



GNFAC Season Summary

April 15, 2013

Greetings!

We just wrapped up our 23rd season at the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center, one of the best winters ever: lots of snow, many days of good stability, and no fatalities. It has been nine years we've had this combination.

Our first storm was on October 3rd when five inches of snow fell above 7,000'. Unbelievably, people skied. I did not click into my boards until October 28th when three skiers were caught, partially buried and injured in an avalanche in the northern Bridger Range. This was the starting pistol to the season which ended on April 7th after 136 avalanche advisories.

Folks reported 27 avalanche incidents involving 31 people this season. Remarkably, there were no fatalities. Luck was certainly a factor but so were snowpack conditions. Avalanches tended to be smaller and less deep than in years past. We issued only one Avalanche Warning, a nice change of pace.

Our energies were concentrated on education, outreach, daily advisories and field days. Our essential mission is twofold: the first part is to get accurate and relevant information about the snowpack, the second is to clearly and succinctly communicate this information to all user groups. Avalanche education is the overarching umbrella of our work which we could not do effectively without the hard work of the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

THE GNFAC INDEX

- Average number of people getting our daily advisory: 4,491
- Number of avalanche classes and attendees: 67 and 3,473
- Percentage of the classes taught by the Friends: 70%
- Number of YouTube videos made this season and number of views: 53 and 62,456
- Number of views for all 274 of our videos: 795,000

- Total number of field days: 98
- Number of full-profile snowpits dug and stability tests performed this season: 129 and 377
- Miles driven on each Yamaha Nytro snowmobile this season: 1,200
- Number of times I had to remind Mark to not hog riding the Nytro TURBO: at least 5
- Last season without an avalanche fatality: 2003-04
- Number of folks reported caught, partially buried and injured in avalanches: 12, 5 and 2.
- Record number of ridge hikes John Curry did for the King & Queen competition: 30
- Number of hikes Doug, Mark and Eric did: 0, 9 and 18
- If x = lameness, Doug's efforts expressed as a formula: $2(x)$
- Daily average number of pageviews to mtavalanche.com: 3,603
- Number of Facebook "Likes" and Twitter "Followers": 2,595 and 1,133
- Percentage of days with a LOW avalanche danger rating on some terrain: 40%
- A HIGH danger: 8%

Mark, Eric and I would not be able to run a successful program without all of your help. The avalanche center relies heavily on volunteers and outside financial support. This season 43% of our annual budget came from the Friends of the Avalanche Center and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. We are indebted to the outdoor community and local businesses for supporting the Friends for the last two decades.

Thank you for another great season. We will start up again next October. Until then, have a safe and enjoyable spring and summer.

Respectfully,

Doug Chabot