

Fire Information – Elbow Pass Complex

September 2, 2012 10:00 AM

Incident Team: Type 3 IMT Bill King, Brett Witte (T)

Cause: Lightning

Acres: 20,705 acres

Resources: 1 helicopter

Containment 0%

Total Personnel: 27

Contact: Glenda Scott 562-3791

The Elbow Pass Complex is comprised of five different lightning ignitions from July 12 through July 31. These four fires have merged into one fire, the Elbow Pass Complex: Triple Divide Fire, Rapid Creek Fire, Elbow Pass Fire, and Bar Creek Fire. The fires are generally located 25 miles west southwest of Augusta, Montana. The Falls Point fire is south of the Complex. All are located in inaccessible terrain in heavy fuels. The fires are in the Bob Marshall and Scapegoat Wilderness Areas and are on three national forests.

The Elbow Pass Complex acreage remains at 20,705 acres; 16,169 acres on the Lewis & Clark National Forest, 3,797 acres on the Flathead National Forest, and 769 acres on the Lolo National Forest. Additionally, fire managers are managing the Falls Point fire on the Lolo National forest, currently 266 acres.

RED FLAG WARNINGS continue through today. All forest users are reminded to be especially careful during activities that could cause sparks. This includes but is not limited to, being careful with campfire, carefully monitoring all cooking activities, not tossing cigarettes on the ground and making sure vehicles and trailers are not dragging anything that could create sparks.

Yesterday's Activities: High winds prevented any aerial reconnaissance or other helicopter work. There was an infrared flight Saturday night which showed more interior burning than in previous days where the fire burns in unburned timber where heat, wind and slope align. The fire continues to creep and smolder with individual tree and group torching. The fire grew 281 acres over the last two days primarily in the western portion in the Rapid Creek area. Minor growth was seen in the South Fork Sun River. The Falls Point fire showed more fire activity than had been present during the past few days; individual and group tree torching was seen on the southeast perimeter.

Todays Update: RED FLAG WARNINGS continue today caused by high westerly winds and low relative humidity. Aerial reconnaissance is not expected today unless the winds subside by evening. Fire managers will rely on Patrol Lookout to monitor fire behavior. Widespread single and group torching is expected where there is heat. Fire activity is expected to continue along the southern and western portions of the fire. Short uphill runs and single tree and group torching are anticipated. Structure protection remains in place for Danaher and Basin Cabins. Firefighter and public safety during all operations is our number one priority. Fire managers are prepared to assist with initial attack.

Recreation Opportunities: While the Benchmark Road is open, the area is closed beginning a half mile west of the road. Numerous trails remain closed. Please check with local offices for specific recreation information. Please note that vehicles parked at the trailhead could be at fire risk due to possible future fire activity. The Benchmark Air Strip is closed, the Augusta air strip is open.

For more information on these or other wildland fires, and related information visit:

www.inciweb.org or call:

Augusta Information Station 406-562-3247

Choteau District Office

406-466-5341

Seeley Lake Ranger District 406-677-2233

Spotted Bear Ranger District

406-758-5376