



Grouse Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest



Fire Information: 406-865-0941

<https://www.facebook.com/usfsbdf/>
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-grouse>

July 31, 2024 9:00 a.m.

Incident Commander: D. Hammack, C. Olander, (T)

Location: 10 miles southwest of Wise River, MT

Start Date: 7/25/2024

Cause: Undetermined

Size: 615 acres

Resources on Site: 1 suppression module; 4 engines; 1 skidgen; and 1 helicopter available to assist

Total Personnel: 126

KEY MESSAGES:

Numerous firefighting resources are present along the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. A cattle drive is expected to be moving cows on and along the Byway for 5-6 miles from Pettengill Creek to Lacy Creek today. Motorists in the area are urged to slow down, look for lowering speed signs, be aware of the increased traffic, and yield to livestock on the road, right-of-way to firefighting apparatus and vehicles.

Fire managers are urging people to stay out of the fire area, especially Pettengill Creek, Grouse Creek, Stine Creek, and the Stine Creek Road area, for safety reasons. Fire managers and agency officials are discussing necessary area, road, and trail closures. Ensuring public and firefighter safety and protecting life and property are of the utmost importance.

CURRENT STATUS/PLANNED ACTIONS:

An Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) drone flew over the fire yesterday to more accurately assess fire perimeter and check for fire spotting after Monday's active fire growth. Crews continued with structure protection measures, working from the junction of Pettengill Road and along the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway to the north. They continue prepping a section of existing fireline, utilizing both natural (marshy areas of Pettengill Creek) and manmade control features (fuel breaks previously constructed during the Alder Creek Fire of 2021). Other crews constructed additional fuel breaks northward along the Byway, utilizing natural rock features. Firefighters are monitoring previous installed water-handling equipment (pumps, hoses, and sprinklers) around structures in the Pettengill Creek area. In the coming days, crews will plan on using existing and improved control features (such as prepped firelines) for burnout operations to lessen the fire's impact to critical values at risk.

Crews will continue with structure protection preparations and prepping the Pettengill Road, progressing northward along the Byway and identifying locations where fire suppression actions can be taken in the event the fire advances towards the Byway.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR:

The fire is moving primarily up the Grouse Creek drainage and sub-drainages. Cooler temperatures and precipitation helped reduce fire behavior, with fire still smoldering and creeping. Tomorrow active fire movement on all flanks is expected to return, with fire backing downhill towards Pettengill Creek and spotting to the north towards Grouse Creek and the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. The fire is burning mainly in a subalpine fir fuel



model, in heavy timber on steep rocky terrain. Available fuels are unseasonably dry and include large amounts of standing dead and down trees.

Dead fuels along the ridges at the highest elevations are consuming completely. If winds align with terrain, in combination with the dry fuels, extreme fire behavior with active movement can be expected. These conditions pose additional hazards to firefighters, limiting access and affecting on-the-ground progress.

Winds are forecasted to be light with relative humidity at 20-40%. Hot and dry conditions are anticipated Wednesday through Friday.

CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS:

A Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) is in place over the fire area.

The Forest is in Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. Campfires are allowed only in a permanent metal fire grate/ring provided by the Forest Service in a designated, developed recreation site. Smoking is restricted to vehicles, in buildings, or in an area clear of flammable materials. Devices with an on/off switch that use LPG fuels are allowed in an area clear of flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.

