

Great Basin Complex Incident Management Team #4



Bench Lake Fire Update

Tuesday, July 16, 2024

Contact Fire Information: 208-901-7230

Or 2024.benclake@firenet.gov

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/sawtoothnationalforest>

InciWeb: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/idstf-bench-lake-fire>

Start Date	Cause	Size	Percent Containment	Helicopters	Scooper Planes	Engines	Crews	Total Personnel
07/11/24	Under Investigation	1,275	0%	3	2	12	5	259

Fire activity increased yesterday with growth on the northwest corner of the Bench Lake Fire. Heavy smoke from high volumes of dead timber in the area drifted mainly East, a change from Sunday when it moved South. The change in fire acreage is due to more accurate mapping resulting with increased visibility of the fire's perimeter from the air.

On the west side of Redfish Lake, the fire moved more slowly downhill towards the lake. Low-intensity burning will contribute to a mosaic burn, where many older trees will survive and the underbrush will return in abundance. As the fire reaches the lake, firefighters will begin to achieve containment from the lake's edge, directly along the active southern fire perimeter, and up towards the ridge.

On the north side of Redfish Lake, crews are focused on structure protection while improving mitigation efforts around Redfish Lodge and adjacent structures throughout the compound. Sprinklers, water pumps, and an extensive network of hoses have been strategically placed to ensure adequate water support. Crews are removing fuels with chainsaws along the Fishhook Creek Trail system.

Helicopters and scooping aircraft are continuing to cool the fire's edge with water drops. Aviation resources and crews are identifying and using natural barriers – including riparian areas, ridges, and rocky outcroppings – as control areas where the fire activity will be naturally slowed and limit the fire's overall size.

There is a slight chance of thunderstorms tomorrow. The greatest concerns with these storms are erratic outflow winds and the potential for new fires to ignite. Firefighters will maintain awareness of these conditions and adjust their locations and tactics as needed to stay safe and have the greatest chance of success in containing the fire.

Community Meeting: Wednesday, July 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Building in the Stanley, Idaho (500 Eva Falls Ave.)

Closures: Sawtooth National Recreation Area officials issued an emergency closure for the Bench Lake Fire (0414-04-147) July 12 for the Redfish Lake recreation complex, including the lodge and associated buildings, roads, trails, trailheads, and campgrounds in the area. Visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/sawtooth/alerts-notices> for a map and more details on the closure order. Both Highway 21 and Highway 75 remain open. Increased fire traffic and potential poor visibility warrant slowing down.