



Grouse Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest



Fire Information: 406-865-0941

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

August 2, 2024 9:30 a.m.

Incident Commander: R. Griffin, C. Olander, (T)

Location: 10 miles southwest of Wise River, MT

Start Date: 7/25/2024

Cause: Undetermined

Size: 800 acres

Resources on Site: 4 type 2 IA crews; 2 hotshot crews; 8 engines; 1 skidgen; and 3 helicopters available to assist

Total Personnel: 225

KEY MESSAGES:

An Area/Road/Trail Closure is in effect for the vicinity of the fire perimeter on the west side of the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway. Motorist on the Byway can expect increased smoke and a heavy amount of firefighting equipment and crews in the area. If the public is traveling in this area, please slow down, look for 35 MPH speed signs, and yield to firefighting equipment, engines and vehicles.

Fire managers and agency officials are considering night operations, and ensuring public and firefighter safety and protecting life and property are of the utmost importance.

CURRENT STATUS/PLANNED ACTIONS:

The fire was active yesterday, with torching, flanking, and a visible smoke column throughout the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway and Wise River vicinity. Some minor spotting occurred on the southwest corner due to up valley winds. Most of the fire activity was on the southeast flank of fire and was less active towards the residences on the eastern edge. Crews completed prepping and improving Forest Road (Pettengill Rd) to use as a containment line.

Strategic firing operations were completed on the southeast side of the fire last night, as firefighters used UAS to light and burn the fuels between the uncontrolled fire edge and the constructed control line on Forest Road 186 (Pattengill Rd). This fire suppression tactic is an effective method of reducing the available fuels ahead of an active fire edge, while reducing the potential for negative impacts to residences value and resource damage caused when high-severity fire occurs on timbered slopes.

With increased temperatures and fire behavior, Firefighters continue monitoring structure protection equipment (pumps, hoses, and sprinklers) near residences in the Pettengill Creek area. Friday and into the weekend, crews will plan on using existing and improved control features (such as prepped firelines) for strategic firing operations to lessen the fire's impact to critical values at risk. Fire managers are scouting for safe strategies and establishing anchor points to protect the critical values at risk. An anchor point is defined as an advantageous location, usually a barrier to fire spread, from which to start constructing a fireline. The anchor point is used to minimize the chance of being flanked (or outflanked) by the fire while the line is being constructed.



WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR:

Relative humidity values continue to decrease, with values dropping to the single digits. Unstable weather conditions are forecasted to change on Saturday with a chance of thunderstorms Saturday night and into Sunday. Very active fire behavior is expected to continue with movement primarily up the Grouse Creek drainage and sub-drainages.

Tomorrow active fire movement on all flanks is expected, as well as spotting and fire backing downhill towards Pettengill Creek and to the north towards Grouse Creek and the Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway.

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.

CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS:

The Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest has issued an Area/Road/Trail Closure (Closure #01-02-03-24-05) effective July 31, 2024. This Order is for public and firefighter safety during fire suppression efforts of the Grouse Fire. Closure information and maps are posted on the Forests' website and the fire's Inciweb page as they are in place. <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-grouse>.

The Pioneer Mountains Scenic Byway remains open. Those recreating or traveling in the fire area are encouraged to be aware of the situation and to pay attention to increased fire traffic.

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.

