

Great Basin Complex Incident Management Team #4



Bench Lake Fire Update

Thursday, July 18, 2024

Contact Fire Information: 208-901-7230

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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	2,037	3%	2	2	13	9	331

Crews on the Bench Lake Fire were able to continue backburning operations to successfully guide the fire into Fishhook drainage yesterday, where wet and marshy terrain have lowered the intensity of the main fire. Today, crews will be working on building line along Fishhook Trail to the west to bolster defenses between the main fire and the north, including the Redfish Lodge area. On the south end of the fire, crews made good progress digging handline among the rocky terrain. Initial containment along the lake's edge will enable firefighters to continue safely and effectively constructing fireline and increasing the containment to the south and west.

To date, aerial resources have dropped over 900,000 gallons of water on the fire. Together, scoopers and helicopters have flown more than 100 hours. The proximity of the fire to a large lake like Redfish will continue to be an asset throughout the containment process.

West to northwest winds of 10-20 mph are expected today with temperatures in the mid-80s. As the fire moves through trees impacted by insect and disease north of Redfish, the dark, gray smoke visible in the past few days is likely to persist. Due to smoke concerns, an Air Resources Advisor joined the incident this morning. Smoke reports and air quality information for the Stanley Basin and its surrounding area will be made available soon.

Restrictions: The Sawtooth National Forest has initiated Stage 1 fire restrictions within the National Forest System lands boundaries on the Sawtooth and Cassia zones. 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.

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://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-closures/idstf-bench-lake-fire> 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.