



# 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](mailto:Kristin.Mortenson@mt.gov)

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

**Monday, August 26, 2024, at 10 a.m.**

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**Location:** 10 miles west of Helmville, Montana

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

**Cause:** Lightning

**Size:** 176 acres

**Containment:** 0%

### CURRENT STATUS

The McElwain Fire, located by McElwain Creek 10 miles west of Helmville in Powell County is currently 176 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. Fire behavior includes creeping and smoldering with isolated torching. Control line has been established by heavy equipment around the south fire and where access has allowed on the north fire. Firefighters will work today to complete one last section of control line on the north fire after fallers remove dangerous snag trees in the area. Progress was made yesterday on securing existing control line by mopping up (extinguishing all flame and heat) 20-30 feet deep, and work will continue today to mop up one chain (66 feet) deep and contain and control spot fires as detected. The fire remains at 0% containment with the anticipation that this will increase as line is completed and secured. Containment measures confidence that the control line will effectively halt fire spread.

A Type 3 Incident Commander (IC) is in place and resources include four engines, three Type 2 hand crews, one eight-person hand crew (Module), one water tender, four skidgines, and one dozer. A Type 2 DNRC helicopter provided bucket drop support yesterday as needed and will be available this afternoon for support as well. It was determined that lightning caused the fire.

### WEATHER

Drier conditions and light, variable winds are expected throughout the area today. Firefighters are working hard to secure the fire ahead of a relatively dry cold front expected tomorrow that could bring with it an increase in west winds with gusts from 25 to 35 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 and have improved a helispot so additional firefighters and supplies can be shuttled in. The Weasel Fire, just west of the McElwain Fire has been controlled and is in patrol status. 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](http://www.MTFireInfo.org) for specific fire restriction information and fire prevention tips. ###