



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

Incident Information: <https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtmts-mcelwain-fire>

Sunday, August 25, 2024, at 10 a.m.

Location: 6 miles west of Helmville, Montana

Start Date: 8/23/2024

Cause: Undetermined

Size: 176 acres

Containment: 0%

CURRENT STATUS

The McElwain Fire, located by McElwain Creek six miles west of Helmville in Powell County is currently 176 acres in size. Increased acreage is due to infrared mapping overnight, but crews will map the fire perimeter today to ground truth the size estimate. The fire is burning in grass and timber on private and Bureau of Land Management land under Montana DNRC wildland fire protection. Fire behavior includes creeping and smoldering with isolated torching.

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 where access has allowed on the north fire. Firefighters are working to put in handline on the north fire. Work will continue today to extend and improve lines by extinguishing all flame and heat one chain (66 feet) deep as well as containing and controlling spot fires as detected. The fire remains at 0% containment. Containment is a measure of confidence that the control line will effectively halt fire spread.

A Type 3 Incident Commander (IC) is in place and resources include four engines, one Type 2 hand crew, one eight-person hand crew, one water tender, four skidgines, and two dozers. A Type 2 DNRC helicopter is available for support as needed. The cause of the fire remains undetermined.

WEATHER

Light, variable winds and cooler temperatures are expected throughout the area today, which will help moderate fire behavior. A relatively dry cold front is expected Tuesday, bringing with it an increase in west winds with gusts from 20 to 30 mph. Much cooler temperatures are expected post frontal.

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 six-acre lightning caused fire on Hoodoo Mountain seven miles southeast of Helmville. Burning in steep, difficult terrain with scree and heavy dead and down timber, six firefighters are working to contain the fire. Firefighters are also working to contain the Weasel Fire, just west of the McElwain Fire. Both fires are on BLM land under DNRC wildland fire protection.

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 for specific fire restriction information and fire prevention tips. ###