



NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 5

INCIDENT COMMANDER: JOE SAMPSON

EAST FORK FIRE

SEPTEMBER 7, 2023

Location: 12 miles south of Trego, Montana **Information Line:** 406-285-8634
Start Date: 7/30/2023 **Cause:** Lightning **Size:** 5,162 acres **Containment:** 49%
Total Personnel: 335 **Engines:** 7 **Helicopters:** 1 **Hand Crews:** 5

CURRENT STATUS

Fire crews continue to look for hotspots and to tie cold lines together throughout the fire area. The UAS (Unmanned Aerial System) is flying the perimeter of the fire, searching for and mapping areas holding residual heat. Once identified, crews access these areas to mop-up the areas of heat. Excess resources not needed are demobilizing and returning home.

PLANNED ACTION

Mop-up and patrol of residual heat will continue along the edges of the fire. Firefighters and heavy equipment are implementing repair plans and improving damaged roads and surfaces to pre-fire conditions. The UAS will continue to search for hotspots along the fire perimeter. Continue working to remove the wood and brush from the burn area.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Mostly cloudy skies prevailed across the incident yesterday, as an upper-level disturbance moved through the area. The system did produce a few widely scattered showers but no measurable precipitation occurred over the incident. High temperatures due to the cloud cover only managed to make it into the lower to mid-60s with humidity bottoming out in the mid to upper 40s. Winds were light and from the west, averaging less than 10 mph.

There is still some heat found in the deep ravines on the east and north aspects. The rest of the fire is creeping and smoldering. This fire behavior currently poses no threat to containment lines.

CLOSURES AND EVACUATIONS

The Flathead National Forest rescinded its previously issued area closure order (#01-01-08-23-20) on September 2, 2023. The Kootenai National Forest-Fortine Ranger District and the Flathead National Forest-Tally Lake Ranger District have issued a new revised road closure order (#01-01-03-23-12), effective September 2, 2023.

The closure order is in place to provide heavy equipment and suppression repair personnel unhindered access to areas of the East Fork fire. Work in the area includes road repair, cleaning slash and other debris out of ditches and culverts, and strategically moving logs and other downed trees to prevent erosion in burned areas. The rest of the fire is creeping and smoldering. This fire behavior currently poses no threat to containment lines.

The roads in the area are narrow, and pullouts and turnarounds are too few for heavy traffic. Temporary closures are implemented during wildfire events to protect working firefighters and equipment operators. Once agency officials determine the area is safe, closure orders will be adjusted or rescinded.

