

# GNFAC Avalanche Forecast for Mon Apr 28, 2025

Good morning, this is Dave Zinn with a spring weather and snowpack update on Monday, April 28th. Daily avalanche forecasts have ended for the season. We will issue conditions updates on Monday and Friday mornings through April. This information does not apply to operating ski areas.

## Mountain Weather

This is a volatile week in the battle between winter and summer. With temperatures in the upper 20s to low 30s F, a wet spring snowstorm is impacting the area to start off the work week, with the Bridger Range receiving the most significant precipitation. As of Monday, at 6 AM, the Bridger Range has received a whopping 1.3" of [snow water equivalent](#) (SWE) in the last 12 hours, with a more nominal 7" of snow at the Alpine Weather Station. The [Red Chair Cam](#) at Bridger Bowl shows 14" of new snow. The mountains near Cooke City, Big Sky, including the Taylor Fork, and south of Bozeman have received 0.5" of *water* with 0-5" of snow (meaning it rained in some areas). Light rain fell in West Yellowstone and Island Park.

The first storm of the week winds down Monday evening after an additional 1-4" of snow falls during the day. Tuesday will be warm and dry, but rain and snow return to the area Tuesday night through Wednesday.

The tail end of the week will be lovely spring weather with mountain temperatures pushing into the 50s and low 60s F.

## Snowpack and Avalanche Discussion



### All Regions

The weather and spring storms are the primary drivers of this week's avalanche danger. To start off the week, there are significant differences in the weather throughout the forecast area, with significant snowfall in some areas (Bridger Range), moderate accumulation in others, (south of Bozeman, Big Sky, and Cooke City) and a few ranges receiving more rain than snow (Lionhead and Centennial Ranges).

### Here's what we know:

- The snowpack was mostly stable before Sunday/ Monday's storm.
- The more *new* snow there is, the more likely you are to encounter avalanches and the larger their potential size. Slides will fail within the new and wind-drifted snow as **storm slab** and **wind slab avalanches**. Deeper depths of new snow generally equate to more significant avalanche danger.
- Rain on snow has a destabilizing effect as the bonds that hold the snowpack together break apart.
- Expect **wet loose avalanches** as the new snow warms. These may run long distances on underlying crusts.

### What to do:

- Evaluate new snow depths and expect these to change with elevation.
- If your travel plans take you to slopes steeper than 30 degrees, assess how the new and wind-drifted snow is bonding to the old snow surface by watching for clear signs of instability, such as avalanches and shooting cracks. A quick, extended column test 1-2 feet deep can provide additional information.
- If rain fell on the snowpack and as temperatures warm, breaking through an unsupportable and slushy snowpack, seeing pinwheels of wet snow and small wet slides are indicators of wet snow instability.

**Moving forward through the week**, Tuesday's temperatures will climb well above freezing. **Wet loose avalanches** will run long distances on firm crusts underlying the new snow. These slides will be most concerning in areas where the most snow fell. A shift to cooler, north-facing aspects may be enough to ward off the wet snow danger.

Depending on midweek snowfall amounts, the avalanche danger may increase again Tuesday night into Wednesday before settling into the spring rhythm of stable conditions in the morning while snow surfaces are cold and frozen, and less stable by late morning as temperatures climb into the 50 and 60 degree F range under sunny skies toward the end of the week.

We have had a long and wonderful season. *So far*, there have been no avalanche fatalities within our forecasting area. Keep up the good work, and don't let your guard down. We want to keep it that way. Assess how the new snow is bonding, avoid slopes with active wind-loading, and evaluate the snowpack for changing conditions as temperatures warm and cool again.

See our website for more general spring snowpack and travel advice.

## **Give Big Gallatin Valley**

**[Give Big Gallatin Valley is this week! \(May 1-2, 6pm-6pm\)](#)**

Please support the excellent non-profits of Gallatin County, including the Friends of the Avalanche Center. One Valley Community Foundation's Give Big Gallatin Valley is a 24-hour celebration of giving to connect generous community members with causes they care about most in order to raise important funding for nonprofits serving Gallatin Valley.

**[Use this link to donate to The Friends of GNFAC during the Give Big event](#)**

**[Learn more about Give Big Gallatin Valley and help spread the word](#)**

**Thank you to the Bozeman Ice Festival for matching \$2500 in donations this year!**

Your support goes toward free and low-cost avalanche education, beacon parks, weather stations, and avalanche center operations. This season, the education program reached over 3,600 students, including school-age youth, search and rescue groups, and motorized and human-powered users. 5,500+ people read our daily avalanche forecasts and more followed along on social media. We appreciate your help!

Sincerely, The Board of Directors, Friends of the Gallatin National Forest Avalanche Center, and GNFAC staff

## **Announcements**

The Hyalite Canyon Road is closed to ALL MOTORIZED VEHICLES until May 16. This is a regular annual road closure to reduce road damage during the spring thaw. Bicycle and foot traffic are allowed. Contact the [Bozeman FS Ranger District](#) for more info.

Bridger Bowl Ski Area is closed for the season, and uphill travel is allowed. Please give employees and machinery plenty of room as they work to clean up from the season. Backcountry conditions exist. There are no ski patrol services, rescue or avalanche mitigation. Call 911 for any incidents requiring outside assistance.