

NW Montana Joint Information Center

Fire Update

August 28, 2003, 10:00 AM



Center Hours 6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Phone # (406) 755-3910 www.fs.fed.us/nwacfire

The East Side Reservoir Road #38 is CLOSED. Middle Fork River from Bear Creek to West Glacier is closed. Stanton Lake area is reopened. Highway 2 is NOT closed. Road #895 along the west side of Hungry Horse Reservoir is CLOSED. Stage II Restrictions are still in effect. Going to the Sun Road is still open.

Blackfoot Lake Complex Includes the Beta Lake-Doris Ridge fires, Ball fire, and the Blackfoot lake complex of fires located on Flathead National Forest, south of Hungry Horse; Hungry Horse, MT. Fire Information (406) 755-3910, 387-4609.

Size: Beta Lake – 518 acres
Size: Doris Ridge- 1930 acres
Size: Blackfoot Lake Fires – 1,135 acres
Size: Ball Fire – 314 acres

total personnel: 580
For entire complex

containment: 0%
containment: 0%
containment: 0%
containment: 5%

* Current acreage was estimated at 6:00 pm on the 27th.

Status: Lost Johnny, Beta and portions of the other fires experienced wind-driven torching and uphill runs. The Lost Johnny Fire increased in activity due to NNW winds. The Ball Fire moved to the east. The Beta Fire spotted across the Hungry Horse Reservoir into the Abbot Bay area. Active suppression on these spots continued into late evening. The Martin City community was on a precautionary evacuation alert with some residents in the far eastern sections on mandatory evacuation. This order was lifted at 10:00 am this morning with the notice that residents should remain on alert. **Road #38 (Eastside Reservoir Road) is closed until further notice. Road #895 from Highway 2 along the west side of Hungry Horse Reservoir is closed. Campgrounds along the Westside and Eastside of the reservoir are also closed.**

Outlook: Due to the increase in fire activity, planned line construction and burnouts are being evaluated. Air operations will continue as long as weather permits. Monitoring will continue on other fires in the complex.

Closures extend along Forest Road #895 (Westside of Reservoir Road) from its junction with US Highway 2 south along the west side of Hungry Horse Reservoir to the junction of Road #2826. It then extends west through the Swan Lake Ranger District and then heads north following the Forest boundary all the way to the town of Hungry Horse. This closure includes the Jewel Basin Hiking Area. **A public meeting will be held nightly at the Canyon Elementary School at 7:00 pm.**

Crazy Horse Fire Located on private and Flathead National Forest land, 3 miles northwest of Lindbergh Lake, MT. Fire Information: (406) 754-4620, (406) 754-2295, (406) 754-2291, (406) 754-3137

Size: 10,188 acres (19 acres growth since 8/26) total personnel: 552 containment: 40%

Status: The fire continued its slow surface spread with some isolated torching. Good progress was made in holding and mopping up lines. Handcrews continued to construct line inside the Mission Mountain Wilderness. **All mandatory evacuations and fire activity advisories have been lifted. Upper Kraft Creek road remains closed due to fire traffic. Current Forest Service area closure remains in effect from Road #903 at the north end along Highway 83 and Road #906 at the south end. The west side boundary includes the Mission Mountain Wilderness and the eastern boundary is Hwy 83. All areas east of Hwy 83, the Hwy 83 corridor and Holland Lake Campground and Recreation Facilities are open.**

Outlook: Chrisman's Northern Idaho Type I Team will assume command at 6:00 am. Construction of line in the Mission Mountains Wilderness will continue. Existing fire line will continue to be held, improved and mopped-up. **A community meeting will be held tomorrow, August 28th at 6:30 pm at Swan Valley Elementary School.**

LITTLE SALMON COMPLEX Located in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, 47 miles southeast of Kalispell, MT. Fire Information: (406) 758-5376

Size: 40,100 acres est. (1,579 acres growth since 8/27) **total personnel:** 75 **containment:** N/A

Status: A Fire Use Management team is set up at the Spotted Bear Ranger District. The Little Salmon complex now includes 16 fires: 9 Wildland Fire Use fires (Little Salmon, Pagoda Mtn., Lime Creek, Independence Park, Salmon Point, Casey Creek, South Spud, Little Hammer, & Casey II) and 7 suppression fires that are more than 15 acres include Mid Creek, Black Bear Mtn., Some Creek, Una Mtn., Molly Creek, and Leota. Fires that have burned together are as follows: Mid Creek burned together with Black Bear Mtn.; This fire then burned together with the Some Creek and Una Mtn. fires. Flame lengths of 1-3' in the surface fuels were seen. This extreme fire behavior was observed until about 2:00 am on the Some, Una, and Bartlett Fires. It was confirmed that they had burned together and will be referred to as the Barsomuna Fire. Increased acreage is estimated from aerial observations. These numbers will adjust when IR and GPS mapping can be accomplished.

Outlook: Monitoring of the fire spread will continue on all the fires. Accurately mapping of the perimeters will be attempted. Strategies for managing the Barsomuna Fire will be planned.

The existing closure from the northern section of the Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex Area, South Fork Flathead River Drainage from Mid Creek (3 miles south of Meadow Creek Trailhead), will be expanded to include the remainder of the wilderness portion of the South Fork Flathead River drainage on Spotted Bear Ranger District. This closes Gorge Creek Trail 218, Lion Creek Pass Trail 25, the rest of Little Salmon Trail 29, and the rest of East Side Trail 80. Up the Spotted Bear River drainage Spotted Bear River Trail 83, Trails 87, 173, 177, 359, 92, 143, 90, 229, 447, as well as the upper end of White River Trail 112 and 176 are also closed.

