



Blacktail Canyon

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Fire Information 406-683-3920 Email: terina.hill@usda.gov

<https://www.facebook.com/usfsbdf/>

<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-blacktail-canyon>

July 20, 2024 9:00 a.m.

Incident Commander J. Willoughby

Location: southeast of Butte, MT between Interstate 90 and Highway 2

Start Date: 7/19/2024

Cause: Unknown

Size: estimated at 96 acres (overnight infrared mapping flight)

Resources on Site: 3 engines, 1 type 1 "hotshot" hand crew, 2 type 2 hand crews

Resources on Order: 3 type 1 "hotshot" crews, 2 type 2 hand crews, 3 large helicopters, Scoopers

KEY MESSAGES:

The Butte-Silver Bow Law Enforcement Department has issued an evacuation warning for Blacktail Canyon Road southeast of Homestake Road and Homestake Road east of Blacktail Canyon Road. This warning means residents should be prepared to evacuate but are not yet under an evacuation order.

CURRENT STATUS:

Seven Large Air Tankers (LAT) and a Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT) dropped fire retardant during the afternoon and evening hours yesterday. Six helicopters provided aerial support through water bucket drops to help cool hot spots. Engines crews, a 20-person crew, and other firefighters assisted on the ground. Additional large helicopters, water "scooper" airplanes and additional crews are on order and should arrive today.

Firefighters are currently scouting for areas to access the fire and to locate safe anchor points for fireline construction. Hotshot crews are currently looking for opportunities to safely construct fireline, tying into existing roads/trails, to prevent progression of the fire northward. Helicopter rappellers will work to construct a helispot at the heel of the fire on the top of Blacktail Canyon. Other crews will continue to assess critical values at risk in the Blacktail Canyon, Passmore Canyon, and Toll Mountain areas. The fire is burning in large amounts of dead and down lodgepole pine trees, creating additional hazards and affecting progress.

Working in cooperation with the Butte-Silver Bow community officials, fire managers have identified and prioritized critical values at risk, focusing available resources and current efforts on the protection of the private structures in the Blacktail Canyon and Homestake Road areas. Local Fire Department engines provided structure protection in these areas. Additional resources, including three type 2 hand crews, have been ordered. As they arrive, fire managers and agency officials will collaborate to utilize resources to protect the prioritized values.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Fire behavior was active yesterday, with single tree and group torching and short-range spotting observed. Fire crews remaining on-site overnight experienced dry lightning and gusty outflow winds until the early morning hours. Fire behavior is expected to be similar to yesterday. Hot, dry conditions will persist over the weekend and into much of next week. Relative humidity recovery overnight will be poor, especially at upper elevations. Winds will be from the northeast at 5-15 mph. There is a slight chance for afternoon thunderstorms over the weekend.

