

GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Jan 27, 2025

This is Dave Zinn with the avalanche forecast for Monday, January 27th, at 7:00 a.m. sponsored by [Idaho State Snowmobile Association - Avalanche Fund](#) and [Uphill Pursuits](#). This forecast does not apply to operating ski areas.

Mountain Weather

This morning, temperatures are inverted, with upper elevations temperatures in the teens F and valley temperatures in the single digits above and below 0 F. There is no new snow.

In the northern half of the forecast area, winds are 15-35 mph, gusting to 45 mph from the west and northwest. The strongest winds are in the Bridger Range. In the southern half, winds are 5-10 mph from the northwest to northeast.

Today, temperatures will be in the upper 20s to low 30s F. The winds will be 10-20 mph in the northern half of the forecast area and 5-10 in the southern half. Stronger winds will continue in the Bridger Range.

Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



Bridger Range Northern Gallatin Northern Madison

In the mountains around Bozeman and Big Sky, the wind is transporting recent snow into unstable drifts at many elevations. **Wind slab avalanches** are the primary concern.

Skiers north of Bridger Bowl triggered an avalanche on a wind-loaded slope that broke a foot deep and twenty feet wide ([observation](#)), while others noted cracks in wind-drifted snow shooting from their ski tips ([observation](#)). Local Ski Patrols triggered **wind slab avalanches** that broke 6-18" deep during routine mitigation work. On many slopes, recent snow and wind slabs sit on weak layers of surface hoar and facets, slowing stabilization (Buck Ridge [observation](#), Divide Basin [observation](#), Beehive Basin [observation](#)).

Avoid steep wind-loaded terrain, opting for sheltered slopes, where the surface conditions will be better, and avalanche conditions will be safer. Visual clues, a stiffening snow surface, and signs of instability, including avalanche activity and shooting cracks, can help us identify concerning terrain features.

In non-wind-loaded terrain, assess the upper few feet of the snowpack for instability before considering steeper slopes. Follow safe travel protocols, carry avalanche safety equipment and carefully evaluate terrain to consider the consequences of potential slides.

*** **Ice climbers** in steep, confined gullies should watch for roller balls and wet loose avalanches coming from rocky areas above during the heat of the day. Shady aspects will have lower wet snow hazard.

The avalanche danger is [MODERATE](#).



Time and the absence of significant loading allowed the snowpack to adjust and stabilize in the mountains of Island Park, West Yellowstone, and Cooke City, as well as in the Southern Gallatin and Southern Madison Ranges. While avalanches are unlikely, they are not impossible, and a very large slide south of Cooke City last week demonstrates their potential ([photo](#)).

We are encouraged by minimal avalanche activity, the generally small size of slides, the lack of signs of instability and unremarkable test results ([Lionhead video](#), [Cooke City video](#)). As Mark stated in the Lionhead video, “The weak layers are dormant, not dead.” **Persistent slab avalanches** remain the primary concern, and conditions will become more dangerous again when it snows. For now, generally safe avalanche conditions exist.

Isolated **wind slab avalanches** breaking within recent drifts are a secondary concern. This is especially true in steep and technical terrain, where a small avalanche can have significant consequences.

Travel Advice: Just because the danger dropped to low *doesn't mean you should shred all avalanche terrain on day one*. Avoid the highest-consequence slopes—very steep and large faces and avalanche paths with terrain traps such as cliffs, trees, and gullies where isolated instability would be fatal. If you elect to travel in avalanche terrain, look for signs of isolated instability, follow safe travel protocols, expose only one person at a time to potential risk, and ensure everyone carries avalanche safety gear.

The avalanche danger is rated [LOW](#).

KING AND QUEEN OF THE RIDGE

Do you like to hike? Do you like to ski/ride? Then the King & Queen of the Ridge on 2/1 is for you. Hike, ride and raise money for the Friends of the Avalanche Center at Bridger Bowl this year! Join this fun event to promote and support avalanche safety and awareness! Fundraising prizes for the top 5 individuals who raise over \$500. *No racing is necessary to compete for the fundraising prizes.* Info to fundraise is [HERE](#) or [donate here](#).

Race participants for the King and Queen of the Ridge must register separately with Bridger Bowl [here](#)

Upcoming Avalanche Education and Events

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

February 20, 4-7 p.m. Beacon BBQ at Uphill Pursuits in Bozeman. Come try out different brands of avalanche transceivers (or practice with your own!) with coaching from Friends of GNFAC instructors and free hotdogs.

Every weekend in Cooke City: Friday at The Antlers at 7 p.m., Free Avalanche Awareness and Current Conditions talk, and Saturday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Round Lake Warming Hut, Free Rescue Practice.