



# Salmon-Challis National Forest

## Fire Update

### 4 September 2011

Contact Fire Information: 208-756-5204



**OVERVIEW:** Temperatures will continue rising and humidity will keep falling on Sunday. By Monday, forecasters expect a slight chance of thunderstorms with little or no moisture. Winds on Sunday are predicted to shift to the southwest. The coming week will remain warm, forecasters said. There were no new fires yesterday.

**BLACK CANYON FIRE:** The size of the Black Canyon Fire has been revised down to 2,300 acres. Fire managers are continuing to monitor fire spread, taking suppression actions when the fire reaches terrain where it is safe and cost effective to take full suppression actions. It is unsafe for crews to construct line on steep and rugged areas. The elevation of the area burned varies from 5,400 to 10,000 feet with vegetation including grasses, sagebrush, Douglas fir, subalpine fir and whitebark pine. Adell's Type 2 Incident Management Team is managing the fire.

On September 3, a number of personnel came down with an intestinal disorder. Local community EMS, INL, Arco Medical Center and the Idaho Falls Hospital assisted with patient care. Firefighter health is continuing to be monitored by the management team with medical attention being provided as warranted. A mobile medical unit from Rexburg is on site. The Idaho Department of Health is involved in investigating the cause.

For firefighter and public safety during suppression and containment of the Black Canyon wildfire, an area closure including road and motorized/non-motorized trail closures is in effect from the base of the mountains (mouth of the canyons) to Saddle Mountain, for more information see <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2564/>.

**Resources:** 2 Helicopters, 6 Engines, 5 Crews, 168 Total Personnel.

**Start Date:** 31 August

**Cause:** Unknown

**SALT FIRE:** The Salt Fire has now burned 10,689 acres in the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

Saturday was an "opportunity day" at the Salt Fire, 16 miles southwest of Salmon. Predicted winds didn't occur. Along the key Ridge Road (Forest Road 045) on Saturday, firefighters were able to burn out between 100 and 300 feet west of the road. They did this along four miles of the road, south of Lake Mountain. Near that mountain, the fire perimeter and the road form a triangle that's almost two miles across at its base. In that area, helicopters engaged in "aerial ignition" on Saturday. They dropped incendiary devices known as "ping-pong balls" to further rob the Salt fire of fuel to burn. Officials would like to burn at least a one-quarter mile buffer in this area. They hope this will prevent spot fires ahead of any advancing flame front. Work will continue in this area Sunday.

Farther north, crews tied off fire lines to allow the fire to move into an area burned in 1985. The younger, small trees there offer less fuel for the fire. Firefighters feel confident they can pick up any fire that does occur in that area. Elsewhere on the fire, crews are nearly done working on the southwest corner. They will wrap up their work there on Sunday. And, crews will continue assessing structures at Williams Lake. They will also continue preparing road 028, northwest of Williams Lake, for possible burnout.

**Resources:** 7 Helicopters; 10 Engines; 6 Dozers; 11 Water tenders; 574 Total Personnel

**Start Date:** 25 August

**Cause:** Lightning

**THE VELVET FIRE:** The Velvet Fire is located about 5 miles northeast of the Boundary Creek launch site, has grown to about 1,300 acres. Active in Soldier Creek drainage on the east flank approximately 2.5 miles from the river and Velvet Creek on the west flank approximately 1.6 miles from the river-smoky conditions have limited visibility and fire activity for most of the day due to higher humidities. The primary concern from the fire is if it backs down the bottom of the ridge and "leapfrogs" down and up ridges ultimately reaching the MF of the Salmon River. There is currently a Type 4 IC assigned to the fire, assisted by three firefighters and the Middle Fork River Patrol, completing an assessment of river camps and the Joe Bump Cabin site in the river reach between Dagger Falls and Rapid River. A fire lookout is in place at Artillery Dome approximately 7 miles north of the fire area. The Velvet Fire is being managed for multiple resource objectives, including the return of fire to the ecosystem.

**Start Date:** 13 August

**Cause:** Lightning

**SHIP ISLAND FIRE:** The Ship Island Fire, last reported at 88 acres has shown small increases in size, is burning about 3.5 miles up Ship Island Creek from the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness. Fire activity showed a moderate increase over previous days. Winds on the fire appeared to remain up slope all day. While the fire is allowed to play its natural role in the ecosystem, a crew has been divided into separate squads to assist in limiting the fire's impact on the river corridor. One squad will monitor the fire from the Stoddard Lookout; one squad will patrol the Bighorn Crags area; and the third squad will launch from Bernard on Sunday to serve as a point of contact for boaters and also to assess campgrounds.

**Resources:** 1 Crew; 17 Total Personnel

**Start Date:** 25 August

**Cause:** Lightning

**SADDLE COMPLEX:** The Idaho portion of the **Saddle Complex** continues to creep downhill and make short uphill runs. The total acreage is now 26,915 with 13,236 acres in Idaho. The overall acreage is down slightly as a result of more accurate mapping. Close monitoring and point to point protection is in place for any values at risk. This fire is being allowed to play its natural role in the ecosystem.

**Resources:** 3 Crews; 3 engines; 1 water tender; 72 Total Personnel

**Start Date:** 10 August

**Cause:** Lightning

For more information on area closures and on fires burning on the Salmon-Challis National Forest, visit <http://www.inciweb.org/unit/46/>.