

## GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Feb 23, 2023

Good morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Thursday, February 23rd at 6:45 a.m. This information is sponsored by [Beartooth Powder Guides](#), [Yellowstone Ski Tours](#) and [Suzy Hahn: Montana Mountain Real Estate Cooke City](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

### Mountain Weather

There is no new snow to report. The [Bridger ridge](#) is the coldest (-28F) and windiest (30-45 mph E). All other stations are showing wind from the SW at 10-20 mph with temperatures of -10 to -20F. Skies will be partly cloudy in the north and mostly cloudy in the south as wind remains light to moderate out of the SW, switching this afternoon in the Bridgers. The arctic grip will loosen and temperatures should hit zero F. By tomorrow morning Lionhead and Cooke City will have 1-2" of snow and a trace to 1" elsewhere.

### Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



#### Bridger Range Cooke City

The east wind in the Bridger Range is a frigid anomaly. It is blowing strong and yesterday it gusted to 70+ mph many times. In simple terms, east facing upper elevation slopes have been scoured while west facing slopes have been loaded. The reality of strong wind is that it does not always follow clean patterns and we expect a few pockets of dense, wind-drifted snow on all aspects.

Both Cooke City and the Bridger Range got hammered with snow and wind Saturday afternoon through Tuesday when 3-4 feet fell, reportedly more in Cooke City. The precise amount is not important. All slopes were loaded with heavy weight and many avalanches were seen in Cooke City while the Bridger Range only had a few. Skiers near Cooke City saw both large and small slab avalanches yesterday and sent in pictures and observations ([Obs1](#), [Obs2](#)). In both the Bridger Range and Cooke City natural avalanches are not expected today, but triggering one is. Slopes need more time to adjust to the weight of the new snow ([video](#)). Stability is getting better, but we cannot rush the trend. Today is a day to avoid getting on steep slopes and enjoy the deep snow on low-angled terrain instead.

The avalanche danger is rated [CONSIDERABLE](#) on all slopes.



#### Gallatin Range Madison Range Lionhead Range

The Gallatin Range, Madison Range and Lionhead area near West Yellowstone received 15-25" during the multi-day storm. Overall the snowpack held up well with only a few [avalanches reported](#). Yesterday, Dave and his partner rode from Taylor Fork to Cabin Creek looking for avalanches and found none. Visibility was not perfect, but it was good enough to determine that natural slides were few and far between ([video](#) and [observation](#)). The concern throughout these ranges center around triggering avalanches on wind-loaded slopes and also on slopes that may harbor a lingering weakness three feet deep. With passing days the snowpack is

getting more stable, but we know that some areas, like Lionhead, had weaker snow near the surface before this storm ([observation](#)). Without obvious signs of instability the onus to find it lies with you. You can dig, test and decide, or you can just hope for the best.

The avalanche danger is rated [MODERATE](#) on all slopes.

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



## Island Park

The mountains received 15" of snow with the recent, multi-day storm. The concern is triggering avalanches on wind-loaded slopes and also on slopes that may harbor a lingering weakness three feet deep. Without obvious signs of instability the onus to find it lies with you. You can dig, test and decide, or you can just hope for the best.

## Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

February 24 & 25, Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 3, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Bozeman Splitfest - Companion Rescue Clinic. Classroom session followed by a field session. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 3-5, Bozeman Splitfest. [More info and register here](#).

March 3 & 4, Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

March 9, 6 p.m.-7 p.m., 1-Hour Awareness - Spring conditions. FREE at REI Bozeman.

March 10 & 11, SheJumps - Women's Companion Rescue Clinic. Online classroom session Friday evening followed by a field session from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday. [More information and registration HERE](#).

Every Saturday, 10 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. ***Avalanche Rescue Training***, drop in for any amount of time. Round Lake Warming Hut, Cooke City. Free.

[Loss in the Outdoors](#), is a support group for those who have been affected by grief and loss related to outdoor pursuits. Check out the link for more information.