

Glenda Wiles

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
Sent: Monday, July 24, 2017 5:24 PM
Subject: Bitterroot NF - Wildfire Update - July 24, 2017
Attachments: Fire Fact Sheet - 7-24-17.docx



July 24, 2017

Contact: Public Affairs Officer - Tod McKay
Phone: 406-363-7122
Cell: 406-531-1130

What: Bitterroot NF Fire Update
Location: Bitterroot National Forest

Dominic Butte Fire did not grow in size over the weekend and remains at 55 acres today. The lightning caused fire located on the Stevensville Ranger District in the Sapphire Mountains east of Corvallis is now 40 percent contained.

Crews made good progress yesterday on continuing mop up activities (extinguishing remaining hot spots and burning materials) further into the black – interior of the fire. This will help prevent any spotting outside of containment lines.

Fire managers will continue utilizing helicopters today with buckets for water drops to contain any active torching that occurs on the upper, north end of the fire. This area, which previously burned in the 2010 Dominic Point Fire, contains heavy dead and down fuels and numerous snags which presents a serious safety threat to firefighters, especially in high wind situations.

80 firefighters, five engines, three water tenders and a dozer remain assigned to the blaze which is being actively suppressed. The fire lookout on Willow Mountain who was evacuated last Wednesday has now safely returned to duty.

Road and trail closures remain in place for Willow Creek Road, Willow Creek Trail, Gleason Lake Trail, and Burnt Fork Lake. For more information visit <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5396/>

Tin Cup Fire on the Darby/Sula Ranger District at the head of Tin Cup drainage also did not grow over the weekend and remains at 5 acres. There are currently 8 smokejumpers working to suppress this fire which is located near Tin Cup Lake in the Bitterroot Mountains. There are

no structures threatened, but a closure is in place for public safety and includes the Tin Cup Trail #96.

White Cap & Vance Mountain Fires are located on the West Fork Ranger District in Idaho's Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness three miles west of Tin Cup Lake. The White Cap fire remains at 5 acres in size and Vance Mountain is estimated at 15 acres. Both are lightning caused and are remote with no access. They're located in extremely steep, rugged, and rocky terrain. These fire will not be staffed as firefighter safety is the number one priority and they are not threatening any structures. The fires will be managed for resource benefits and monitored by staffed lookouts and daily recon/air patrol flights.

Fire Danger: This weekend, fire danger on the Bitterroot National Forest was raised to "Very High". When fire danger is very high, fires will 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 and fire whirls. The fires can be difficult to control and will often become much larger and longer-lasting fires.

Fire Restrictions: Due to continued hot and dry conditions and potential for rapid and dangerous fire growth, Stage II Fire Restrictions will go into effect in Ravalli County and on the Bitterroot National Forest this Thursday, July 27, 2017. This means campfires and all other fires are prohibited on the forest along with operating motorized vehicles off designated trails. Firewood cutting is also prohibited after 1:00 p.m. and smoking is not allowed unless in enclosed vehicles, buildings, or flammable free areas. Camping stoves (Liquid petroleum) that can be turned on and off are allowed. Individuals who violate these restrictions can face fines up to \$5,000 and six months in jail along with paying suppression costs and damages, if you start a fire. For more information, go to <http://firerestrictions.us/>

Weather: A red flag warning remains in effect for portions of western Montana today with 10-20 mph winds and low relative humidity with a slight chance of thunderstorms. A warming trend continues all week with temps in the mid-upper 90's returning by next weekend.

Smoke/Air Quality: There are several lightning wilderness fires burning to our west in Idaho on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest that are contributing to widespread hazy skies and smoke impacts in the Bitterroot Valley. The largest is the 860 acre Moose Creek Fire near Moose Creek Ranger Station. Most of the smoke from this fire is impacting Lost Horse Canyon and areas south of Lost Horse (Darby). For more information on this fire and other fires burning around us (Lolo Peak, Rock Creek fires) visit <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov>. For the latest air quality information visit <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/todaysair/>. This site displays particulate concentrations and health effects including a daily *Wildfire Smoke Update*.

2017 Fire Season: Firefighters have responded to 10 human caused fires and 27 lightning fires this summer on the Bitterroot National Forest. Due to the quick response of crews, most fires were kept small -- under 1 acre in size.

Please Note: Drones are dangerous if flown near wildfires. Drones can interfere with wildland fire air traffic that are necessary to suppress fires and could ground firefighting aircraft due to safety concerns. Learn more at <http://www.nifc.gov/drones/>

###



Tod McKay
Public Affairs Officer

Forest Service
Bitterroot National Forest

p: 406-363-7122

c: 406-531-1130

tgmckay@fs.fed.us

1801 N. First

Hamilton, MT 59840

www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot



Caring for the land and serving people

This electronic message contains information generated by the USDA solely for the intended recipients. Any unauthorized interception of this message or the use or disclosure of the information it contains may violate the law and subject the violator to civil or criminal penalties. If you believe you have received this message in error, please notify the sender and delete the email immediately.