



NW Montana Joint Information Center

Fire Update

August 31, 2003, 12:30 PM

Center Hours 6 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Phone # (406) 755-3910

www.fs.fed.us/nwacfire

North Fork River is open to rafting from Polebridge to Big Creek. There is a mandatory pull out at Big Creek. Big Creek campground is open for overnight use. The road into Kelly Camp is open to residents. Residents are asked not to remove the wrappings on the structures. Westside Reservoir Road #895 along the of Hungry Horse Reservoir is CLOSED. Middle Fork River from Bear Creek to West Glacier is closed. Stanton Lake area has reopened. 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, 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 – 1,046 acres

total personnel: 1,046

containment: 5%

Size: Doris Ridge- 2,754 acres

For entire complex

For entire complex

Size: Blackfoot Lake Fires – 2,477 acres

Size: Ball Fire – 435 acres

Size: Mid Fire – 8,360 acres

Status: Significant progress was made on the burnout on the Beta Fire.

Outlook: Crews on the Beta Lake, Doris Ridge, Blackfoot Lake Fires, and the Ball Fire will be utilizing direct and indirect line and continue burnout operations, which will be supported by aircraft, after indirect lines are completed. The Mid Fire will be monitored from the air and air resources will be used to confine it to the wilderness on the westside.

The area 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 Spotted Bear Ranger District boundary with the Bob Marshall Wilderness. 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.

The road closures includes Road #895 (Westside Reservoir Road) from Highway 2 in Hungry Horse along the Reservoir to the Spotted Bear Ranger Station. Campgrounds along the Westside of the reservoir are also closed.

A public meeting will be held Tuesday, September 2, at the Canyon Elementary School at 7:00 pm.

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: 10,500 acres (300 acres growth since 8/29)

total personnel: 407

containment: 70%

Status: With the dropping humidities, there was an increase in torching resulting in the burning of unburned islands within the fire perimeter. Burning along the uncontained perimeter in the vicinity of Hemlock Creek in the wilderness continued.

Outlook: Patrolling and improving existing fire lines, mopping up, and rehabilitation will continue outside of the Wilderness. Plans for an additional burnout later if needed and conditions permit.

A community meeting will be held tomorrow, September 1, at 6:30 pm at Condon Community Center.

Upper Kraft Creek road remains closed due to fire traffic. Current Forest Service area closure remains in effect.

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

Size: 34,710 acres **total personnel:** 85 **containment** N/A

Status: Smoldering and creeping in the ground fuels below the inversion was observed. Torching occurred in the canyons of the Leota Fire. Short runs on the south edges of the fires also were observed. A Fire Use Management team is set up at the Spotted Bear Ranger District. The Little Salmon complex now includes **14 active fires: 8 Wildland Fire Use fires** (Little Salmon, Pagoda Mtn., Lime Creek, Independence Park, Salmon Point, Casey Creek, South Spud, & Little Hammer) and **7 modified-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.

Outlook: Monitoring of the fires' spread and map changing perimeters will continue. Structure protection at Beg Prairie Ranger Station will also continue. Reconnaissance will be done on the Leota, Gordon, Molly Creek, Gyp, and High Fires for possible suppression considerations. Spotted Bear Lookout will continued to be wrapped. A Division Supervisor will be inserted for future trail hazard assessment. Structure protection water systems will be tested and maintained. Smokey conditions prevented mapping so no new acreage will be shown in today's report. Decrease in acreage is the result of the moving the Mid Fire to the Blackfoot Lake Complex command.

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: 49,339 (1,391 acres growth since 8/26) **total personnel:** 423 **containment:** 70%

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

Outlook: Mopping up and controlling of the fire lines will continue. Rehabilitation of cooler portions of the fire will also continue. Monitoring will occur on the northwest area of the fire within Glacier National Park, which has open line.

Road closures and openings include the North Fork Road being open from Glacier Rim to Polebridge. No stopping along the road and all roads that junction or are adjacent to 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 restricting access to the river access points and Glacier National Park. The exception to the second closure is public use of the North Fork River from Polebridge to Big Creek. Big Creek campground is also open to overnight use. The travel restrictions are in effect due to the concern for public safety.

A community meeting will be held in Essex at the Quick Response Unit Facility Monday, September 1, at 7:00 pm.

Glacier National Park: The Middle Fork of the Flathead River from Bear Creek access point to West Glacier is closed. 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 – 27,612 **Trapper Creek: size** – 18,883 acres, **Containment** - 65% **Wolf Gun: size** – 8,729 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. 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, north of Polebridge, MT and six miles south of the Canadian border. Fire Information (801) 413-0525.

Size: 48,763 (790 acres increase since 8/30) **total personnel:** 545 **containment:** 73%

Status: Structure protection is in place and sprinklers are maintained in the Trail Creek area. Handline construction continued in the Trail Creek area. Handline was tied into the old Red Bench burn in the southeastern area of the fire. Improvement of handlines along with lining two spot fires south of AkoKala Creek. Burnout operations progressed through the meadow for approximately 1 mile. 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 continue.

Outlook: Continuation of handline construction in the Trail Creek area. Burnout operations in the southeastern area will continue. 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.

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. There are no new starts in this area right now.

Other Fires on the Flathead National Forest/Glacier National Park

- **Middle Fork Complex: 4,913 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. Continuation of structure protection, monitoring, reconnaissance, and aerial suppression on the fires. Ground action on the northern flank will also continue.
- **Rampage Complex: 11,768 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. Moderate surface fire with occasional torching was observed. Personnel might possibly be inserted on the east side of the Continental Divide to pick up small slopovers. Structure protection assessment and activities will continue.