



Salmon-Challis National Forest

Fire Update

Friday, September 9, 2011



Contact Fire Information: 208.756.5204

OVERVIEW: No new fires were reported for the forest yesterday. The high pressure ridge that has been over the fire areas will continue. There is a chance of isolated thunderstorms in the central mountains.

The Wildfire Firefighter Foundation, from Boise, Idaho, is set up at the Salt fire camp. They are on hand to sell their shirts and jackets to raise money for the organization which provides assistance, both monetary and other support, for families of fallen or injured firefighters.

The Alpine fire which started on August 5 has grown to 7.5 acres according to last night's infrared. It is located in the Big Horn Crags area, 7 miles south of Ship Island Lake, west of Alpine Creek. The fire is being monitored.

SALT FIRE: Thursday saw more of the inversion that has slowed the Salt fire the last few days. Infrared mapping shows the fire has now burned 18,224 acres in the Salmon-Challis National Forest. While the fire burned only some 700 acres on Thursday, it remains very hot in many locations, burning inside its perimeter or filling in unburned gaps. Firefighters are actively fighting the Salt fire but due to difficult access issues and extreme fire behavior firefighters are taking more indirect tactics in their effort to suppress the fire.

Major areas of heat are in the northeast and south of the fire. Firefighters completed building fire line from the southwest corner of the fire into Panther Creek. They also built line and then burned out near Road 099 near Swan Peak, on the north. Structure-protection crews continued helping move cattle out, south of the fire in the Upper Morgan Creek area, and they will continue with that work on Friday. Along the Ridge Road (045), firefighters expect to wrap up major work on Friday and to need only patrols there starting Saturday. Firefighters are keeping a wary eye on the fire in the upper Moyer Creek area. Shifting winds could push the fire across the creek. Grasses and shrubs are quickly drying out throughout the fire area as well, and can now carry fire.

The weather continues to play a major role in how active the fire is. As humidity falls or winds or temperatures increase, the fire gets more active. One area on the south developed plumes of smoke as the fire got active there late Thursday afternoon.

Public Meetings: There will be a public meeting at the Williams Lake fire hall at 5:30 p.m. tonight. At Elk Bend, a public meeting will take place at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 10, at the fire hall. Both meetings will give residents the latest information on the Salt fire.

Special Note: The evacuation ordered on Sept. 6 between Panther Creek and Camas Creek is still in effect. The evacuation center in Salmon has closed.

Resources: 7 helicopters; 20 engines; 6 bulldozers; 15 water tenders; 9 crews: 485 Total Personnel

Start Date: 25 August

Cause: Lightning

SADDLE COMPLEX: Thursday the fire was again under a heavy inversion for nearly the entire day. As a result, fire behavior was significantly moderated, even the high elevation areas on the divide. There was some clearing by the Lookout Towers late in the afternoon. Oreana Lookout reported a few sprinkles of precipitation that lasted about ten minutes. The chance of precipitation has been negligible. A spot fire from yesterday that is south of the Horse Creek road was mopped-up and secured. A field observer in the Cathedral Rocks area reported mainly creeping and smoldering fire behavior with some isolated torching. An old hand line from a previous fire was located by crews in the Gattin Ranch area. It extends down into Gattin from the old fire scar. This will be used to provide additional protection for the Ranch. Crews also scouted the trail to the north in East Reynolds Creek for burn out as another option.

Fire managers will continue to impose the area closure and assess its continuation on a daily basis.

Resources: 3 Crews; 5 engines; 1 watertender; 87 Total Personnel

Start Date: 10 August **Cause:** Lightning **Idaho Acreage:** 15,522

SHIP ISLAND FIRE: Last night's infrared flight of The Ship Island Fire shows 1039 acres, an increase of 200+ acres. The new growth is to the east, west and southwest. The fire continues to burn on the ridges above Ship Island Creek. Heavy continuous timber stands, with dead and dying trees, are what is fueling this fire. In this particular area, there has not been a significant fire for many years. The wildfire Module will continue summarizing observations and completing evaluation work. Extensive smoke and haze prevented any visual assessment of fire movement. Last night's infrared map will be available at <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/2538/>. This fire is being managed to return fire as a natural partner in ecosystem management. The fire 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.

Resources: 1 Crew; 17 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 3,001 acres. Velvet fire continues to spread to the east into Muskeg and Soldier Creeks. There has been little growth to the west. The primary concern is if the fire backs down the bottom of the ridge and "leapfrogs" up and down ridges ultimately reaching the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. Firefighters have installed a pump, hose lay and sprinklers at Joe Bump Cabin. Should there be a need to start the pumps to protect the Joe Bump Cabin, it is ready. Velvet Fire is being managed for multiple resource objectives, including the return of fire to the ecosystem.

Resources: 2 Total Personnel

Start Date: 12 August **Cause:** Lightning

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/>.