GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Apr 3, 2023

Good morning. This is Dave Zinn with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Monday, April 3rd at 7:00 a.m. This information is sponsored by **Blitz Motorsports and Yamaha** and the **Yellowstone Club Community Foundation**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

The mountains around Big Sky, West Yellowstone and Cooke City received 1-3” of snow yesterday. Temperatures are in the single digits F, and winds calmed and shifted to the southwest to southeast at 5-10 mph. Today, temperatures will be in the 20s F with east to northeast winds blowing 5-15 mph. West Yellowstone will see up to 5” of snow by tomorrow morning, with a trace to 2” elsewhere.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Southern Madison | Southern Gallatin | Lionhead Range | Cooke City | Island Park

The southern ranges of the advisory area received 12-14” of snow in the last few days. Strong winds drifted snow onto slopes where avalanches breaking 1-2’ deep are likely today. Larger avalanches failing on deeply buried weak layers are possible.

Despite poor visibility, we had many reports of avalanches yesterday within the new and wind-drifted snow. Near Cooke City, a natural avalanche broke 1-3’ deep and 100’ wide on Woody Ridge (**photos and details**), and a skier remotely triggered a wind-loaded slope on Mineral Mountain from 20’ away that avalanched 12-18” deep, 750’ wide and ran into mature trees below (**photo and details**). We saw six natural avalanches in the Taylor Fork that broke within the new and wind-drifted snow above Beaver Creek (**photos and details**, **video**).

True to form this season, new snow and wind-loading resulted in at least a few deep slab avalanches. In the Hayden Creek drainage south of Cooke City, an avalanche broke 1000’ wide and 4-6’ deep (**photos and details**), and near Hilgard Peak in the Southern Madison Range, an avalanche similarly appeared 4-6’ deep and 1000’ wide (**photos and details**, **video**). Groups sent in two noteworthy observations of deep slab avalanches from outside the advisory area; a large avalanche in the Tobacco Root Mountains (**photo**) and an avalanche east of Emigrant Peak in the Absaroka Range that broke an estimated 10’ deep and 1000’ wide (**photo and observation**).

Recreate on slopes less than 30 degrees steepness, avoiding areas immediately below steep slopes. Choose smaller, non-wind-loaded slopes without terrain traps. The danger is CONSIDERABLE.

Bridger Range | Northern Gallatin | Northern Madison

The northern ranges of the advisory area received 5-7” of snow and strong winds in the last few days. Avalanches breaking 1-2’ deep within recently wind-drifted snow and on deeply buried weak layers are

possible.

Yesterday, groups sent in details and photos of natural avalanches breaking 1-3’ deep on wind-loaded slopes in the Bridger Range (**Battle Ridge**, **Naya Nuki**). On Friday, a natural avalanche failed on Cedar Mountain near Big Sky (**photo**), and a rider triggered a 2-3’ deep avalanche from 100’ away in Portal Creek (**photo and details**).

Recent deep slab avalanches highlight a dangerous possibility. Thursday, outside the Big Sky Resort boundary, a snowboarder took a nasty ride over cliffs in a slide that broke 2-4’ deep (**photo**). Earlier this weekend, an avalanche above Ainger Lake in the Bridger Range broke several feet deep and 500 feet wide, running to the Lake below (**details and photos**).

Dig and test for instability in the upper few feet of the snowpack and retreat from steep slopes where signs of instability are present. Choose smaller, non-wind-loaded slopes with fewer hazards, like trees or cliffs. The avalanche danger is MODERATE.

Please share avalanche, snowpack or weather observations via our website, email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Events and Education Calendar.