

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Sat Feb 2, 2019

Good morning. This is Eric Knoff with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast issued on Saturday, February 2nd at 6:45 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Bridger Bowl](#) and [Spark R&D](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

At 5 a.m. temps are in the 20's F and west-southwest winds are blowing 25-45 mph with gusts pushing 70 mph near Big Sky. Today, warm and windy conditions will continue. Highs warm into the upper 20's to mid-30's F and winds remain moderate to strong out of the west-southwest. Snow develops over the southern mountains by this afternoon with 3-5" possible by tomorrow morning. Snow arrives a little later for the northern mountains which will 1-3" by morning. Heavy snow impacts the entire forecast area tomorrow with up to a foot possible by Monday morning.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



All Regions

Triggering an avalanche on a layer of faceted snow in the bottom 1/3 of the snowpack is the main concern today. This layer is not as reactive as it was a week ago, but unstable test results and the occasional rumbling collapse are clear indicators it's still capable of producing avalanches ([video](#), [photos](#)).

Today, you're most likely to trigger a slide in areas with one or more of these characteristics:

- Steep slopes where the snowpack is thinner, generally less than 3' deep [video](#).
- Slopes where hard wind drifted snow rest over faceted snow near the ground.
- Steep rocky slopes or scoured ridgelines where it's easier to impact buried weak layers [video](#).

Assessing snow stability is challenging due to the high spatial variability of the snowpack ([video](#)). Some slopes have strong snow while others are weak and unstable. Predicting what slopes are safe to ride requires careful snowpack evaluation. I recommend putting the shovel in the snow and doing a few stability tests before committing to steep terrain. Keep in mind, the easiest way to avoid avalanches is to avoid riding on or underneath steep slopes. If you do expose yourself to avalanche terrain, always be thinking of the consequences of being caught and have a plan in case a slide does occur.

Today, avalanches breaking on weak layers in the bottom 1/3 of the snowpack are possible and the avalanche danger is rated **[MODERATE](#)**.

If you get out and have any avalanche or snowpack observations to share, contact us via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram ([#gnfacobs](#)).

King and Queen of the Ridge

Today at Bridger Bowl! This is the Friends of the Avalanche Center's second biggest fundraiser of the year. Come on out and help us raise some money by hiking and skiing some laps on the ridge. Prizes, camaraderie and

a good time is guaranteed. [Register with Bridger](#) to hike in the event, and [create a pledge page](#) to raise funds with your Ridge laps.

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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