



Bowles Creek Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Bitterroot National Forest

Fire Information: 406-426-9130

Email: 2023.bowlescreek@firenet.gov

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Bowles-Creek-Fire-Information>

<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-bowles-creek>

July 26, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.

Location: 3 miles west of Skalkaho Pass in the Bowles Creek drainage

Start Date: 7/20/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 1,633 acres

Completion: 0%

Total Personnel: 157

Engines: 4

Helicopters: 2

Hand Crews: 4

Fire Danger is VERY HIGH on both forests (Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF and Bitterroot NF).

CURRENT SITUATION & PLANNED ACTIONS

An overnight infrared flight mapped the fire size at approximately 1,633 acres. Yesterday, on the west side of the fire, Idaho Panhandle Hot Shots continue fireline construction and improvement work along Forest Road 711 to serve as an indirect control line for containment by removing thick underbrush and vegetation. Heavy equipment and masticators (machine for grinding or pulping material), will work on opening up forest roads and work on fireline construction in locations that have high probability of success to contain the fire. Previous firelines and dozer lines constructed in the 2022 Hog Trough fire are being utilized.

On the east side, crews continue building fireline along Forest Trail 313 to minimize spread and give time to implement suppression objectives. Heavy equipment, including a chipper (machine capable of reducing trees to wood chips) and a feller buncher (a machine with a cutting head that is capable of holding more than one tree at a time) continues work creating fuel breaks on Forest Roads 5070 and 5071. Fire personnel are utilizing helicopter support north of Bowles Creek to slow fire growth of various spot fires.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Temperatures on Wednesday will remain in the low to mid 70s. Winds are southwesterly in the 5-10 mph range, with a chance of a gusts increasing mid-day to 25-35 mph. Thursday's weather forecasts for similar temperatures and wind, but there is a slight chance of thunderstorms.

Timbered drainages with heavy dead and down trees will expect active fire with potential for torching. Grass and brush are still green, however they will still support fire spread. The gusty southwesterly winds could increase fire activity.

CLOSURES

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Bitterroot National Forest issued an emergency closure of roads and trails (Closure #02-08-23-19) effective July 25, 2023. This Order is for public and firefighter safety during fire suppression efforts of the Bowles Creek Fire. See the following link for a complete listing of the roads and trails listed in the closure: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/bdnf/alerts-notice/?aid=81818>. Closure information and maps are posted on the Forests' website and the fire's Inciweb page as they are in place.

The Skalkaho Pass Road remains open. Those recreating or traveling in the fire area are encouraged to be aware of the situation and to pay attention to increased fire traffic.

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in effect over the fire area for the safety of the aviation resources.