



FACT SHEET

Wildfire Update

July 19, 2022

Contact: Public Affairs Officer – Tod McKay
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What: Hog Trough Fire
Discovered: July 17th
Cause: Lightning
Location: Bitterroot National Forest – Darby/Sula Ranger District

Summary: The lightning-caused Hog Trough Fire burning 17 miles east of Hamilton is currently estimated at 300 acres. The fire is located five miles east of Black Bear Campground and seven miles southwest of Skalkaho Falls. It is burning in the Sapphire Wilderness Study Area (WSA) on both the Bitterroot and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests. There are no structures currently threatened or values at risk. An area closure is being developed on both Forests that will include trails and roads in the vicinity of the fire. See below for additional information.

Terrain: Firefighter safety remains a top priority due to the fire's location in extremely remote, rugged, and inaccessible terrain. The fire is burning in an old fire scar from the fires of 2000 with heavy fuels, dead standing trees, and downed timber. The area is filled with snags (dead trees) which presents a major safety threat to firefighters on the ground, especially in high wind situations.

Fire Activity: Much of the fire growth yesterday was to the east (away from Hamilton) and was driven by 50mph winds over the fire area. The winds were so strong last night that all aircraft was grounded, and a window was blown out of the Gird Point Fire Lookout in the Skalkaho area, where the Hog Trough Fire was being observed for potential growth and activity.

Planned Actions: Firefighters are not directly engaging this fire on the ground at this time due to significant safety threats posed by acres of snags and inaccessible terrain. Firefighter and public safety is always the highest priority during a wildfire. No amount of protection for a structure or resource is worth the loss of human life.

Strategies to manage and suppress the fire may include both ground and aviation resources as needed. Daily scouting and aerial observations are taking place to strategically evaluate the most effective and safest tactic to engage the fire's perimeter. When it is safe to do so, the right resources are available, and there is a high probability of success, firefighters will engage in fire suppression tactics.

Type 3 Team: Ken Park's local Western Montana Incident Management Team will take over the Hog Trough Fire tomorrow. An Infrared (IR) flight is also scheduled tonight to get an accurate estimate of the size.

Inciweb: For the latest on the Hog Trough Fire and to see a map of the fire closure area visit Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8258/>

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.

2022 Fire Season: This year, firefighters on the Bitterroot National Forest have extinguished 6 human-caused fires and 17 lightning fires.

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