



# Ratio Mountain Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Fire Information: 406-865-0941

[Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF Wildland Fire Information Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Beaverhead-Deerlodge-NF-Wildland-Fire-Information)

<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-ratio-mountain>

September 1, 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:** 1,058 acres

**Resources on Site:** 4 crews; 1 engine

**Total Personnel:** 74

An overnight infrared mapping flight puts the fire at 1,058 acres. The northern, eastern, and southern edges of the fire are currently where fire managers want them, preventing forward progression of the fire toward critical values at risk. Recent strategic firing operations have been successful at protecting these values identified by local Jefferson County officials and cooperating agency representatives, by keeping the fire on Forest Service land west of the Hay Canyon Road and north of Little Whitetail Creek.

The 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 all responders.

## **CURRENT STATUS/PLANNED ACTIONS:**

Utilizing Unmanned Aircraft System ("drone") due to the steep, rocky slopes and numerous snags in the fire area, crews successfully implemented strategic firing operations to connect the eastern section of line to the fire footprint from the State Creek Fire of 2020. Crews completed similar strategic firing operations on the eastern side of the fire last week, igniting and burning the fuels along the Hay Canyon Road, working southerly along Pony Creek.

These firing operations have created some depth (reducing fuels available to burn) along the constructed lines. Crews will continue to "mop-up" and extinguish pockets of residual heat, securing and holding the edge in place.

Additional firing operations may be planned in the next few days, working from the southern section of line on the southeast corner of the fire and moving to the west, as needed. More smoke may be visible across the area in the coming days, if and when firing operations are conducted.

The UAS will be utilized to monitor the more remote portions of the fire via aerial reconnaissance, in anticipation of gusty winds predicted for Monday.

## **WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR:**

The fire area will experience a warming and drying trend, with temperatures 10-15 degrees above normal in the lower 80s through the weekend. Winds today will be calm early, becoming east-southeast around 6 mph. Strong thermal belts could result in poor overnight relative humidity recoveries. A disturbance is expected to enter the fire area Monday into Tuesday, causing scattered showers and thunderstorms. Gusty, erratic winds, resulting in critical fire weather conditions, are possible.



Fire behavior consists of isolated torching, backing, and creeping. Fire progression to the northeast and east has been mitigated with the successful strategic firing operations; fire movement uphill to the northwest is possible, given the warmer and drier conditions through today.

### **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-notice>

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.

