

**From:** McKay, Tod G -FS [tgmckay@fs.fed.us]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 17, 2013 2:11 PM  
**Subject:** News Release: Area Closure Lifted  
**Attachments:** Gold Pan Fire - 9-17-13.docx



**September 17, 2013 – 2:00 PM**

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**What:** Gold Pan Complex (Gold Pan, Nez Peak, Thirteen, Goat Fires)  
**Cause:** Lightning  
**Location:** 35 miles SW of Darby, MT. in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness  
**Jurisdiction:** Bitterroot National Forest – West Fork Ranger District

**Summary:** With cooler and wetter weather heading our way, fire activity and movement on the Gold Pan fire is expected to be extremely limited. The National Weather Service is forecasting persistent rains for the Valley with light snow possible in the mountains. Snow levels could lower to 6,000 feet by Wednesday.

As a result, Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor Julie King is lifting all closures on the Gold Pan Complex. This includes all Forest Service trails and roads previously closed in the Frank Church and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness. The Magruder Road Corridor, Selway Road to Paradise and Fales Flat and Deep Creek Campgrounds are all open, along with dispersed camping sites along Magruder Road.

Motorists, recreationists, and hunters should exercise caution and be alert to the hazards associated with travel in areas of previous fires. Potential hazards include falling snags or trees, rolling rocks and debris, burned out stumps, flash flooding and mud flows especially in areas without vegetation. Take proper safety precautions such as: checking the weather forecast, let someone know where you are, and locate your camp away from burned trees. Conditions in a burned forest change constantly!

Travelers are also advised to carry a chainsaw (or crosscut saw in the wilderness) to prevent becoming trapped between fallen trees across roads or trails.

The National Weather Service is advising anyone who plans on camping, backpacking, hiking, or doing any outdoor activities later this week to take measures and be prepared for very wet and cold conditions.

**Cooperating Agencies:** The Bitterroot National Forest would like to thank the following agencies and individuals for their support and cooperation throughout the Gold Pan Complex;

Ravalli County Fire Warden, Painted Rocks RFD, West Fork RFD, Ravalli County Sheriff, Ravalli County Commissioners, Ravalli County Office of Emergency Management, American Red Cross, and West Fork and Painted Rocks homeowners and residents.

**2013 Fire Season:** This summer, wildland firefighters responded to and extinguished 72 wildfires on the Bitterroot National Forest. Due to the quick response of crews, most of the fires were kept under 1-acre in size.

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