



FACT SHEET

Wildfire Update

July 2, 2021

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What: 5 new fires

Location: Bitterroot National Forest

Summary: Firefighters are working this afternoon on 5 new fires caused by lightning from thunderstorms that went through the Bitterroot Valley last night. Thanks to the quick response by fire crews and aviation resources, all fires are currently staffed, contained, or have already been called out. Four of the fires are small, ¼ acre or less, and all are located south of Darby on the southern end of the forest. All fires are being actively suppressed under a full suppression strategy. There are no structures threatened or closures at this time.

Woods Creek Fire: The lightning-caused Woods Creek fire in the upper West Fork above Painted Rocks Reservoir and south of Razorback Mountain is the largest of the new fires. It is currently estimated at 20 acres and is staffed with 10 firefighters, two engines, and one helicopter that is assisting with water drops. A hose lay is in place and crews are constructing handline this afternoon around the fire. A 20-person (Type 2) initial attack crew and an additional engine have been ordered and are in route to the Woods Creek Fire.

Lightning: There were more than 100 confirmed lightning strikes across the Bitterroot National Forest last night, many that touched the ground. Fire crews, along with a fixed wing air patrol, will be on the lookout for more fires today and this weekend. The Forest also has 8 Fire Lookouts that are currently staffed and operating. See lightning map for more details.

Weather: Fortunately, there was some precipitation from last night's storms. The valley bottom and Sapphire Mountains received the most rain with up to .4 inches. The southern end of the forest and the Bitterroot Mountains received less, ranging from 0 to .2 inches. Additional thunderstorms are in the forecast today for the southern portions of the Bitterroot along with a drying trend and hot temperatures returning Saturday through next week.

Fire Danger: Fire Danger is currently "high" on the Bitterroot National Forest. When fire danger is "high," fires will start from most causes. The fires will spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. All fine dead fuels ignite readily and unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are hit hard and fast while small.

Prevention Message: With the holiday weekend upon us, fire managers would like to remind visitors to be extremely careful when camping and remember to properly maintain and extinguish campfires. Ensure that all campfires are dead out by adding water and stirring dirt into hot coals until cold. If your campfire is still hot, then it's too hot leave. Also, fireworks are illegal on public lands: every forest, every campsite, every day. Never light fireworks in the woods. Finally, please pay close attention to those items that may cause a spark, such as chains on a trailer.

2021 Fire Season: To date, there have been 21 wildfires on the Forest; 11 human-caused and 10 lightning fires.

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