GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Feb 15, 2020

Good Morning. This is Ian Hoyer with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Saturday, February 15th at 7:00 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by **Swiss Fit Montana** and **Map Brewing**. This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Yesterday morning, 5-7" of snow fell in the mountains around Bozeman and Cooke City, 3-5" in the Madison Range, and no new snow near Lionhead. West winds are 10-25 mph, with gusts of 30-50 mph. Temperatures are in the single digits to teens F. Moderate west winds with strong gusts will continue today. Temperatures will rise into the teens and 20s F under partly to mostly cloudy skies. Snow showers today will become heavier overnight, with 4-6" accumulating by tomorrow morning near West Yellowstone and Cooke City, and 2-4" near Bozeman and Big Sky. Snow will continue through the day tomorrow.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

All Regions

Gusty west winds are drifting yesterday's new snow into cohesive slabs that will be easily triggered today. Mostly these slabs are relatively thin, but there are also be deeper pockets where you could trigger a larger slide in the new snow. Watch out for deeper drifts near ridgelines. Identify and avoid the most heavily windloaded slopes. Feel for the snow stiffening under your feet and look for cracks shooting out in front of your skis/sled as signs you've found one of these potentially dangerous drifts.

Deep in the snowpack there are weak layers at the ground that can't be forgotten. Yesterday's little bit of new snow wasn't a huge load on these layers, but it is enough to keep them from entirely going to bed. Windloaded slopes got a larger load and if you trigger a slide in the new snow, it could step down to the layers near the ground. Are you likely to trigger a deep slab avalanche today? No. But the possibility is out there, and if you do, bad outcomes are likely. It's only be few days since the last slide on these layers (**photo**). Watch a few of the videos we've made standing beneath huge crowns over the last couple weeks to remind yourself of the size and power of these slides (**video**, **video**, **video**).

The avalanche danger is MODERATE today across our forecast area.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can fill out an **observation form**, email us (**mtavalanche@gmail.com**), leave a VM at 406-587-6984, or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

Our education calendar is full of awareness lectures and field courses. Check it out and plan to attend one or two: Events and Education Calendar.

COOKE CITY

Every Friday and Saturday, **Snowpack Update and Rescue Training**. Friday, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at the Soda Butte Lodge. Saturday anytime between 10-2 @ Round Lake.

BOZEMAN

March 4, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness.** 6-7 p.m. at REI.

WEST YELLOWSTONE

February 22, **1-hr Avalanche Awareness.** 7-8 p.m. at West Yellowstone Holiday Inn.