

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Thu Mar 18, 2021

Good Morning. This is Doug Chabot with the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Forecast on Thursday, March 18th at 6:45 a.m. Today's forecast is sponsored by [Spark R&D](#) and [Bridger Bowl](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

Mountain temperatures are in the low to mid 20s F this morning after hitting the mid 40s F yesterday. Skies are clear and winds are southwest at 10-25 mph. Today will be sunny, breezy and a few degrees warmer than yesterday. Winter is not over and my lawn chairs will hopefully get some snow on them over the weekend.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



[Bridger Range](#) [Gallatin Range](#) [Madison Range](#) [Lionhead Range](#) [Island Park](#)

Wet avalanches are our main concern today. Yesterday's temperatures reached the 40s and sunny slopes moistened but held together. There were no widespread loose avalanches. On slopes that were shady the snowpack is still cold and wintry. Today will be a few degrees warmer, yet a breeze might provide enough cooling to keep avalanche activity in check. It will take a couple hours for the frozen surface to soften up and in general I expect small, wet loose avalanches on sunny slopes. The interplay of elevation, aspect and timing is critical because the snow surface and avalanche danger can change rapidly. Ian explains it further in his [video](#) from Lionhead.

You don't need a compass or watch to inform you where and when slopes become unstable, just pay attention. Sunny slopes will get wet and gloppy. The more intense the sun is, the wetter slopes will become. A sign that wet avalanche danger is rising is sinking past your ankles in wet snow or seeing large pinwheels of snow rolling downhill.

Dave was in Taylor Fork and Lightning Creek yesterday and had 3 things on his mind: wet avalanches, a potential new weak layer at the surface if it gets buried (near-surface facets), and also sugary depth hoar near the ground which broke in his test ([video](#)). The wet snow is the primary concern today, but the other two may become problems when it snows Friday night.

For today, the **wet snow avalanche danger** will start out [LOW](#) but rise to [MODERATE](#) on slopes that become wet and slushy.

The **dry snow avalanche danger** is rated [LOW](#) on all slopes because avalanches are unlikely.



[Cooke City](#)

The mountains outside Cooke City reached the low 40s yesterday. Today will be a few degrees warmer and sunny slopes will get moist and shed surface snow in wet loose avalanches. Wind is expected to keep the snow

surface cool which will inhibit avalanches becoming widespread. On slopes not affected by the sun the snowpack is dry and mostly stable ([video of current conditions](#) from Tuesday).

For today, the **wet snow avalanche danger** will start out [LOW](#) but rise to [MODERATE](#) on slopes that become wet.

The **dry snow avalanche danger** is rated [LOW](#) on all slopes because the snowpack lacks buried weak layers and avalanches are unlikely.

If you get out, please send us your observations no matter how brief. You can submit them via our [website](#), email (mtavalanche@gmail.com), phone (406-587-6984), or Instagram (#gnfacobs).

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

See our [education calendar](#) for an up-to-date list of all local classes. Here are a few select upcoming events and opportunities to check out:

March 20, 5:30 p.m., Snowpack Update for Bozeman Splitfest, online [Link to Join HERE](#)

March 24, 6 p.m., Free 1-Hour Avalanche Awareness, online [Link to Join HERE](#)

March 29, 6 p.m., Free 1-Hour Avalanche Awareness, online [Link to Join HERE](#)