



Flathead National Forest

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Media Release

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Fire Activity Prompts New Area and Trail Closures

In response to increased fire activity on the Flathead National Forest, forest officials have implemented several new closures to protect firefighter and public safety. Several of the closures are in areas frequented by hunters during the early rifle season.

The Puzzle Fire, located on the Hungry Horse Ranger District, is being managed in cooperation with the Rocky Mountain Ranger District of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. The 1372-acre fire is burning to the south of Bullshoe Mountain, towards Puzzle Creek, and east towards the Continental Divide. The fire is actively burning through heavy timber with dead and down snags, and is spreading in all directions. The fire has also spotted east over the continental divide and fire managers are coordinating their response; additional closures may be required.

At present, due to the Puzzle Fire, an area closure and several trail closures are in place, including:

- Upper Skyland Road #569 at the junction with Granite Creek Road, including Morrison Trailhead and Trail #154 south to the Spotted Bear District boundary (Star Creek).
- ATV trails #569.1 and #569G.
- Puzzle Ridge Trail #264 from the beginning of Skyland Road #569 to its terminus.
- East Skyland Trail #251 south of the junction with Elkcalf Mountain Trail #382.

Officials note that Granite Creek Road #9634, Granite Creek Trailhead, and Granite Creek Trail #165 remain open to the public. Parties wishing to access Schafer Meadows and the Upper Middle Fork of the Flathead will need to use the Granite Creek Trail to the Big River Trail #155. The area closure map is available at: <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/map/2651/0/>.

Increased fire activity is also being experienced in the Bob Marshall Wilderness of the Spotted Bear Ranger District prompting new or expanded closures. The lightning-caused Stadler Creek Fire which began on September 8 has increased to 349 acres. There is no access over Stadler Pass, and these closures are in place:

- Hoadley #226 over Stadler Pass to Stadler Creek #271 to the junction with the Basin Creek Trail #267.
- Ayers Creek Trail #273 and Fiction Creek #272 are closed in their entirety.
- South Fork of the Sun #202 from Hoadley to its junction with Trail # 248.

The Big Salmon Lake Fire has been most active in the Brownie Creek drainage and is currently 4966 acres. Trail closures have been modified and now include:

- Trail # 110 Big Salmon Creek is closed between the junction of the West Side South Fork River Trail and the junction of Trail # 451.
- Trail #111 and Trail #451 are closed.

Also in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, the Hammer Creek Fire remains active and is 5600 acres. Existing closures remain in place. Though no closures are planned due to the 106-acre Clack Creek Fire, wilderness users should expect a smoke inversion in this area.

Visitors are cautioned that conditions can change and they are therefore strongly encouraged to contact the local district office for the most up to date information. The Spotted Bear Ranger Station can be reached at 406-758-5376, and the Hungry Horse Ranger District can be contacted at 406-387-3800.

Additional information on area fires can be found online at <http://inciweb.org/>. Use the drop-down menu in the top, right corner to select fires by state or by the name of the incident.

There is high fire danger in the Flathead valley due to the continued hot, dry weather. Officials ask visitors to be cautious with campfires and to ensure that they put them 'dead-out'.

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