

Great Basin Complex Incident Management Team #4



Bench Lake Fire Update

Wednesday, July 17, 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	1,850	3%	4	2	13	9	324

Yesterday on the Bench Lake Fire, crews began using fire as a buffer to burn vegetation between the 101 Trail and the northern edge of the main fire. By intentionally setting fire, crews are creating a break in continuous fuels, reducing fire intensity as it approaches the trail and limiting spread beyond the trail. If conditions prove favorable later today, crews plan to complete the backfire to guide the main fire to the wet, marshy area of Fishhook drainage in the northeast to slow progression of the fire. Incident managers were pleased with the effectiveness of the backburning.

Crews continued structure protection actions throughout the Redfish Lake area, which includes mitigating impacts to historical buildings and areas of cultural significance. The fire is currently above Point Campground, but no damage to the campground has been reported.

South winds of 15 to 25 mph are expected today with temperatures in the mid-80s. Increased smoke across the Stanley Basin was visible yesterday starting in the late morning, a trend which is likely to continue throughout the week. Those who are sensitive to the smoke should limit time outdoors.

The Sawtooth National Forest initiated Stage 1 fire restrictions within the National Forest System lands boundaries on the Sawtooth and Cassia zones, which became effective at 12:01 this morning. Under these restrictions, campfires are allowed only in recreation sites within metal or concrete fire pits. Fires of any kind are not allowed in any dispersed camping areas.

Community Meeting: Today, Wednesday, July 17 at 7:00 p.m. at the Community Building in 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.