



# River Road East Fire

## Fact Sheet



NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 1

Phone: 406-345-5972

[2023.RiverRoadEast@firenet.gov](mailto:2023.RiverRoadEast@firenet.gov)

INCIDENT COMMANDER: BRENT OLSON

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

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

**Thursday, August 24, 2023 at 10:00 am**

**Location:** 6 miles east of Plains, Montana

**Start Date:** 8/18/2023

**Cause:** Unknown

**Size:** 17,083 acres

**Containment:** 5%

**Total Personnel:** 675

**Crews:** 14

**Engines:** 45

**Helicopters:** 7

**KEY MESSAGE:** A public meeting will be held today, Thursday August 24 at 6pm in the Plains High School gym (412 Rittenour St.). The meeting will also be livestreamed to Facebook if the internet connection allows. Fire incident personnel will provide information about ongoing and planned firefighting operations and will be available to answer questions.

**CURRENT STATUS:** Fire containment has increased to 5% around the town of Paradise, MT on both sides of the Clark Fork River. Because of the progress firefighters have been making, the Sanders County Sheriff's Office opened the McLaughlin Creek Road to residents only yesterday. The area is still under a pre-evacuation warning. Significant progress was made on the northwest flank of the fire yesterday as fire crews safely and successfully constructed handline through steep, broken terrain from the active fire edge above River Road East to the bluffs along the river. Heavy equipment continued to build line between Pat's Knob Road and the fire perimeter, and the line now connects into the road system. Work will continue in this area as crews strengthen the line by removing vegetation that would carry fire. On the east side of the fire, heavy equipment and hotshot crews have been building control line, cutting the fingers off the fire to limit spread on the eastern side. The Structure Protection Group continued to work on assessments to build a durable, longterm plan for structure protection. Several helicopters have been assigned to the fire to provide support. Included in this is a helicopter paramedic crew in place in support of the firefighting efforts, substantially reducing the potential medical response time.

### PLANNED ACTIONS:

As the weather returns to warmer and dry conditions, increased fire activity is likely. Smoke will be visible in more areas, and fire spread will increase as fuels continue to dry out from Monday's rainstorm. Firefighters will continue to take advantage of the slower fire growth working to build containment line around much of the fire perimeter. Additional crews, engines, heavy equipment, helicopters and fire line leadership have arrived, allowing resources to cover more of the complex and remote terrain the fire is burning in. Helicopters will be working in support of ground crews delivering water to strategic areas to support perimeter control operations.

**WEATHER:** Today humidity levels will continue to be low, dropping below 30%. Temperatures will increase to approximately 10 degrees warmer than yesterday, 75-85 degrees in the valley and 68-78 ridges. Lighter westerly/southwesterly winds will be at 10 mph through the day.

**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.

