

AVALANCHE ADVISORY

U.S. FOREST SERVICE	FORECASTER: Davis
IDAHO PANHANDLE AVALANCHE CENTER	EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/20/2012
DATE ISSUED: 01/20/2012 0730	OUTLOOK: 01/21-22/2012
This report does not apply to local ski areas within the forecast region and the hazard rating will remain valid through midnight January 20, 2012. Special thanks to Idaho Parks and recreation for sponsoring this avalanche advisory.	Thanks Silver Mountain Ski Patrol and Schweitzer Mountain Patrol for their cooperation with the forecasters field day and all the observers who attended the two events.

WEATHER

TODAY: 80% chance of snow across the forecast region with 1-3 inches possible. Temperatures in the mid to high 20s and calm winds. Temperatures have been on the rise since earlier this week.

TONIGHT: 100% chance of snow with 3-5 inches expected for the mountains of the Silver Valley and 5-9 inches in the Selkirk/Cabinet region. Temperatures will remain in the mid 20s and S/SW winds will increase.

OUTLOOK: Severe weather is expected with Saturday bringing a 100% chance of 3-5 inches and SW winds increasing with gusts into the 30mph range. Expect this weather to continue into the evening with a significant chance of several more inches of accumulation and strengthening westerly winds. Expect dangerous avalanche conditions to exist caused by new snow and heavy wind-loading. **Avalanche danger will increase with the expected weather for the outlook period.**

Selkirk and Cabinet mountains: In the Cabinet Mountains yesterday Oly and I dug pits on SE and North aspects during our travel up to Lunch Peak. On southerly aspects we found about 10 inches of wind scoured snow from this week overlying a firm crust. Shears were clean at this layer but required moderate force to fail. On northerly and easterly aspects snow was deeper due to wind-loading and we revealed a weak layer at 2 feet deep from surface hoar being buried on Tuesday. This layer will be your main concern today and this weekend as it is further stressed from more snow and warming temperatures. The Xmas surface hoar layer is still very weak and buried 4 feet deep, but the weakness is bridged by a supportive crust. It could be triggered in higher elevations areas. Avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE** on wind-loaded aspects steeper than 30 degrees above 5,500 feet. The avalanche danger as MODERATE on non wind-loaded slopes less than 35 degrees.

		Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative	Natural avalanches possible; human-triggered avalanches likely.	Small avalanches in many areas; or large avalanches in specific areas; or very large avalanches in isolated areas.
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St. Regis Basin and Silver valley: Due to the serious weather in the Silver Valley and up the St. Joe this week avalanche forecasters have had a difficult time reaching the higher elevations. Dan did make it to Lookout Pass where he observed many signs of high avalanche danger. Dan observed numerous smaller slides on the railroad grade and up toward the FAA towers. Winds have been consistently strong this week and wind-loading on lee aspects will be deep. Dan revealed two layers of concern. The upper weak layer is buried about 10-12 inches and is weak sugary snow overlying a crust. Shear tests show easy results, buried surface hoar, and the potential for avalanches to be large. Triggering this weak layer could in turn trigger the weak surface hoar layer which is three feet deep. Dan's shear tests revealed clean, easy shears. Dave Alley at Silver Mountain reports avalanches 2-3 feet deep from control work on the mountain yesterday. Avalanche danger is rated **HIGH** on wind-loaded aspects steeper than 30 degrees above 4,500 feet. The avalanche danger as CONSIDERABLE on non wind-loaded slopes less than 30 degrees.

		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.
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Avalanches in the mountains surrounding the Silver Valley and the St. Joe's will be likely today and the danger will increase this weekend due to accumulating snow and strong westerly winds. Slightly less snow to the north but avalanche danger is on the rise there as well. Look for signs of instability like shooting cracks and listen for whumphing which means failing weak layers. Avalanches are bulls-eye information meaning stay off similar slopes and check for weak layers constantly while traveling. Be careful out there this weekend.

The next avalanche advisory will be issued January 27th.

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, eodegaard@fs.fed.us, jrolson@fs.fed.us, ebmorgan@fs.fed.us

In Sandpoint, these classes are currently scheduled.

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 9AM.. 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 26th from 5-8pm.

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 13th and 14th, Sandpoint January 27th and 28th. 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!!!!