

# Saddle Complex Fire Update

September 18, 2011  
Bitterroot and Salmon-Challis National Forests

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**Date Started:** 8/10/2011

**Cause:** Lightning

**Size:** 32,365 acres (16,709 on SCNF, 15,656 on BNF)

**Percent Contained:** 0%

**Resources:** 3 Helicopters; 1 Water Tender  
5 Engines; 3 Crews

**Total Personnel:** 178

**Residence:** 20 threatened; 0 destroyed

**Outbuildings:** 10 threatened; 0 destroyed

**Injuries to Date:** 5

## **Location:**

The Complex is comprised of two fires, the Saddle and Stud Fires, which merged on August 22<sup>nd</sup> into one fire burning on the Salmon-Challis and Bitterroot National Forests in Lemhi County, Idaho, and Ravalli County, Montana. Portions of the fire are within the Frank-Church River of No Return Wilderness.

## **Overview:**

MONTANA: Residual moisture from the storm on Thursday night and high relative humidity today is keeping the fire smoldering and creeping with minimal smoke.

At least seven miles of fireline rehabilitation has been completed so far. Crews transform these fuel breaks, for example, into natural areas by filling them with soil and overlaying the area with brush and other forest debris. Waterbars are constructed to direct water away from fire lines in an effort to prevent erosion.

The area closure is still in place as hazard trees continue to be cut along roads located in the fire. Equipment has been transported from the fire, including more than 11 miles of fire hose. The fire organization will continue to downsize today.

Temperatures are predicted to be similar to yesterday, in the high 50's to mid 60's. Wind speeds are forecasted to be 10 -15 miles per hour from the southwest, with relative humidity from 30%-41% and a slight chance of rain.

This will be the final fire update from the Bitterroot Branch's Incident Management Team, Type 2, led by incident commanders Wayne Cook and Charles Scripps. Beginning tomorrow, incident commander John Olson will lead the incoming local fire management organization, Type 3.

IDAHO: No significant fire activity was seen on Saturday as a result of the moisture received with the cold front. Major actions taken were removing potentially hazardous trees along Horse Creek Road.

One crew has been released from the fire. Operations at the Gattin Ranch are likely to begin demobilization today.

### **Closures and Restrictions:**

The previously reported area closures are still in effect on the Bitterroot National Forest; and will remain until access is safe for the public and firefighters. The Salmon-Challis National Forest has lifted the Closure Order for the area between the Squaw Creek road, west to the Spring Creek road, with a south boundary of the Salmon River road and a north boundary of the Idaho/Montana border. The remainder of the closure area is still in effect. (New Closure Order 9/10 at [inciweb.org](http://inciweb.org).)

For additional information on the closure areas, as well as the entire Saddle Complex, visit [www.inciweb.org/incident/2496](http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2496), or contact the **West Fork Ranger District (Bitterroot NF) at 406-821-3269** or **North Fork Ranger District (Salmon-Challis NF) at 208-865-2700**.