

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

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Attachments: Wildfire Update - 8-11-15.docx



FACT SHEET

Wildfire Update

August 11, 2015

Contact: Information Officer: Joni Lubke
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What: 9 fires
Discovered: August 10th
Location: Bitterroot National Forest

Summary: Firefighters are busy fighting fires caused by the lightning storm that went through the Bitterroot Valley yesterday. So far, 11 fires have been reported, 9 of those have been located with firefighters on scene, and the fire in the Lost Trail area has just been declared out. All fires have been kept under ¼ acre, and at this time there are no concerns.

On the Stevensville Ranger District, four fires have been reported between Burnt Fork Lake and Willow Mountain, two are staffed with firefighters, and firefighters are searching for two more in that area. Two fires are in the Butterfly area (between the Vermiculite mine and Fool Hen Lake), and both are staffed.

There are four fires staffed with firefighters on the Darby/Sula Ranger District. These fires are located 9 miles up Lost Horse, Benson Creek (off Rye Creek), Martin Creek (up the East Fork), and Whisky Gulch (off Robbins Gulch).

Estimated size: At this time, all new fires are under ¼ acre.

Containment: The fire in the Benson Creek area is contained.

Resources on Fires: These fires are staffed with approximately 30 firefighters.

Fire Danger: Fire Danger is currently "very high" on the Bitterroot National Forest. Under these conditions fires will start easily and spread rapidly and have a quick increase in intensity, right after ignition. Small fires can quickly become large fires and exhibit extreme fire intensity such as long-distance spotting. These fires can be very difficult to control.

Fire Restrictions: The Forest is still in Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. Campfires will only be allowed within a designated campground or recreation site which contains a Forest-provided fire ring. Smoking is also prohibited except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials. For more information, go to <http://firerestrictions.us/>.

Special Concerns: The weather pattern today is looking similar to what we saw yesterday (Mon 8/10). However, the winds are not expected to be quite as strong or widespread. Thunderstorms today will be capable of producing strong outflow winds, possibly up to 40 to 50 mph. Storms will be capable of frequent lightning and new wildfire starts are possible due to dry fuel conditions.

Safety of firefighters and the public is always a primary concern. Extremely hot and dry temperatures are predicted through the month and firefighters are asking for the public's help in preventing human-caused wildfires. Never leave a campfire unattended and make sure your coals are cool to the touch before you leave.

2015 Fire Season: Firefighters have responded to and extinguished 26 wildfires this summer on the Bitterroot National Forest.

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