



Salmon-Challis National Forest

Fire Update

7 September 2011



Contact Fire Information: 208.756.5204

*******Red Flag Warning*******

OVERVIEW: The Salt Fire's approach to the Panther Creek area led to an evacuation order for an area southwest of Panther Creek. No new fires were reported for the forest yesterday. A red-flag warning will continue for the next two days, ending at midnight on Thursday. The weather will keep the fire pushing south, spreading a mile or two, depending on terrain and wind and the amount of vegetation.

SALT FIRE: The 15,818-acre Salt Fire produced large cloud-making smoke columns on Tuesday. The fire reached the bottom of Moyer Creek and Iron Lake as well as east of the lake. The fire lines built on the northeast and eastern sides of the fire held well.

Winds today will shift to the east-northeast which would allow firefighters to burnout on the north side to extend the fire line there. Structural protection crews will help ranchers move cattle out of the area south of the fire. A bulldozer fire line on the far west side of the fire will be built above Panther Creek there.

The fire remains "fuel driven," that is, the amount of burnable vegetation is the greatest influence on where and how fast it moves.

Resources: 7 helicopters; 10 engines; 6 bulldozers; 15 water tenders; 570 Total Personnel

Start Date: 25 August

Cause: Lightning

VELVET FIRE: The Velvet Fire, located about 5 miles northeast of the Boundary Creek launch site, has grown to about 1,300 acres. Velvet fire continues to spread slowly, mostly to the northwest and backed down Thicket Creek. 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 Middle Fork 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. The firefighters have installed a pump, hose lay and sprinklers at Joe Bump in case they are needed and are standing by downriver at John's Camp. 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.

Resources: 5 Total Personnel

Start Date: 13 August

Cause: Lightning

SHIP ISLAND FIRE: The Ship Island Fire, reported at 500 acres, has shown more significant increase in size over the last few days. It 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. The latest movement has been to the north and the West Ship Island Creek drainage with a little growth to the Southeast along the top of ridges. This fire is being 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 is monitoring the fire from the Stoddard Lookout; one squad is patrolling the Bighorn Crags area; and the third squad has launched from Bernard 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: Fire continued to spread to the west on Saddle and East Reynolds Creek. On Horse Creek Road, firefighters continue to conduct burnouts to keep the fire north of Horse Creek Road. This is creating an additional “buffer” to hold the forward advance of the fire while firefighters continue to check the south side of Horse Creek for spot fires. On the southern side, firefighters are protecting Blue Nose and Oreana Lookouts where they can do it with limited risk to their safety by reducing fuels as needed. In the interior of the fire, ragged edges of green islands burned actively as small clumps of isolated torching of trees and short range spotting. As of yesterday the fire has crept to 1 ½ east of Gattin ranch and is ½ mile closer as of Monday. Today more hot and dry weather is predicted and fire managers will continue to impose the area closure and assess on a daily basis.

Resources: 3 Crews; 3 engines; 1 watertender; 82 Total Personnel

Start Date: 10 August

Cause: Lightning

Idaho Acreage: 13,577

To learn about how to better prepare your home to withstand a wildfire, go to www.idahofirewise.org. For more information on area closures and on fires burning on the Salmon-Challis National Forest, visit <http://www.inciweb.org/unit/46/>.