



Flathead National Forest

650 Wolfpack Way

Kalispell, MT 59901

Web: <http://www.fs.usda.gov/flathead>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/FlatheadNF>

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News Release

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Piper Fire Status

BIGFORK, MT-August 24, 2016 – On the evening of August 5th, lightning sparked the Piper fire located in the Piper Creek drainage within the Mission Mountains Wilderness. Within the last week, the Piper Fire has experienced two dry cold fronts. On August 18th, wind speeds averaged 5-10 miles per hour with gusts as high as 37 miles per hour out of the east to northeast direction. On August 22nd, wind speeds averaged 5-10 miles per hour with gusts as high as 26 miles per hour out of the west to southwest direction. With the warmer, dryer, and windier conditions, fire activity has increased but fire spread remains up drainage away from values at risk. Currently the fire activity is characterized as backing, creeping, smoldering, and isolated torching. Although the fire activity has increased, fire growth has been minimal. On August 23rd, a reconnaissance flight was performed with more accurate perimeter mapping. Due to better mapping, the Piper Fire size has been reduced to 11 acres.

The Piper Fire is burning in steep, dangerous, and inaccessible terrain. Due to firefighter safety, the Piper Fire is being managed with a confine and contain strategy. Fire managers have a plan in place to take action on the fire when ground resources can safely mitigate the hazards. Currently crews are monitoring the fire closely. With the warmer, drier, and windier conditions, forest visitors and residents can expect to see smoke within this area for the next four to six weeks.

For public safety, the Piper Fire Area closure remains in effect until rescinded. For additional information, contact Janette Turk at 406-758-5200.

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