



Ratio Mountain Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Fire Information: 406-865-0941

[Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF Wildland Fire Information Facebook](https://incweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-ratio-mountain)

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August 30, 2024 9:00 a.m.



Incident Commander: Matt Racicot, Noah Criner (T)

Location: 15 miles north/northwest of Whitehall, MT

Start Date: 8/18/2024

Cause: Lightning

Size: 452 acres

Resources on Site: 4 crews; 1 engine

Total Personnel: 74

The Ratio Mountain Fire, located between Ratio Mountain and Whitetail Reservoir, is burning in an area that has recently experienced several large fires. Fire footprints (or previously burned areas) lie to the north (State Creek Fire of 2020), the south (McClusky Fire of 2019), and the west (Placer Fire of 2021) of the fire location.

The entire area, including the previous fire footprints and the area immediately surrounding the Ratio Mountain fire, contains a large concentration of standing dead trees ("snags") that pose challenges to ensuring firefighter safety and in responding to potential medical emergencies, jeopardizing the well-being of firefighters and other responders.

Fire managers from the Forest, working in collaboration with local Jefferson County officials and cooperating agency representatives from the DNRC and BLM, have identified, mapped, and prioritized critical values at risk in the fire area. These inter-agency, values-based discussions are critical in fire management, informing the decision-making process.

CURRENT STATUS/PLANNED ACTIONS:

Strategic firing operations were successfully implemented on the eastern side of the fire, as firefighters used an Unmanned Aircraft System ("drone") and hand ignitions to ignite and burn the fuels between the active fire edge and the constructed control lines from previous fire incidents along the Hay Canyon Road, working southerly along Pony Creek. The crews have progressed with completion of firing operations along this section, working to mop-up and secure the southern piece. Crews completed prepping additional lines to the north, in anticipation of tying into the State Creek Fire footprint.

Continuation of this firing operation to connect the current section, moving northeast, to the fire footprint from the State Creek Fire of 2020 is planned for today and over the next couple of days as weather conditions allow. Firing operations will be implemented using an Unmanned Aircraft System ("drone") due to steep, rocky slopes and numerous snags. 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 the identified and prioritized values. More smoke may be visible across the area over the next several days as firing operations are conducted.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR:

Fire behavior has been limited to isolated torching, creeping, and backing. With the winds associated with the passing of the dry cold front yesterday, the fire made a small push west toward Whitetail Creek and north toward the State Creek Fire footprint.

The fire area will experience a warming and drying trend, with temperatures increasing to the lower 80s today through the weekend. This afternoon the humidity will fall into the single digits to teens with westerly wind gusts



15-20 mph. Similar conditions will continue until next Tuesday, with a chance of light rain showers and isolated thunderstorms returning to the forecast.

CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS:

The Forest has issued an area closure around the fire area, north of Whitehall on the Butte Ranger District. An area closure often involves specific trail and road sections. The area closure information and maps can be found on the Forest website, under the Closures and Alerts tab. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/bdnf/alerts-notices>

This closure applies to the following National Forest System (NFS) lands, approximately 15 miles north of Whitehall.

All National Forest System lands within:

- T3N, R5W, SECTIONS 1, 2, 3
- T4N, R5W SECTION 35

Closures surrounding a fire area are necessary to protect the safety and welfare of the public and provide for safe firefighting efforts and access.

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.

