



River Road East Fire

Fact Sheet



NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 1

Phone: 406-345-5972

2023.RiverRoadEast@firenet.gov

INCIDENT COMMANDER: BRENT OLSON

<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/mtInf-river-road-east-fire>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/riverroadeastfire>

Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 10:00 am

Location: 6 miles east of Plains, Montana

Start Date: 8/18/2023

Cause: Unknown

Size: 16,772 acres

Containment: 2%

Total Personnel: 582

Crews: 12

Engines: 39

Helicopters: 6

KEY MESSAGE: Tree-felling crews and heavy equipment are working to remove hazardous burned trees and downfall along a portion of River Road East affected by the fire. Two days of rainfall within burned areas has weakened roots and loosened rocks, sending some debris onto the roadway. Crews are removing debris and hazards from the roadway to allow safer travel.

CURRENT STATUS: As intermittent rainfall subdued fire behavior yesterday, firefighting resources seized the opportunity to work on direct control lines along the fire's north side (Henry's Creek). Additional containment was gained yesterday (2%), and the fire size was updated from 16,790 acres to 16,772 acres to reflect an increase in mapping accuracy. A requested overnight infrared flight to locate areas of heat was not able to be flown due to cloud cover. Fire personnel reported that fire growth was minimal, and the most active area of fire was observed in Kennedy Creek in burned stumps and down logs. Crews worked to fall hazardous burned trees along access roads into the fire area. In remote areas, crews worked to find safe access points through steep, broken terrain in order to locate control line options. On the north side of the fire, crews extinguished areas of heat along the fire perimeter. The Structure Protection Group continued to work on assessments in order to build a structure protection plan.

PLANNED ACTIONS: Firefighters are working with residents to leverage local knowledge to locate the best option to construct a fire control line on the northwest flank of the fire. This proposed line would connect to the bluffs along River Road East and keep the fire spreading north of Pat's Knob Road. Additional helicopters are arriving on scene today. These aircraft will be available to work with ground crews to deliver water to areas of heat to limit growth and reduce flame length, allowing ground personnel the opportunity to safely construct direct control lines along the fire's active edge. If soil conditions allow, crews will continue to work from roads along the east side (Camas Prairie) of the fire to cut off fire spread to the east. A Public meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday, August 24th from 6-7 pm at the Plains High School Gymnasium where local officials and fire personnel will provide updates on the fire. The meeting will be live streamed on Facebook if the internet strength allows.

WEATHER: Today will begin a drying trend as the rain showers conclude. The area will return to more typical August weather with humidity levels plummeting from yesterday's 50% to below 20%. The wind will be from the west/southwest at 10-20 mph through the day. Temperatures will range from 65-75 degrees in the valley and 58-68 degrees on the ridges.

EVACUATIONS: For Evacuation updates please visit the Sanders County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page at <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064593409765>. The Montana Red Cross has a shelter open at the Church on the Move, 300 Clayton St., in Plains, MT.

