

US FOREST SERVICE NORTHWEST MONTANA BACKCOUNTRY AVALANCHE ADVISORY



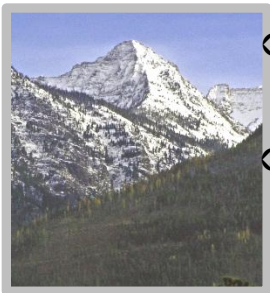
FOR THE GLACIER PARK AND FLATHEAD & KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST AREAS

Avalanche advisory does not apply to developed ski areas

Issue Date: 8:00 AM, Tuesday, January 31, 2012
Valid Until: Midnight, Tuesday, January 31, 2012
Next Update: Friday, February 3, 2012
Issued by: Tony Willits

This advisory is a product of the US Forest Service, US Dept. of Agriculture. Along with other snow and avalanche information, it is originally posted at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>. An audio summary is available via telephone at 406-257-8402

All Mountain Ranges



7,500 ft. elevation



5,500 ft.



Avalanche Danger Summary

3 - Considerable : 5,500 to 7,500 ft. elevation, especially on steep, open, wind loaded slopes and gullies

2 - Mod : below 5,500

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges - 5,500 to 7,500 ft. elevation

Danger Level	3 – CONSIDERABLE
Confidence	Fair
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous avalanche conditions exist, particularly on steep, open slopes especially associated with recent wind loading • Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route finding, and conservative decision-making essential
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural avalanches possible • Human triggered avalanches likely
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small avalanches in many locations <li style="padding-left: 20px;">or • Large avalanches in specific areas <li style="padding-left: 20px;">or • Very large avalanches in isolated areas

AVALANCHE – INSTABILITY DESCRIPTION

All Mountain Ranges – below 5,500 ft. elevation

Danger Level	2 - MODERATE
Confidence	Fair
Travel Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heightened avalanche conditions exist on steep, open slopes and gullies • Evaluate snow and terrain carefully • Identify features of concern
Likelihood of Avalanches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural avalanche unlikely • Human triggered avalanches possible
Avalanche Size & Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small avalanches in specific areas <li style="padding-left: 20px;">or • Larger avalanches in isolated areas

Because of the general nature of this advisory message, each backcountry party will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations. This advisory best describes conditions at the time of its issuance. As time passes avalanche and snow conditions may change, sometimes quite rapidly. Elevation and geographic distinctions used are approximate and transition zones between hazards exist.

Recent Mountain Weather

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday –Tuesday (0300) ---A cold moist west flow transitioned from Saturday into warm moist flow on Sunday. The warm moist flow of Pacific air brought moisture, relatively mild temperatures, and wind to the region.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 0300 Saturday through 0300 Sunday; .4 to .7 inches of snow water equivalent (SWE) was received across the region o Sunday through Monday, warm flow accompanied by moisture created an inverted snow pack with snow fall amounts near 2.0 inches of SWE during this period o Rain at lower elevations on Monday, which seemed to be at approximately 5000 feet in the Northern Swan.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temperatures warmed by 15 degrees from Saturday to Sunday, with temperatures at or near freezing from Sunday through Monday.
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winds were strong on Saturday afternoon with snow being transported onto lee slopes. Sunday's winds were moderate out of the SW at ridge tops.

Field Observation Locations

Monday, 1-30-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meadow Peak, 34 air miles SE of Libby • Jewell Basin NE of Big Fork in Northern Swan Range
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Observer Report Locations

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None received
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Avalanches Observed

- No natural releases were observed on Monday.
- Visibility of surrounding terrain was limited due low cloud ceiling '

Instability Concern / Avalanche Problem	Level of Concern	Most★★★ Less★★ Least★		
New Storm or Near Surface Snow	★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate to heavy amounts of new snowfall Friday thru Monday on all ranges Snow that fell on Saturday and on Friday was colder and less dense than the warm more dense and heavier snow that fell on Sunday and Monday. This created an inverted condition within the surface layers with heavier snow overlying weaker snow below. 		
Wind Loading	★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong SW-W winds Saturday PM produced wind transport and redeposit of snow in saddles, along ridges, and over peaks Sunday... winds were moderate out of the SW 		
Recent or Persistent Buried Weak Layer	★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weakness is being found between the new precipitated or wind deposit snow and buried old snow surface These weak layers reacting with easy force in shear tests Currently buried in the upper third by recent new snowfall 		
Spring Wet Snow or Melt-Freeze		Not applicable		
Rain-on-Snow	★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At lower elevations 		
Loose Snow		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		
Other Concerns				

Weather Forecast

[Current NWS Backcountry Forecast](#)

Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Westerly flow will continue over our region directing Pacific moisture into the region on Tuesday. On Wednesday another system will enter our region bringing localized moderate to heavy accumulations in the mountains. Thursday will see drying conditions as high pressure builds over the region.
Precipitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 to 12 inches of new snow is expected from Tuesday AM through Wednesday night.
Temperature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temperatures will continue to be slightly above normal for this time of the year. Temperatures on Tuesday should be near freezing and cooling only a bit beyond that time into the mid twenties.
Wind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moderate at 17 to 18 MPH, from the SW on Tuesday, AM & PM, and moderate again on Wednesday, AM & PM, out of the west.

Avalanche Outlook

Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The avalanche danger should remain at current levels through Wednesday. A moderating effect should occur to the avalanche danger during Thursday, as a ridge of high pressure begins to build over the region.
Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently wind loaded snow onto lee slopes, especially with special concern directed to E, NE, N, NW convex rolls below ridge tops. Continued moderate to heavy snow fall, adding loading to an already inverted surface snow pack condition.
Comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Always carry and know how to use avalanche safety equipment Check out the site specific snow stability before jumping in or on

Events:

On Tuesday night an avalanche awareness class will be held at the Eureka High School from 6 to 9 PM.