

InciWeb - Incident Information System

Lolo Peak Fire News Release

Lolo Peak Fire Update Aug. 29 2017

Incident: Lolo Peak Fire Wildfire
Released: 1:07 hrs. ago

Lolo Peak Fire Update

Tuesday, August 29, 2017; 8:30 AM
Northern Rockies Incident Management Team
Greg Poncin, Incident Commander

Related Information
Lolo Peak Fire Update Aug. 29, 2017 (pdf 226 kb)

Fire origin: July 15, 2017, ten miles southwest of Lolo, MT.

Fire Information: (406) 272-5433 Hours: 7am – 9pm

Email: LoloPeakFire@gmail.com

Websites: Inciweb: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5375>

Missoula County Sheriff: <http://tinyurl.com/ya93jpuf>

Ravalli County: <http://ravalli.us/557/Fire-Incident-Information>

Facebook: Bitterroot National Forest Facebook Page

Lolo National Forest Facebook Page

Transition Day: Management of the fire will transfer at 5 pm today from Greg Poncin's Northern Rockies Type 1 Incident Management Team to Doug Turman's Northern Rockies Type 1 Incident Management Team.

Weather: Cloud cover today will keep fire activity moderated until forecasted dry thunderstorms move into the area this afternoon from the southwest, bringing the possibility of outflow winds, lightning and the potential for new fire starts.

Fire Information Locations: Staffed fire information is available in three locations: Super 1 Foods in Stevensville; Farmers State Bank in Florence; and the weigh station in Lolo at the corner of Highways 12 and 93.

Evacuations and Warnings: All evacuation areas from the Bear Creek area on Highway 12 east to Lolo and south to the Bass Creek Road on Highway 93 remain under evacuation warning. There are no evacuation orders at this time, but this could change based on fire behavior. For current information visit the Missoula County and Ravalli County Sheriffs' Facebook pages.

Returning Home: Residents may see changes to their property as a result of the fire. Check your property for damage to your well/pump, electric/gas meter, propane tank and for fire-weakened trees.

highway 12 is open - 45 mPH speed limit through the fire area.

Summary: Yesterday, for the second day in a row, firefighters had to divert from normal operations for initial attack on a new fire. Four Single Engine Air Tankers

(SEATs), half of the Wyoming Hotshots assigned to the Lolo Peak fire and local firefighters suppressed the fire, limiting it to 1.5 acres about a mile west of the fire line in the Cooper Creek drainage. Several helicopters were also diverted to do bucket work on a new fire near the Nelson Creek trailhead on the West Fork Ranger District, Bitterroot National Forest.

Fire activity picked up on the west end of Carlton Ridge, sending a visible plume of smoke into the air late in the afternoon. The fire also became active in One Horse Creek, breached the retardant lines that had been holding it on the north slope of the canyon for a week and started to move downslope towards the creek bottom. Crews used hose lays and sprinkler systems to reinforce the hand line at the mouth of the drainage while helicopters continued to drop water on the fire to stall its movement. Firefighters had a plan in place to begin burnout operations at the mouth of the canyon depending on the fire's movement, but did not have to implement that plan. This emphasized the importance of the burnout operations conducted over the past several days. Their purpose is to create a larger buffer along the fire line in the event the fire tries to move east towards the valley through any of the canyons between One Horse Creek and south to the 2009 Kootenai Creek fire scar. The fire will eventually make its move to the east in the direction of the valley.

Farther south, the Pioneer Peak Hotshots from Alaska and a dozer constructed a new control line from the state land west of the Tabke property up the hill to a switchback on Forest Road 1315. This continues the strategy of being prepared ahead of time if the fire continues to move south and into canyons that would provide it the opportunity to burn out of the mountains and east towards the valley.

Today: As the fire continues to back down into the One Horse Creek drainage, firefighters will monitor the fire's movement and will begin burnout operations at the mouth of the canyon if necessary to prevent its spread to the east. If this happens, smoke will be very visible from Florence. The burnout will be conducted in a slow, deliberate manner on the fire side of the primary control line. Firefighters have been expecting and preparing for the fire's movement in this direction. If the firing operation begins, it will be supported by crews, aircraft, engines and water delivery equipment already in place. Structure protection engines will also be on standby for any spot fires in the area immediately east of the fire line. Depending on fire growth, the chain of burnout blocks that firefighters have been preparing for the last week may come into play as an additional buffer already in place along the primary control line.

Around the rest of the fire, firefighters will continue mop up and patrol along the control line during the day and patrol the line and nearby residences in the highway corridors at night. They will continue to pull equipment from the Highway 12 corridor that is no longer needed in that area. Improvements to the primary control line between Bass Creek Road and North Kootenai Creek road will continue. Farther south, crews continue to push control line construction from the primary control line into the 2009 Kootenai Creek fire scar.

Please do not stop along the highways to view fire activity. It creates a significant traffic hazard, impedes firefighter traffic, impacts the safety of firefighters and citizens, and increases the chances that the fire could escape control lines.

Firewise: For information on how to improve the chances of your homes and structures surviving a wildfire, visit the Firewise website at www.Firewise.org.

Evacuation/Closure Information: Evacuations and road closures are based upon the need to provide for safety of the public and firefighters, current fire behavior, forecasted weather, and planned suppression operations. Fire officials, Missoula and Ravalli County Sheriff's Offices, and Montana Department of Transportation will evaluate the evacuation and road closures daily. The Incident Commander, Missoula County Rural Fire Chief, Ravalli County Fire Warden, and the Missoula and Ravalli County Sheriffs appreciate your patience and will work hard to get you back into your homes as soon as it is safe to do so. Go to the Sheriffs Offices' Facebook pages for the most current information.

Drones and TFR: The Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) for the Lolo Peak Fire remains in effect. The restriction includes "drones" or unmanned aerial vehicles. If drones are detected, air operations stop. "If you fly, we can't! If you see a drone in the fire area, including the evacuation areas, report it immediately to 406-272-5433. Please provide your name, phone number, location and time you observed the drone. Your cooperation is needed to insure the safety of our pilots.

Stage II Fire Restrictions are in effect for Missoula and Ravalli Counties and across the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests. Additional information can be found on Inciweb.

Closures: For specific area closure information on the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests please visit the Inciweb website, the Lolo National Forest website and/or the Bitterroot National Forest website.

Jurisdiction: The fire is under the jurisdiction of the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests and the Montana Department of Natural Resources (MTDNRC). It is being managed under unified command consisting of Incident Commander Poncin, Missoula Rural Fire Chief Newman and Ravalli County Fire Warden Mohn. **Montana National Guard** soldiers are providing assistance to the Missoula and Ravalli County Sheriffs' offices in road closures and evacuation programs.

Missoula County residents can receive emergency notifications of critical alerts via their choice of text, phone and/or email by signing up at **Smart911.com**. Residents in Ravalli County can download the **Ravalli County Sheriff's app** to their mobile devices to receive critical information notifications.

Cooperators: Stevensville, Ravalli & Missoula County Government; Ravalli and Missoula County Sheriffs' Offices; Missoula Rural Fire; Florence VFD; Florence – Carlton School District; Nez Perce Tribe; Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes; MDOT; Carlton and Bass Lake Irrigation; Ravalli and Missoula County DES; Private Landowners.



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