ROBERT FIRE Located on Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park, 8 miles north of Columbia Falls, MT. Fire Information (406) 892-0946, 892-0948.

Size: 46,448 (450 acres increase since 8/26) **total personnel:** 611 **containment:** 65%

Status: Significant runs occurred in the northeast area late yesterday. Lack of full IR coverage 8/27 made the assessment of the fire growth impossible. Helicopter availability and smoke also contributed in making aerial reconnaissance difficult. Smoldering with occasional flare ups turned into short runs once the slopes were exposed to winds. The south and west portions of the fire remain in mop-up, holding, and patrol status with rehabilitation of suppression related resource damage continuing. National Guard troops were assigned on mop-up and patrol. Steep rugged terrain is still a concern for safety and line construction.

Outlook: Hot spots will continue to be patrolled and mopped up, while also securing established control lines. Rehabilitation of suppression related resource damage will continue in cooler portions of the fire. North Fork Road is open from Glacier Rim to Polebridge. No stopping along the road and all roads that junction or are adjacent with the North Fork road will remain closed. The area just beyond Polebridge and the Red Meadows road remain closed to all except residents, emergency personnel and firefighters. A second closure is in effect above Polebridge restricting access to the river access point and Glacier National Park. The travel restrictions are in effect due to the concern for public safety.

Glacier National Park: The Middle Fork Complex (2,027 ac), inside the park, was active yesterday. Suppression actions are being considered. The Middle Fork of the Flathead River from Cascadilla Creek access point to West Glacier is closed. These fires continue to be monitored and assessed. Trails and campgrounds in the park's North Fork area, north from Lake McDonald and west of the Continental Divide, and the Camas and Hay Creek Roads remain temporarily closed until further notice. Boating on Lake McDonald is temporarily prohibited with the exception of boat tours on the DeSmet, transporting fire crews, and Kelly Camp residents, due to aerial fire suppression. Fish Creek, Avalanche and Big Creek campgrounds remain closed. All trails in Walton are closed. Openings and closures are dependent upon fire behavior. Lake McDonald Lodge is now open to the public. Sperry Chalet is closed for the season. Trails in the Sperry Chalet area are also closed. **Call Glacier National Park for more detailed information 406-888-7801.**

TRAPPER CREEK COMPLEX (Trapper Creek fire, Paul Bunyan fire, Trout Creek and Wolf Gun Fire)

Located in Glacier National Park, 45 miles north of Kalispell, MT. Fire Information: (406) 892-0946, 892-0948.

**Complex size – 26,176 (556 report since 8/26) Trapper Creek: size – 17,830 acres, Containment - 65%
Wolf Gun: size – 8,729 acres, Containment - 50% 3) total personnel: 21**

Status: This fire is being monitored exclusively by air with no ongoing suppression actions. Smoldering, creeping, short upslope surface fire runs and torching were observed yesterday. Morning Star Fire, between Two Medicine and Cutbank, is contained and mop-up is being done but crews are still monitoring. Pitamakin Pass- Atlantic Creek trail is closed. Morning Star campground is closed.

Outlook: All fires remain in a monitoring status and aerial monitoring of fire activity will continue. Extremely dry fuels, inaccessible terrain, and the remote nature of this fire preclude containment and confinement. Poor visibility and smoke inversions are hampering the use of aviation resources.

WEDGE CANYON FIRE Located on the Flathead National Forest and Glacier National Park, 20 miles east of Eureka, MT and six miles south of the Canadian border. Fire Information (801) 413-0525.

Size: 46,126 (1,026 acres increase since 8/27) **total personnel:** 495 **containment:** 66%

Status: Structure protection is in place and sprinklers maintained in the Trail Creek area. Aggressive use of helicopters were used in areas with difficult access. Interior torching, crowning, and rapid fire growth occurred in the northern and eastern portions of the fire. Residents are reminded that evacuations remain in effect from Moose Creek to the Canadian Border. Teepee Creek Road is closed due to snags. Structure protection measures continued.

Outlook: Continued flanking action is planned in the eastern portion of the fire. This includes improving hand lines and tying in Akokala Creek Trail into the old Red Bench burn area. Mopup (monitoring, construction and improvement of lines with helicopter support) continues in north central area of the fire. **Public meeting at Polebridge every night at 8:00 pm. Community meeting at Larry Wilson's place at 9:00 am every other day starting 8/25.**

Fires on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Call (208) 765-7217. This fire is located two miles southeast of Murray, Idaho. Construction of fire line around the perimeter continued through out the day. Air attack was used dropping retardant and water. Four 20-person crews are building fire line and suppressing small spot fires. No evacuations are ordered and no structures are threatened at this time.

Other Fires on the Flathead National Forest/Glacier National Park

- **High Fire:** 120 acres. On the Flathead NF, in the SE corner of the Bob Marshall Wilderness. Air suppression activities used water to activity down. This fire will be monitored today.
- **Middle Fork Complex:** 2,750 acres. In Glacier National Park, approximately 5 miles east of West Glacier. The complex consists of the Belton, Center and Harrison fires. Smoldering with occasional flare-ups occurred once slopes were exposed to the winds. This caused some short runs to occur. Both the Harrison and Belton Fires were staffed yesterday. Patrol and monitoring of these fires will continue.
- **Rampage Complex:** 7,355 acres. In Glacier National Park, southern edge of the Park. The complex consists of the Rampage, Riverview 1, Riverview 2, and Double Mountain 2 fires. Smoldering with occasional flare-ups occurred once slopes were exposed to the winds. This caused some short runs to occur. The Double Mountain Fire made a significant run late yesterday, moving primarily to the east into the Glacier National Park and away from residents along Hwy 2. All fires within the complex are being closely monitored.