



Gravel Pit Fire Fact Sheet

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Northwest Land Office

WESTERN MONTANA ALL HAZARDS IMT | INCIDENT COMMANDER: KEN PARKS

<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtmts-gravel-pit-fire>
Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Location: 25 miles southeast of Libby, near Silver Butte

Start Date: 8/1/23 **Cause:** Human **Size:** 304 acres

Containment: 25%

Total Personnel: 107 **Engines:** 10

Dozers: 4

Hand Crews: 2

CURRENT STATUS

Most of the fire perimeter is tied in with dozer line and plumbed with hose lays. To the east, the fire is well-contained within the firelines with a buffer of at least two chains (132 feet) between the fireline and containment line. To the north and west, crews have laid hose and improved dozer line to widen the fuel break. Recent thunderstorms have left potential lightning holdovers that could smolder for many days posing a risk for flareups. Helicopters provided water bucket drops in response to an increase in fire activity in the late afternoon yesterday.

PLANNED ACTIONS

To the north of the fire, hand crews will continue to improve dozer line and mop up heat sources. Mop-up activities are focused on finding and extinguishing hot spots on the fire's interior to secure the fireline to at least two chains in depth. Crews will also improve a location for a helicopter landing zone, for equipment transport and potential medical evacuations. Helicopters will be on standby for water bucket drops should fire activity increase, aiding in cooling hot spots and facilitating safe crew operations along the fire's edge. On the east flank of the fire, crews will mop up and patrolling activities keeping the fire east of the 76 road. Spot fires and lightning-induced starts are a primary concern. Engines will provide initial attack and suppress new fire starts across the fire area.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

A cold front will move through the area bringing an increase in winds with a chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Stronger storms may produce outflow winds, elevating fire weather concerns.

Fire behavior is low, but potential exists for more active fire behavior with the drying weather pattern in coming days.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES

An evacuation warning will remain in place for residents near the fire area along the Highway 2 corridor. The Lincoln County Sheriff's Office has notified these residents. All Lincoln County residents are encouraged to sign up for emergency alerts by downloading the Code Red application and entering contact information. Code Red is the primary notification system to alert residents of evacuations.