

# AVALANCHE ADVISORY

**U.S. FOREST SERVICE**

**FORECASTER: Morgan**

**IDAHO PANHANDLE AVALANCHE CENTER**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/30/2011**

**DATE ISSUED: 12/30/2011 0730**

**OUTLOOK: 12/30-01/02/2011**

This report does not apply to local ski areas within the forecast region and the hazard rating will remain valid through midnight December 30, 2011. Special thanks to Idaho Parks and recreation for sponsoring this avalanche advisory.

Thanks to all who contributed information from the backcountry on Thursday. Happy New Year!

## WEATHER

**TODAY:** 100% chance of snow with up to 4" in the north and 5-9" in the south with westerly windy conditions throughout (25-30G55 in the north and 14-20G31 in the south). Temperatures will be slightly below freezing in the north and as high as 36 in the south.

**TONIGHT:** Continued snow showers picking up another few inches temperatures cooling down to 20 with continued high and gusty winds out of the west.

**OUTLOOK:** The NWS is forecasting light snowfall to continue until Saturday with drier conditions expected this weekend as high pressure moves over the area. **The avalanche danger will increase with the expected weather for the outlook period.**

**Selkirks and Cabinet mountains:** In the Selkirk Mountains yesterday we found about 5 feet of snow on a East aspect. There are two ice crust layers in the top 8 inches, the surface crust 1cm thick with new snow 3 inches below it that sits atop a 10 cm crust. Under this we found softer snow that sits on facets about 1.5 feet down from the surface. Here we found some weakness during our tests which will be a concern as we get more snow in addition to the new snow accumulations on top of yesterday's ice crust. In short, if the ice crust layer fails with a load on it, it may step down and the facet layer 1.5 feet down may also go with the disturbance. I expect the stability of these layers to decrease with the 5 inch snow accumulations last night and more on windloaded aspects. Keep a close eye on the temps and snow accumulation with the next storms with the breakable ice crusts underneath. We have a structurally weak snowpack in the top meter of snow with more accumulation on the way. Avalanche danger is rated **HIGH** on windloaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. The avalanche danger as **CONSIDERABLE** on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

**4 High**



Very dangerous avalanche conditions. Travel in avalanche terrain not recommended.

Natural avalanches likely; human-triggered avalanches very likely.

Large avalanches in many areas; or very large avalanches in specific areas.

**St. Regis Basin and Silver valley:** Carole and Dan were at Mullan Pass and found over 3 feet of faceted snow on a SE aspect. The weakest layer they found was buried surface hoar about 2 feet deep that sits atop an ice crust (T-day). Note that there is also another ice crust within 8 inches of this layer as well. Shears on Northerly aspects were cleaner and higher quality, taking less force to produce a shear. With the addition of 5 inches (more with wind loading), Avalanche danger is rated **HIGH** on windloaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. The avalanche danger as **CONSIDERABLE** on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

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Keep a heads up this weekend. High means human triggered avalanches are very likely on steep windloaded aspects above 5,000 feet. As we begin to get new snow be more cautious in your route selection. We will most likely be dealing with 2 or more layers of crusts, facets, and/or surface hoar. The more load from accumulating snow the more unstable these layers will become. .

The next avalanche advisory will be issued January 6<sup>th</sup>.

Contact: Kevin Davis (208) 265-6686, Ed Odegaard (208) 245-6209, or John Olson (208) 265-6635

This message is available by calling (208) 765-7323 or toll-free at 1-866-489-8664.

E-mail address: [kevingdavis@fs.fed.us](mailto:kevingdavis@fs.fed.us), [eodegaard@fs.fed.us](mailto:eodegaard@fs.fed.us), [jrolson@fs.fed.us](mailto:jrolson@fs.fed.us), [ebmorgan@fs.fed.us](mailto:ebmorgan@fs.fed.us)

In Sandpoint, these classes are currently scheduled.

Jan. 10, **“Fire and Ice, Risk Assessment and Situational Awareness.”**

Feb. 10, **“Ten Years of Avalanche Fatalities in North Idaho.”**

**These classes are *free to the public* and will be held from 6-8PM in the Conference Room of the New Forest Service Building in Sandpoint,, 1602 Ontario St.,, west of town on the way to Dover.. Call Kevin Davis at 265-6686 or John Olson at 946-3378 if you have a group that is interested in attending..**

In the Silver Valley, these classes are currently scheduled.

January 21, “Avalanche Awareness, Route Finding, and Rescue

**In the Silver Valley the class is conducted at the Silver Valley Forest Service Building in Smelterville at 10AM.. The field session,, beacon practice and rescue training will be held at Mullan Pass the same day..**

**Contact Dan Frigard at 783-2131.**

**In St. Maries,** Ed Odegaard is conducting an avalanche workshop at the St. Maries Forest Service on January 26<sup>th</sup> from 5-8pm. Don't miss the chili feed starting at Scheffy's in Avery on January 14<sup>th</sup> where Ed will talk about avalanche factors and dig a pit on the ride at Rutledge Saddle, sounds like a hoot.

The State of Idaho Parks and Recreation Department in cooperation with the IPNF-AC, is conducting (**Free**) avalanche workshops for snowmobilers this winter in Coeur d' Alene January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, Sandpoint January 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. For more information go to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Department website at <http://parksandrecreation.idaho.gov/recreation/snowmobileeducation.aspx>, or call Marc Hildesheim, North Region Trails Specialist, at (208) 769-1511.

Check out these websites from our Neighbors for more information:

<http://www.glacieravalanche.org/currentadvisory.cfm>

<http://www.nwac.us/>

<http://www.avalanche.ca/>

**Have a safe and pleasant Holiday!!!!**