



WILDFIRE DAILY UPDATE

September 12, 2022

Mill Lake / Blodgett Lake Fire Daily Update

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

Email: 2022.milllake@firenet.gov

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

Mill Lake Fire	1,608 Acres	7 miles West of Pinesdale, MT	Burning in timber, litter and understory with down heavy fuels and understory torching
Blodgett Lake Fire	1,200 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:** 50 **Engines:** 4
Helicopters: as available **Crews:** 2 **Heavy Equipment:** 2

CURRENT STATUS

The Mill Creek drainage continues to be filled with heavy smoke, limiting fire staff with viewing the fire perimeter via aircraft. The fire area is estimated around 1,608 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. Fire was flown briefly yesterday before winds and smoke obstructed fire viewpoints.

Directly south of the Mill Lake fire, is the Blodgett Lake fire which exhibited extreme fire behavior yesterday and is now estimated at 1,200 acres in size. Late afternoon aircraft observed extreme crowning and spotting occurred at least a quarter of a mile ahead of the main fire front. Fuels and slope are driving dead, down and cured shrubs. The fire has crossed 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. The fire remains active. Multiple helicopters (Type 1 & 2) have been conducting water bucket drops on the fire this past week. These will continue today as resources become available and as air quality allows.

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/>

A Type I incident management team has been ordered for the Mill Lake and Blodgett Lake fires. Jay Wood and Scott Suko's Type 3 team will continue to manage the fires in the interim.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Monday weather: Conditions today continue to be hot and dry. High temperatures and low relative humidity are expected over the fire area. West winds are forecasted. Tomorrow's forecast calls for lower temperatures and higher relative humidity, with a slight chance of scattered showers.

Fire Behavior: Fire was active yesterday with uphill runs, flanking, and torching. Crown fire was observed on the Blodgett Lake fire with upslope runs. Both 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. Fires will stay active throughout the night due to hot and dry conditions.

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:** 265 acres
- **Bear Creek Fire:** 5 acres
- **Kootenai Creek:** 0.3 acres
- **South Fork Fire** (Nez Perce Clearwater NF): 400 acres, Powell Ranger District, NCF, and Stevensville RD, BRF, 12 miles west of Stevensville MT in Idaho

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/>