



River Road East Fire Fact Sheet



Thursday, August 31, 2023 at 10:00 am

NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 1

INCIDENT COMMANDER: BRENT OLSON

Information Phone: 406-345-5972

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

Email: 2023.RiverRoadEast@firenet.gov

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

Location: 6 miles southeast of Plains, Montana

Start Date: 8/18/2023

Cause: Unknown

Size: 17,227 acres

Containment: 35%

Total Personnel: 625

Crews: 13

Engines: 37

Helicopters: 6

KEY MESSAGE: Containment means more than just constructing control line around a fire. After firefighting resources construct control line, the next step is to remove wildland fuel available to burn and/or extinguish sources of heat by mopping up. These actions are taken to secure control lines and prevent the fire from escaping under the current and expected weather forecast. Operations personnel then make the decision on if that area of the fire can be designated as contained.

CURRENT STATUS: The rain stopped falling on the fire area by early morning yesterday. Containment was increased along the northern flank of the fire (Henry's Creek and Henry's Peak) and crews continued to patrol and monitor that area. The northern control and containment lines continued to hold well. Along the eastern side along the National Forest and CSKT boundary, fire personnel worked to connect control lines and worked towards finishing some last segments. On the southeast corner crews used an Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) or drone to seek out and map heat sources to focus firefighter efforts for mop up. UAS can be a valuable tool used to cover a large area in a short amount of time. Crews continued to mop up and secure control lines on the northwest corner where firing operations were completed in recent days. Crews attempted to work on the indirect line on the southwest corner of the fire south of Pat's Knob but had to turn back when they encountered hazardous conditions from recent rain.

PLANNED ACTIONS: Operations will start to consolidate some of the personnel around the fire perimeter and adjust the number of crews and engines based on increased containment. On the north, east, and southeast sides of the fire crews will patrol and mop up areas of heat. On the northwest corner firefighters will continue to mop up and secure the control line where firing operations were completed recently. Along the west side north of Pat's Knob, equipment and crews will clean up the area where the shaded fuels break was constructed. A crew will reengage on indirect control line construction along the southwest corner of the fire if conditions allow. A slightly warming and drying trend in the weather begins today and continues through the weekend. Fire personnel will continue to work on control lines and patrol containment lines while monitoring fire activity as the weather conditions change.

WEATHER: The weather will be partly cloudy and start a slight warming and drying trend. Temperatures will be 63-73 degrees. Minimum relative humidity levels will be 32-42%. Winds will be from the west at 5-15 mph.

CLOSURES: The Flathead River closure from the Perma Bridge to the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes boundary has been rescinded as of August 30, 2023.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks has a closure in place on segments of the Flathead River and Clark Fork River within and near the River Road East Fire area. Details can be found at Restrictions and Closures:

<https://fwp.mt.gov/news/current-closures-restrictions>.

The Lolo National Forest has an emergency closure of roads and trails (**Closure #23-010-Lolo-D5**) effective August 21, 2023. This Order is for public and firefighter safety during fire suppression efforts of the River Road East Fire. For a complete listing of the closed roads & trails visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/lolo/alerts-notice>.

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in effect over the fire (**FDC 3/9687**) for the safety of aviation resources.

