



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>

Thursday, August 29, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.

Location: 10 miles west of Helmville, Montana

Start Date: 8/23/2024

Cause: Lightning

Size: 176 acres

Containment: 25%

CURRENT STATUS

The McElwain Fire, located 10 miles west of Helmville in Powell County, is 176 acres in size and burning in grass and timber on private and Bureau of Land Management land under Montana DNRC wildland fire protection. Elevated winds hit the fire throughout the day yesterday, causing firefighters to pull off the line due to falling interior trees, but control lines held and fire activity remained moderate. Firefighters were able to secure a large portion of line, extinguishing all heat and flame 100-150 feet deep so the fire is now 25% contained. Work will continue today to secure the rest of the control line 100-150 feet deep.

The fire is comprised of two adjacent fires, a north fire, and a south fire. Fire behavior includes creeping and smoldering with isolated torching. Resources are being downsized to match the current fire demands and now include four engines, two Type 2 hand crews, one eight-person hand crew (Module), one water tender, and two skidgins. A Type 2 DNRC helicopter will support as needed.

WEATHER & FIRE BEHAVIOR

Developing high pressure will bring dry conditions, light winds, and higher temperatures to the area. Above normal temperatures and minimum relative humidities in the teens and lower 20s are predicted through the weekend. Winds will be variable to westerly today, switching to southwesterly this evening and tomorrow. Deep fire control line security is critical in preparation for potential increased fire activity due to the expected dry, breezy, and hot conditions.

Firefighters did pull off the line during recent high winds due to falling trees, which is one of the top causes of firefighter fatality. This provides a reminder to the public as well, as they head out to post-fire areas to enjoy our outdoors. Use extra caution when in burned areas with standing trees, especially during windy conditions. Trees that look healthy may not be and standing dead trees are hazardous and can fall at any time.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES

The Powell County Sheriff's Office has **lifted all evacuation warnings** in the area, including residents in the Ledger Road area. Please visit the Powell County Sheriff's Office Facebook page for specific information and further updates. Please use caution if travel is necessary in the area due to increased firefighting traffic.

Powell County is currently in Stage 1 fire restrictions, which does limit campfires. 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.

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