

Glenda Wiles

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Subject: Fire updates for 7/28/2017
Attachments: Fire Fact Sheet - 7-28-17.docx



FACT SHEET

Wildfire Update

July 28, 2017

Contact: Acting Public Affairs Officer – Joe Butsick
Phone: 406-821-1215
Cell: 406-396-9103

What: Bitterroot NF Fire Update
Location: Bitterroot National Forest

Dominic Butte Fire did not grow in size and remains at 55 acres. The lightning caused fire located on the Stevensville Ranger District in the Sapphire Mountains east of Corvallis is now 60 percent contained.

Fire managers will continue utilizing helicopters 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.nwccg.gov/incident/5396/>

Tin Cup Fire on the Darby/Sula Ranger District at the head of Tin Cup drainage 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 72 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 past 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 went into effect in Ravalli County and on the Bitterroot National Forest yesterday 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: Expected weather for today and this weekend is chance of showers and thunderstorms in the evening. Highs in the mid 70s to lower 80s and lows from 40s to 50s. Clouds are expected tonight, Saturday and Sunday nights.

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.nwccg.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: There was one new fire detected last night in the Hughes Creek drainage on the MT side of the ID/Mt border. A light and medium helicopter was used to suppress this ¼ acre fire. There are 5 firefighters on site. Firefighters have responded to 10 human caused fires and 28 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/>

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