

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Tue Oct 26, 2010

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with mountain weather and snowpack information issued on Tuesday, October 26th. This bulletin will be updated as conditions change.

Mountain Weather

Since yesterday morning the Bridger Range picked up 12+ inches of heavy, dense snow at 9,000 feet. All other SNOTEL sites are showing 3-6 inches. Mountain temperatures have cooled to 15 degrees with ridgetop winds on [Flanders Mountain](#) and [Lulu Pass](#) blowing out of the west to northwest at 20-30 mph. Showers today could bring a few more inches to the upper elevations as winds continue to blow in the 20s.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion

Our snowfall data is from the [NRCS SNOTEL](#) sites scattered throughout southwest Montana. Higher elevations have deeper snows as well as drifts forming in the gullies and couloirs of the higher peaks. I'm estimating that most mountain ranges have 12-24 inches of snow at 9,000 feet. Barring a freak melt, this snow will form the foundation of our winter snowpack. We like getting dense, wetter snow this early in the season since it protects our skis as well as our bones from the ground. It can also inhibit the development of sugary facets at the ground too, although at this early date it's more wishful thinking.

Open, snow covered slopes steeper than 30 degrees are defined as avalanche terrain. As the snowpack deepens the potential for avalanches increases. Wind slabs in gullies and near ridgelines are the most likely spot to trigger slides. An avalanche this time of year is rarely big, but often injurious if not deadly from the trauma inflicted. Rocks are never far from the surface. **Hunters** need to be especially careful since they travel in avalanche terrain yet are not equipped for avalanches: often no partner is watching them and they have no rescue gear. Crossing snow covered open slopes and gullies is the most risky part of the hunt. **Ice climbers**, most likely on Sphinx Mountain, face an elevated danger too since small pockets can push them off cliffs. This isn't an empty warning, we've had early season avalanche fatalities involving hunters, climbers and skiers.

Be extra aware of entering avalanche terrain and especially mindful of the consequences of a slide. If you have any snowpack or avalanche observations, drop us a line at mtavalanche@gmail.com or call us at 587-6984.

POWDERBLAST this Friday!!

October 29th 2010, 6:30-10:30 pm at the Emerson Cultural Center. \$30 admission gets you in the door. A silent Auction, dinner by Bountiful Table, beer from Blackfoot Brewery, wine and live music by Holler n' Pine are included. *Buy tickets online at:* <http://www.mtavalanche.com/gnfac/powderblast/> OR at Barrel Mountaineering, NLTC, Timber Trails and Grizzly Outfitters. All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Avalanche Center.

EDUCATION

Our education offerings are expanding with many one hour avalanche lectures in November. Check out our [Education](#) calendar on our website for the latest offerings.