



NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 5

INCIDENT COMMANDER: JOE SAMPSON

# EAST FORK FIRE

SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

---

**Location:** 12 miles south of Trego, Montana  
**Start Date:** 7/30/2023    **Cause:** Lightning    **Size:** 5,144 acres    **Containment:** 61%  
**Total Personnel:** 211    **Engines:** 4    **Helicopters:** 1    **Hand Crews:** 3

**This will be the last morning update from Northern Rockies Team #5.**

Joe Sampson's Complex Incident Management Team will be transferring command of the East Fork Fire back to the local unit. Incident Commander Ray Flanagan and firefighting/support personnel will "shadow" current resources today, ensuring for a smooth and seamless transition. The Incident Command Post (ICP) will relocate to the Murphy Lake Forest Service office and fire camp will move to Ant Flat.

## CURRENT STATUS/ PLANNED ACTIONS

Fire crews continue to look for hotspots throughout the fire area, "mopping-up" the smoldering fuels and removing the residual heat. Crews constructed about 200 feet of line around an interior unburned island of fuel, near the southern edge of the fire. Firefighters and heavy equipment are implementing repair plans and improving damaged roads and surfaces to pre-fire conditions. As conditions on the fire wind down, excess resources no longer needed are demobilizing and returning to their home units.

## WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

High pressure dominates over the area, producing increased stability, warmer temperatures, and drier conditions. Winds will continue to be terrain driven, with a slight southwest component. The weather across the incident will be quiet today and into early next week. Little to no precipitation is expected. Fire activity is limited to creeping and smoldering. This fire behavior currently poses no threat to containment lines. Any heat will remain in the currently burning fuels, and no fire movement is expected.

## 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The Flathead National Forest rescinded its previously issued area closure order (#01-01-08-23-20) on September 2, 2023.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 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.

The Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) over the fire will be released at the end of shift on Sunday.