



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 17, 2023

Location: 27 miles southwest of Philipsburg, Montana

Start Date: 7/20/2023	Cause: Lightning	Size: 4,481 acres	Completion: 15%
Total Personnel: 196	Engines: 6	Helicopters: 2	Hand Crews: 3

Smoke from the Bowles Creek Fire continues to impact local communities, especially along Hwy 38, Skalkaho Road. Hwy 38 remains open. However, motorists are urged to drive slowly and with caution as heavy fire operations are occurring along the entirety of the roadway. Additionally, smoke from the fire settles more heavily at night, so drivers are urged to remain extra vigilant if traveling through the area after sunset. In light of potential changing fire conditions, it is recommended to check for updated information on road and area closures prior to traveling. Updates can be found on Inciweb or the Bowles Creek Fire Facebook page. If road access changes, a news release/update will be released by the Incident Management Team.

CURRENT SITUATION & PLANNED ACTIONS

The area is experiencing its 9th day of drying conditions. Larger fuels are drying with more live surface fuel availability. Fire activity is picking up and will continue over the next few days. Flanking, group tree torching, and spotting is being observed. Fire crews continue to construct fuel breaks along several roads. Aircraft is checking fire spread and fire officials continue to monitor fire behavior. Firefighters are utilizing firing operations to strengthen containment lines. Fire crews also continue to implement chipping and mastication operations, as well as installation of sprinklers, to reduce available fuels near values at risk.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Elevated fire weather conditions will continue today, Thursday, August 17. Confidence is high for west wind gusts of 15-20 mph, especially across mid-slopes and ridges. Atmospheric instability will begin to increase tonight, with isolated high-based showers forming into Friday morning. Southwest winds will increase Friday afternoon, with gusts of 30-35 mph. Relative humidities will trend higher Friday, with cooler temperatures.

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. For a complete listing of the closed roads and trails, visit: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/bdnf/alerts-notice/?aid=81818>. Closure information and maps are also posted on the Forests' website and the fire's Inciweb page. 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.