

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Nov 20, 2014

This is Mark Staples with early season snowpack information issued on Thursday, November 20. Today's information is sponsored by [Grizzly Outfitters](#) in partnership with the **Friends of the Avalanche Center**. This information will be updated as conditions change.

Mountain Weather

Temperatures in the mountains warmed today into the upper 20s F to lower 30s F. The most recent snow fell last weekend with 3-5 inches near Bozeman and Big Sky and 7-12 inches near West Yellowstone and Cooke City. No more snow has fallen this week. A Pacific weather system will bring precipitation starting Friday night followed by colder temperatures Saturday night. Next week looks promising for more snow as well.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

First avalanche - The first reported avalanche of the season occurred yesterday in the northern Bridger Range north of Fairy Lake ([photo1](#), [photo2](#), [photo3](#)) as two skiers were hiking up a slope. One skier was caught and carried about 30 feet before self-arresting in the bed surface. The other skier was 15 feet to the side of the first and not caught. A dog was caught and managed to exit the avalanche just before it ran into exposed rocks.

Snowpack - As they put it: "At this point, there look to be zero slopes holding snow that are not wind-loaded. But that's not the problem. The problem are those facets capped by a wind-slab." This slope had a southerly aspect and had relatively thinner snow compared to other slopes where they were skiing. They found many stable slopes that did not have these obvious facets. See [video](#).

Reminder - While not a big slide, this one reminds us to be prepared. Go one at a time and carry rescue gear. They said "we should have been booting up 1 at a time, but I'm very glad I set my own boot pack a good distance from his or I would have been caught as well." An avalanche occurred almost in this exact location two years ago in October. Read the [accident report](#) from that one.

It doesn't matter if you are skiing, ice climbing, or hunting. All three users have been caught, injured, and even killed in avalanches this time of year. Don't cut corners because it's early season.

We will update this information as conditions change. In the meantime tune up your avalanche knowledge with a class. Take a look at our [Education Calendar](#) for a current list of offerings.

Education highlights:

TONIGHT, November 20, 6 p.m.: Bozeman, MSU, Roskie Hall

Monday, November 24, 7 p.m.: Bozeman, Northern Lights Trading Company

MSU - Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course

The workshops are held on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, with a field course on Saturday. Different topics are presented each evening. Topics include: avalanche terrain recognition, the affect weather has on avalanche hazard, the development of the mountain snowpack, decision making skills, and basic search and rescue procedures.

December 3, 4 and 6 or 7, 2014: <https://www.ticketriver.com/event/13089>

Snowmobiler Introduction to Avalanches with Field Course

Five hours of lectures are followed by a full day field course. Topics covered include: avalanche terrain recognition, the affect weather has on avalanche hazard, the development of the mountain snowpack, decision making skills, and basic search and rescue procedures.

[West Yellowstone: Dec 18 and 19, 2014](#)