Probe). Put fresh batteries in your beacon and practice using it, check your probe and shovel for damage, and check your partners' gear before you leave the trailhead.

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, drop a line via our website, email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#GNFACobs).

Powder Blast Fund-raiser

27 October, 6:30 p.m. at the Emerson Cultural Center. [Tickets and Info](#)

Grizzly Outfitters of Big Sky is title sponsor of this year's 19th Annual Powder Blast. **Mystery Ranch, World Boards, Community Food Co-op, and Spark R&D** are key sponsors along with **Alpine Orthopedics, Stronghold Fabrication, Highline Partners, and Marcie Hahn-Knoff Real Estate. Javaman, Edward Jones and Buck Products** are other long-time PB supporters.

Your \$30 donation gets you an unforgettable evening at the Emerson Cultural Center. All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Avalanche Center which supports avalanche awareness, education and information throughout southwest Montana.

Beer from **Katabatic Brewing Company**; Wine from **Montana Ale Works**; Dinner by **Bountiful Table**; Music by **DJ Missy O'Malley**. **And the best silent auction of outdoor gear in the valley!**

Events and Education Calendar

Billings

7 November, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at Basecamp, Billings

BUTTE

17 November, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m., Butte, MT

HELENA

7 November, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at Carroll College, Helena

18 November, **Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice for Snowmobiles**, 9 a.m. at Montana Boat Center, Helena

7 December, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at Basecamp, Helena

BOZEMAN

1 November, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at REI Bozeman

6 December, **Avalanche Awareness**, 6-7:30 p.m. at REI Bozeman

7 December, **Avalanche Awareness and Beacon Practice**, 6-8 p.m. at Beall Park, Bozeman

Nov. 29, 30 and Dec. 2, 3 or 9, **Introduction to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#)

Jan. 12 and 13, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, [Info and Register](#)

Jan. 17, 18 and 20 or 21, **Introduction to Avalanches w/ Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#)

Jan. 24, 25 and 27, **Advanced Avalanche Workshop w. Field Day**, [Info and Register Here](#)

Feb. 9 and 10, **Companion Rescue Clinic**, [Info and Register](#)