



NW Montana Joint Information Center

Fire Update

September 4, 2003, 10:00 A.M.

Center Hours 6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Phone # (406) 755-3910

www.fs.fed.us/nwacfire

For information on closures on the Flathead National Forest call 406-758-6491.

For information on closures at Glacier National Park call 406-888-7800.

Blackfoot Lake Complex Includes the Beta Lake-Doris Ridge fires, Ball fire, Mid Fire and the Blackfoot lake complex of fires located on Flathead National Forest, 19 miles East of Kalispell, MT. Fire Information (406) 755-3910, 387-4609.

Size: Beta Lake – 1,322 acres

total personnel: 1,282

containment: 7%

Size: Doris Ridge- 2,982 acres

For entire complex

For entire complex

Size: Blackfoot Lake Fires – 3,707 acres

Size: Ball Fire – 2,618 acres

Size: Mid Fire – 9,423 acres

Status: In the Blackfoot Lake Complex, fire behavior was limited through late the late afternoon due to the heavy inversion. At higher elevations, creeping ground fires and torching were observed. On some, the fire moved across primary lines in several divisions creating the need to develop and/or use contingency lines.

Outlook: Crews on Beta Lake and Doris Ridge will be utilizing direct and indirect line around main fires and spots. Blackfoot Lake Fire crews and equipment will continue preparation of contingency lines. Resources on the Ball Fire will be implementing structure preparation for the Heinrud community. The Mid Fire will be monitored from the air and air resources will be used to confine it to the wilderness on the west side.

A public meeting will be held tonight at 7:00 pm in the Canyon Elementary School.

Crazy Horse Fire Located on private and Flathead National Forest land, 8 miles south of Condon, MT. Fire Information: (406) 754-4620, (406) 754-2295, (406) 754-2291, (406) 754-3137

Size: 11,100 acres

total personnel: 214

containment: 80%

Status: Within the wilderness, increased burnouts by torching and short runs of ground fire were observed. Outside of the wilderness, suppression action has reduced fire behavior to isolated areas of creeping ground fire. In the Hemlock Lake area, the fire is actively backing and making short runs. In the Red Butte Basin area some interior, isolated pockets of fuels were consumed by isolated torching and creeping ground fire. In both locations, fire intensity is being controlled with helicopter bucket drops. Rehab is proceeding well.

Outlook: Continue patrol, mop-up and rehab outside of the Wilderness. Inside of the Wilderness, patrol and mop-up will utilize helicopter bucket work to control fire intensity and to suppress any spots outside of the fire edge.

A community meeting will be held Friday, September 5, at 6:30 pm at the Swan Valley Community Center.

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

Size: 44,385 acres

total personnel: 79

containment: N/A

Status: The Little Salmon complex is managing both Wild Fire Use and Suppression incidents. The complex consists of 15 active fires: 8 Wildland Fire Use fires (Little Salmon, Pagoda Mtn., Lime Creek, Independence Park, Salmon Point, Casey Creek, South Spud, & Little Hammer) and 7modified-suppression fires that are more than 15 acres include Gordon, Gyp, Crimson, Molly Creek, Leota, & High. The Barsomuna Fire is now being called the Some Creek Fire. This fire is now classified as a modified-suppression fire. To date, ten fires have been declared out/suppressed and six have been combined with other fires. The inversion was slow to mix out yesterday. Low to moderate burning intensity was noted with activity mostly creeping and torching with some isolated torching in areas of intense heat also had short range spotting. Late afternoon

yesterday, the inversion lifted and a plume dominated fire was observed. Identification of which fire won't be known until reconnaissance is down later in the evening. The Air Ops transitions with the retardant patch plant, which is set up for operation, will continue. Fire is on four sides of Big Prairie Ranger Station. District employees and fire use modules have successfully implemented the structural protection plan. Lime Creek and Some Creek Fires have moved adjacent to each other with the South Fork of the Flathead River separating them.

Outlook: Continue structure protection at Big Prairie and site protection at various wilderness facilities, including the running/testing of pumps and hose lays. Begin to mop up and consolidate equipment as fire activity dictates at Big Prairie. In addition, the personnel will begin to size-up rehab needs. Mapping, reconnaissance, and evaluation of the fires within the complex as smoke/Air Ops allow.

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: 52,319 (236 acres growth since 9/3) **total personnel:** 587 **containment:** 70%

Status: Slow burning ground fires with occasional torching were observed.

Outlook: Mopping up and controlling of the fire lines will continue. Rehabilitation of cooler portions of the fire will also continue.

A community meeting will be held in Essex at the Quick Response Unit Facility at 6:30 pm tonight. A public meeting will be held Friday, September 5, at the East Glacier Motel at 8:00 pm.

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 – 29,807 Trapper Creek: size – 19,107 acres, Containment - 65% Wolf Gun: size – 10,700 acres, Containment - 50% 3) total personnel: 0

Status: These fires are being monitored exclusively by air with no ongoing suppression actions. Smoldering, creeping, short upslope surface fire runs and torching were observed yesterday.

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.

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

Size: 51,117 (868 acres increase since 9/3) **total personnel:** 625 **containment:** 81%

Status: Fire behavior was moderated yesterday due to the inversion; however, torching and associated short range spotting occurred. Active backing fire with torching occurring was observed in the southeastern and north central areas of the fire. Air operations were grounded for the day yesterday due to the heavy inversion. Crews made good progress holding and extending the burnout accomplished Tuesday in the southeastern and south central areas of the fire. Residents are reminded that evacuations remain in effect from Moose Creek to the Canadian Border. Structure protection measures continue.

Outlook: Direct attack handlines will be initiated in the Trail Creek area and supported by helicopters and water handling equipment. Burnout operations in the southeastern area will continue with helicopter support and water handling equipment. Handline improvement and mop up of spot fires in the eastern section of the southeastern area of the fire will continue. Patrol and mop up will continue in all other areas. Rehabilitation will continue in the cooler sections of the fire.

A public meeting at Polebridge will be held every night at 8:00 pm. Community meetings at Larry Wilson's place are held at 9:00 am every other day starting 8/25.

Fires on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest Call (208) 267-6725. Two new fires were reported. The Mac Flash Fire is located on the Saint Joe Ranger District and is currently 20 acres. The Mama's Cascade Fire is located in the area by Bonner's Ferry and is currently 200 acres. The Mama's Cascade Fire has been renamed the Myrtle Creek Fire. An Incident Command Team from Colorado is coming in to manage the fire.

Other Fires on the Flathead National Forest/Glacier National Park

- **Middle Fork Complex: 7,583 acres.** In Glacier National Park, approximately 5 miles east of West Glacier. The complex consists of the Belton, Center and Harrison fires. Moderate ground fire with some occasional torching was observed. Continued structure protection, monitor, reconnaissance, aerial suppression, and continued ground action will occur on the Belton Fire to keep it from moving toward West Glacier.
- **Rampage Complex: 16,246 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. The Double Mountain Fires 1 and 2 have grown together. Moderate surface fires with torching and short crown fire runs were observed. Contingency planning and structure protection also continue.