



# McElwain Fire

## Southwestern Land Office

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Fire Protection - Clearwater Unit  
USDI Bureau of Land Management Jurisdiction

**Fire Information:** Kristin Mortenson (406) 381-7451, Kristin.Mortenson@mt.gov

**Saturday, August 24, 2024, at 12 p.m.**

**Location:** 6 miles west of Helmville, Montana

**Start Date:** 8/23/2024

**Cause:** Undetermined

**Size:** 107 acres

**Containment:** 0%

### CURRENT STATUS

The McElwain Fire, located by McElwain Creek 6 miles west of Helmville in Powell County is currently 107 acres in size. The fire is burning in grass and timber on private and Bureau of Land Management land under Montana DNRC wildland fire protection. The Fire is comprised of two adjacent fires, a north fire, and a south fire. Control line has been established by heavy equipment around the south fire and work will continue today to improve that line. Access to the north fire is difficult for heavy equipment, so firefighters will also be focusing on improving that.

A Type 3 Incident Commander (IC) is in place and multiple resources are committed to the incident including four engines, one Type 2 hand crew, two water tenders, three skidgines, two dozers, and one Type 2 DNRC helicopter. A reconnaissance of the area is being flown by the IC today. The cause of the fire remains undetermined.

### WEATHER

Saturday will be partly cloudy with slight chance of showers. Hazy conditions will persist in the afternoon. Temperatures will be in the mid-70's with westerly winds ranging from 5-15 mph. Low chance of wetting rain today or Sunday, but higher relative humidities in the area will help moderate fire behavior. Winds are expected to decrease Sunday, which will also be welcome news for firefighters.

### EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES

The Powell County Sheriff's Office has issued evacuation warnings to residents in the immediate area of the fire, specifically the Ledger Road area. This is a limited warning for residents in the immediate area. Please visit the Powell County Sheriff's Office Facebook page for specific information and updates.

### ADDITIONAL AREA FIRES

The Hoodoo Fire is a two to three-acre lightning caused fire on Hoodoo Mountain southeast of Helmville burning in heavy dead and down timber in steep and difficult to access terrain. Strong winds prohibited delivery of aerial firefighters (heli-rappelers and smokejumpers) Friday, but bucket drops by a Type 2 helicopter as weather allowed were able to dampen the fire. Fire managers are planning to use heli-rappelers (firefighters that rappel out of a helicopter near the fire) to fight the fire if weather conditions allow. The Weasel Fire, just west of the McElwain Fire, is another suspected lightning start and is 0.1 acres. Firefighters are still working to access that fire from the ground. Both fires are on BLM land under DNRC wildland fire protection. An additional fire south of Elevation Mountain in the Top O' Deep area was detected earlier today and resources are enroute.

Powell County is currently in Stage 1 fire restrictions. Residents and visitors are asked to be extra careful when outdoors to limit human caused sparks. We cannot control the lightning, but we can prevent unintended human caused wildfires. Visit [www.MTFireInfo.org](http://www.MTFireInfo.org) for specific fire restriction information and fire prevention tips.

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