



# Bowles Creek Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Bitterroot National Forest

Fire Information: 406-426-9130

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

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

**July 27, 2023 at 11:00 a.m.**

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**Location:** 3 miles west of Skalkaho Pass in the Bowles Creek drainage  
**Start Date:** 7/20/2023    **Cause:** Lightning    **Size:** 1,698 acres    **Completion:** 0%  
**Total Personnel:** 175    **Engines:** 4    **Helicopters:** 2    **Hand Crews:** 4

**Fire Danger is VERY HIGH on both forests (Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF and Bitterroot NF).  
Weather forecasts for chance of afternoon thunderstorms and lightning.**

## CURRENT SITUATION & PLANNED ACTIONS

On the Bitterroot National Forest side of the fire (west), a hotshot crew continues fireline construction from Forest Road 711 towards a rock scree to serve as an indirect control line for containment by removing thick underbrush and vegetation. A rock scree is a mass of rock on the side of a mountain that can serve as a natural barrier used in containment lines. Heavy equipment and masticators (machines 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 Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest side (east), crews continue building and improving 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) continue 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

Thursday's weather pattern will be similar to yesterday, with temperatures in the low to mid 70s with a 30% chance of thunderstorms later in the afternoon. Winds are forecasted to be southwesterly in the 5-10 mph range, with a chance of a gusts increasing mid-day to 25-30 mph. Friday forecasts to be slightly warmer and drier, with another chance of afternoon thunderstorms and lightning.

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-notices/?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.