

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Jan 11, 2010

Good Morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Advisory issued on Monday, January 11, at 7:30 a.m. **Jeff King at Edwards Jones Investments**, in cooperation with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**, sponsor today's advisory. This advisory does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

If you enjoyed yesterdays beautiful weather than you will definitely like the weather today. High pressure has created carbon copy weather over the past couple days and will continue to do so through tomorrow. Warm and dry conditions will prevail today, sending high temperatures close to 40 F degrees with lows falling into the teens. Winds will remain light in the valleys but will pick up this afternoon out of the west at 15-20 mph along the ridgelines. The dominating high pressure will begin to break down starting Wednesday morning, bringing with it a slight change in conditions.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Just because the weather is high pressure and stable does not mean the same for the snowpack. The pack is still searching for the equilibrium that it may never achieve this season. During the storm cycle last week tremendous stress was added very quickly. This new load increased an already offset equilibrium in the pack, testing and at times snapping the meager strength that held the snow in place. This resulted in one of the largest avalanche cycles our area has seen in quite some time. The snowpack hates rapid change, whether it's an increase in load or major temperature fluctuations, both can have an adverse affect on the pack creating very dangerous avalanche conditions.

As the snowpack tries to cope with the extremes set upon it during the past week, spatial variability of snow conditions has become common. One slope might be perfect powder while a slope 100 feet away might be riddled with punchy wind slabs. Because we are in the midst of an equal opportunity avalanche cycle, meaning all aspects and elevations have been affected, determining which slopes are most stable can seem nearly impossible. Approaching all slopes as if they will slide is the smartest way to travel in the backcountry under these conditions.

Yesterday Doug and his partner traveled to Buck Ridge to observe and document the highly impressive avalanche cycle of this past week. They witnessed an intense amount of avalanche activity both natural and human triggered. A point of concern in this area is snowmobile tracks next to and through recent avalanches ([photo](#)). This type of decision making does not ensure a long happy career as a rider or skier. With a thick cohesive slab 1-2 feet thick sitting over various layers of weak faceted snow near the ground sizeable and destructive avalanches remain a real concern. Due to the unstable nature of the pack fractures will propagate over long distances and avalanches can be triggered from low angle terrain in avalanche runout zones. Avoid riding and playing under slopes steeper than 30 degrees.

Once again, human triggered avalanches are likely over our entire advisory area and the avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE**.

Doug will issue the next advisory tomorrow morning at 7:30 a.m. If you get out in the backcountry give us a call or email with your observations. You can reach us at 587-6984 or email us at mtavalanche@gmail.com.

Entertainment

Hans Saari Memorial Fund presents the UP THERE Film Fest Thursday and Friday, January 14-15 at the Emerson Cultural Center - Two Films, including Mike Marolt's Skiing Everest and Swift, Silent, Deep, the Story of the Jackson Hole Air Force will be shown. For more info go to www.hansfund.org

Avalanche Education

1 Hour Awareness - Thursday, January 14th, 7 p.m.

MT Western- Birch Creek Center, Dillon MT ([map](#))

1 Hour Awareness - Friday, January 15th, 4 p.m.

MT Western- Birch Creek Center, Dillon MT ([map](#))

AAI - Level 1 - Friday January 22nd - Sunday January 24th

Bridger Bowl

Basic Avalanche Seminar, Classroom Sessions January 27th and 28th

MSU Stand Union Building, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Ballroom B&C

Basic Avalanche Field Session - Saturday, January 30th

Bridger Bowl -9 a.m. to 3 p.m

1 Hour Avalanche Awareness - Saturday, January 30th 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Holiday Inn, West Yellowstone