



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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Free Avalanche Clinics Offered

The Flathead National Forest in partnership with Glacier Country Avalanche Center is sponsoring several free avalanche awareness clinics in the Flathead Valley.

A basic avalanche awareness class will be hosted Thursday, December 4, 6:30-8:30pm, at the Whitefish Library. Flathead National Forest spokesperson Denise Germann said, "This class is a good basic introduction to avalanche awareness, and a great refresher." Germann encourages everyone that recreates or works in the area to consider participating in the basic class.

Registration is not needed.

In addition, two Avalanche Level 1 workshops will be hosted in January. These workshops consist of four evening lectures followed by two field sessions. These programs meet the American Avalanche Association Level 1 guidelines. The programs include information about avalanche terrain, mountain weather and snowpack, stability evaluation and decision making, and avalanche rescue. Participants are encouraged to attend all sessions to gain maximum benefit.

One Avalanche Level 1 workshop will be focused for down-hill and cross-country skiers, snowboarders, snowshoe enthusiasts and mountaineers. Classes will be held at the Flathead National Forest Office in Kalispell on January 5, 7, 12, and 14, with field sessions on January 10 and 17.

The other Avalanche Level 1 workshop will be focused for snowmobilers on January 26 and 28, February 2 and 4, with field sessions on January 31 and February 7.

Germann said, "We have some great winter recreation opportunities in Northwest Montana, and with that opportunity comes individual responsibility to be aware of winter survival techniques

and avalanche hazard recognition.” The classes sponsored by the Forest Service and Glacier County Avalanche Center are free and available to all. Germann highly encourages everyone to consider participating in classes offered.

Registration is not required for any of the workshops but participants are encouraged to contact the Flathead National Forest at 758-5295 or visit www.glacieravalanche.org for more information.

REMINDER:

The Flathead National Forest issues avalanche advisories for Northwest Montana throughout the winter, beginning the first Friday in December or as weather conditions warrant. Advisories are issued once a week, on Friday mornings, until the third week in December when they are issued Tuesday and Friday mornings until April. Advisories include information about snowpack conditions, weather forecasts, and hazard evaluations. Visit www.glacieravalanche.org or call 406-257-8402 for these advisories. Anyone traveling in the backcountry will always need to make their own time and site specific avalanche hazard evaluations.

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