



Forest Service News Release

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<https://www.usda.gov/btnf>

Bridger-Teton National Forest Fire Updates for August 18, 2024

Jackson, Wyo., August 18, 2024 – The Bridger-Teton National Forest is continuing efforts to suppress several fires on the Forest, including the Fish Creek and Cottonwood Creek fires on the Jackson Ranger District, the Leeds Creek Fire on the Pinedale Ranger District and the Merna Butte Fire on the Big Piney Ranger District.

Fish Creek Fire

The Fish Creek Fire was discovered on Friday, August 16, in a remote area of the North Fork Fish Creek drainage, approximately 7 miles southwest of Togwotee Pass. The lightning-caused fire is currently 1,731-acres in size burning in heavy timber, litter, understory and standing dead Engelmann spruce. Smoke from the fire may be visible from Grand Teton National Park, the Continental Divide Trail (CDT), as well as Moran, Dubois, Jackson and Pinedale, WY.

The Forest has ordered a Wyoming Type 3 Incident Management Team to help fight the Fish Creek Fire. A Type 3 Incident Management Team is brought in for fires that exceed the firefighting resources a Forest has available. The Team utilizes the Incident Command System and is staffed with supervisory positions that can order resources to fight the fire and provide oversight for several operational periods.

Additional resources have been ordered to help suppress the fire, including a helicopter, helitack crew, 6 fire engines, and medical personnel. Fire managers and crews continue to scout potential control line locations and protect resources.

During the evening, smoke from the Fish Creek Fire may impact US HWY 26/287. Please drive slowly and cautiously in the area with your headlights on. For more information, please visit the fire's InciWeb page at <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/wybt-fish-creek-fire>.

Cottonwood Creek Fire

The Cottonwood Creek Fire was discovered on Saturday, August 17, 2024, in the Sohare Creek area, northeast of Gunsight Pass and west of the Cottonwood Creek drainage (the fire is located approximately 6 miles southwest of the Fish Creek Fire). The lightning-caused Cottonwood Creek Fire is currently 7-acres in size burning in dead and down timber and younger mixed-conifer.

Air attack operations, including 2 air tankers dropped retardant lines around the fire. One common way fire retardant works is by reducing the receptiveness of fuels in the surrounding area to slow the rate of

combustion and limit the spread of the flames. Smoke jumpers also responded to the fire to go direct and suppress the fire, and hotshot crews have also been ordered.

Leeds Creek Fire

The 780-acre Leeds Creek Fire is currently 70% contained and has received a significant amount of moisture last week. Fire crews continue efforts to suppress the fire on the Pinedale Ranger District of the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Ten personnel are assigned to the fire.

The [Leeds Creek Area, Roads, and Trails Closure Order \(map\)](#) has been established for public and firefighter safety. See full details at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/btnf/alerts-notice>. Union Pass Road and South Fork Fish Creek Trail remain open under this closure. A reroute for the Continental Divide Trail (CDT) has also been established. Visit the CDT Coalition's Closures and Alerts webpage to learn more at <https://cdtcoalition.org/closures-and-alerts/>.

Merna Butte Fire

The 153-acre Merna Butte Fire is currently 50% contained and has received a significant amount of moisture over the last few days. Firefighters continue to work along the perimeter of the fire “mopping up,” which means they are finding hot spots in the burn and extinguishing them so that the fire remains contained in the existing footprint. Twenty-six resources are assigned to the fire including one fire engine.

The Bridger-Teton has rescinded the temporary area, road and trail closure that was placed around the Merna Butte Fire. While the fire is not out, visitors can now enter the Forest near the fire area. Anyone accessing the Merna Butte area is asked to use caution as firefighters and equipment are still working in the area. Additionally, Sublette County downgraded all their pre-evacuation notices and there are no alerts at this time.

The Forest Service uses all available strategies and tools to suppress wildfires, and public and firefighter safety are the top priorities for fire managers.

Fire danger rating for the Bridger-Teton National Forest remains at High. That means that all fine dead fuels ignite readily, and fires start easily from most causes. It also means unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common in High fire danger.

For other news, events and information about the Bridger-Teton National Forest, call 307-739-5500, visit the Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/btnf> and follow the Bridger-Teton on [Facebook](#) and [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#) @BridgerTetonNF.

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