



WILDFIRE DAILY UPDATE

September 11, 2022

Mill Lake / Blodgett Lake Fire Daily Update

Fire Information: (406)210-0070 daily from 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

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Bitterroot National Forest Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF>

Mill Lake Fire	1,589 Acres	7 miles West of Pinesdale, MT	Burning in timber, litter and understory with down heavy fuels and understory torching
Blodgett Lake Fire	70 Acres	11 miles West of Hamilton, MT	Burning in timber, litter and understory with large snags and blow down along creek bottom

Start Date: 8/29/2022 **Cause:** Lightning **Total Personnel:** 42 **Engines:** 2
Helicopters: as available **Crews:** 2 **Heavy Equipment:** 2

CURRENT STATUS

Due to heavy smoke in the Mill Creek drainage, fire staff have been limited with viewing the fire perimeter via aircraft. The fire area is estimated around 1,589 acres and had minimal growth yesterday. A few small spots to the west of the main fire above Mill Lake are burning in the rocks and in a small band of timber with smoldering and creeping. The main fire is currently smoldering and creeping in the down and dead. There is little to no movement to the east (down canyon) from the last report.

With recent smoke this week, the lightning-caused Blodgett Lake fire wasn't as visible via aircraft and has increased in activity. The Blodgett Lake fire located approximately 3.5 miles east of Blodgett Lake and 7 miles west of the Blodgett Creek Trailhead is now estimated at 70 acres after several days of easterly winds. It was discovered by air patrol on August 27, 2022. The fire did cross the main Blodgett Creek on the east flank of the fire and is smoldering in the down and deal fuels, with isolated pockets of open flames on the south and west flanks. Most of the progression of the fire was parallel to the creek and to the south (up drainage). Multiple helicopters (Type 1 & 2) have been conducting water bucket drops on the fire this week. These will continue today (as needed).

The forest is working on expanding trail closures in the Blodgett Creek area, so please visit our forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot>, or check back on Facebook for updated trail closure information. For updated information on the Mill Lake Fire (staff for the Mill Lake Fire are also managing the Blodgett Lake fire), please visit Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8392/>

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Sunday weather: Ridge of high pressure will strengthen over the fires Sunday. Moderate west-southwest winds will develop during the afternoon hours. Smoke may limit temperatures and minimum relative humidity potential. Winds are forecasted West 7-12 mph after 1200.

Fire Behavior: Fires will continue to burn in the dead and down fuels that are very dry. Fires will spread upslope the steep canyon slopes and down drainage with increased winds. The narrow drainages can funnel the wind increasing the winds that are forecasted. In the areas of timber, there is 40-60% of the trees that are standing dead. If enough fuel and fire gets into those areas, trees can torch out, emit fire embers into areas out in front of the main fire, and start new spot fires.

CLOSURES AND SPECIAL MESSAGES

Specific closure information can be found at <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8392/>.

Trail Closures:

1. **Mill Creek, National Forest System (NFS) Trail #364** from trailhead origin to its intersection with Fred Burr Trail #38.
2. **Cow Creek, NFS Trail #3** from trailhead origin to the intersection of Mill Creek Trail #364.
3. **Hauf Lake, NFS Trail #309** from intersection of Mill Creek Trail #364 to Hauf Lake.
4. **Sears Lake, NFS Trail #312** from the intersection of Mill Creek Trail #364 to Sears Lake.
5. **Sheafman Creek, NFS Trail #82** from trailhead origin to Aichelee Lake.
6. **A section of Fred Burr NFS Trail #38**, from the west end of Fred Burr Reservoir to its intersection with Mill Creek Trail #364.

Road Closures

1. **Cow Creek, NFS Road #438**, uphill of the gate at the Bitterroot NF boundary line.

Other Fires in the Area:

- **Big Creek Fire:** 234 acres
- **Bear Creek Fire:** 2-10 estimated acres
- **Kootenai Creek:** 0.3 acres
- **Sweeney:** 0.12 acres, human-caused and contained
- **South Fork Fire** (Nez Perce Clearwater NF): 400 acres, Powell Ranger District, NCF, and Stevensville RD, BRF, 12 miles west of Stevensville MT in ID

Fire Restrictions:

Stage 2 Fire Restrictions on all Bitterroot National Forest lands in Montana. See mtfireinfo.org for more specific restrictions information.

InciWeb: Mill Lake Fire: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/8392/>

Bitterroot National Forest Website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot>

Air quality: <https://fire.airnow.gov/>