



MINNESOTA INCIDENT COMMAND
SYSTEM (MNICS)

INCIDENT COMMANDER: JEB BACKE

Bowles Creek Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest and Bitterroot National Forest

Fire Information: 406-426-9130

Email: 2023.bowlescreek@firenet.gov

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

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

August 16, 2023

Location: 27 miles southwest of Phillipsburg, Montana

Start Date: 7/20/2023 **Cause:** Lightning **Size:** 4,481 acres **Completion:** 10%

Total Personnel: 187 **Engines:** 7 **Helicopters:** 2 **Hand Crews:** 3

Highway 38, Skalkaho Road, remains open to the public. However, continued smoke impacts and fire operations may impact travel along the roadway, especially at night when visibility will be even further reduced. Motorists should exercise extreme caution while driving. The public is urged to travel along Highway 38 with caution and check for updated information in case of potential travel restrictions and closures as fire activity is expected to increase over the next several days. The rest of this week is forecasted to be warmer and drier, which may cause increased smoke levels and reduced visibility.

CURRENT SITUATION & PLANNED ACTIONS

Fire crews continue to construct fuel breaks along several roads near the fire area. Fire behavior is being monitored and aircraft is checking fire spread. Firing operations are being used to strengthen containment lines as fire progresses. Fire crews also continue to implement chipping and mastication operations to reduce available fuels near values at risk.

The area is experiencing its 8th day of drying conditions, which now match the same conditions when the Bowles Creek Fire made its initial run at the end of July. Larger fuels are also beginning to dry with more live surface fuels becoming available. Fire activity is picking up, flanking and group tree torching is being observed. Overnight inversions have allowed for warmer nighttime temperatures and lower relative humidity levels, increasing the potential for increased fire perimeter growth.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Hot, dry conditions will continue through Thursday under the influence of a high-pressure ridge. The ridge will break down late Thursday and Friday (August 17-18), causing much cooler temperatures and a rebound in relative humidity for Friday and into the weekend. Chance of wetting rain jumps up into the 30 percent range Saturday and stays in the 60-70 percent range for Sunday and Monday. Friday through Monday shows a 30 percent chance for cloud to ground lightning each evening near the fire area.

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-notice/?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.