



Butler Creek Fire

July 23, 2024

Fire Information: 406-370-9381

Start Date & Location: July 22, 2024, Butler Creek Road, Missoula

Cause: Human caused

Size: 307 acres

Containment: 15%

KEY MESSAGE

Regional fire activity in Montana as well as a surge of Canadian smoke has resulted in diminished air quality around the Butler Creek Fire area. Residents should take measures to reduce smoke exposure when air quality dips. Current air quality can be found at <https://fire.airnow.gov/>.

Residents are encouraged to sign up for emergency alerts at Smart911.com and monitor the Missoula County Sheriff's Office for evacuation updates and information. Drivers are urged to reduce speed around the fire area to eliminate conflicts with emergency traffic.

CURRENT STATUS

Firefighting efforts began early yesterday morning with crews building handline and dozers establishing a line along the fire's north flank. As the day progressed, aviation resources supported with water drops to cool hotspots and reduce fire spread while firefighters focused on constructing direct containment lines along the west flank, with engine crews following to spray water and douse hot spots to prevent flare-ups. Crews conducted "mop up" operations along the fire perimeter, systematically patrolling along a grid 100 feet into the fire's perimeter, to detect and extinguish any residual heat sources.

Today, firefighters will focus on locating and extinguishing remaining heat along the north and west flanks of the fire. Crews will intensify mop-up operations to secure control lines, cold lining/trailing (feeling for heat) up to one chain (66 feet) into the burned area to ensure the fire remains within containment. Containment is a measure of confidence that the control line around the fire will effectively halt fire spread.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Tuesday, a persistent hot and dry weather pattern remain over the fire area with temperatures in the upper 90s and humidity values in the teens. The National Weather Service has issued a Fire Weather Watch starting Wednesday for hot temperatures, low relative humidity, and gusty winds, leading to low fuel moistures and serious wildfire conditions. Fuels will be extremely receptive to ignition and fires will spread rapidly creating dangerous conditions and high-risk situations for firefighters and the public. Outside burning and campfires are prohibited until further notice.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES

Evacuation Order: There is an Evacuation Order for residents on Lavelle Creek Road and on the west side of Butler Creek Road from Lavelle Creek Road to Timberline Ridge. Residents north of Timberline Ridge and on the east side of Butler Creek Road are under an evacuation warning. The evacuation order issued for residents in the Indreland and Buffalo Speedway area has been downgraded to an evacuation warning. This includes all of Buffalo Speedway and Indreland Lane east of Buffalo Speedway, and streets accessed off Buffalo Speedway such as Kit Lane, Karamu Lane, Patinella Court and Brow Tine Drive.

Road Closure: Butler Creek and connected side roads are closed to non-local traffic. Residents may use roads for necessary travel only.

