

Frazier Lake Avalanche, northern Bridger Range

6 February 2011

1 caught, partially buried, injured

45°55'16.97"N 110°58'53.11"W

Two separate parties of skiers triggered avalanches near Frazier Lake in the northern Bridger Range. The first group of three skinned to the top of long and popular east facing chute (>45 degrees). The first skier triggered a slide that broke 18" deep about ½ way down the run, but managed to ski out of it. This slide likely broke on the weak interface between the old and new snow.

A second group decided to ski a nearby steep slope (also >45 degrees) slightly to the north. They were unaware of the previous avalanche. The first skier safely descended the run. The second skier had the slope break on his first turn. He tumbled over 1,000 feet through rocks and was almost fully buried. By wiggling his head and using his free arm he was able to dig himself out. His femur was broken, but luckily it was not an open fracture. His partner shouted to the other group who returned to help. A cell phone call to Gallatin County Search and Rescue got rescuers and a helicopter to the scene. He was evacuated with only minutes of daylight to spare.

The avalanche danger was rated HIGH on all wind-loaded slopes and CONSIDERABLE on all others.

