



Meridian Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Fire Information: 406-502-8205

[Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF Wildland Fire Information Facebook](#)

October 14, 2024 8:00 p.m.



Incident Commander: Derek Wittenberg

Location: Meridian Creek. Approximately 40 miles south of Ennis, MT and approximately 10 miles southwest of Lyons Bridge on HWY 287.

Start Date: 10/08/2024

Cause: Unknown

Size: Estimated at 1425 acres as of 07:00 PM 10/14/2024

Resources on Site: 1-Type 1 helicopter, 1-20-person hand crew, 4-Type 6 engines.

Total Personnel: 44

The Meridian Fire was reported late in the day on October 8th and is located approximately 10 miles southwest of Lyons Bridge on HWY 287 in the Meridian Creek Drainage. Fire managers from the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest have identified and prioritized critical values at risk in the fire area. Firefighting efforts will focus available resources on the protection of structures approximately 1/2 mile from the fire.

There are several factors involved in making wildfire management decisions. These factors include, firefighter safety, resource availability and threats to public safety and property. As well as, terrain, fire behavior, fire season outlook and modeling, and past prescribed fire units and vegetation management projects in the area. Fire managers are strategic in their approach and continually reassess conditions and alter management strategies to protect critical values.

CURRENT STATUS/PLANNED ACTIONS:

The fire doubled in size today after it spotted across FS Trail 6019 and moved to the east/northeast to the top of Cliff Lake Bench. Resources remained in a safety zone until fire behavior allowed for re-engagement to scout where the fire had moved to and potential containment features. One Type 1 helicopter was used to drop water were effective and provided aerial views and information of the fires spread. The rest of the fire showed minimal fire activity throughout the day. Contact was made with Cliff and Wade Lake Resort in the evening and an assessment of people in the campground was completed. Madison County Sheriff's office was updated on the fire situation. A higher-level Incident Commander, one Air Attack, two Type 1 helicopters, and two engines were ordered.

"Do Not Report" signs remain in place Reynolds Pass and the junction of HWY 87 and HWY 287 by Three Dollar Bridge to minimize 911 calls impacting Madison County Dispatch. Information boards were updated are still in place at the MT DOT Rest Area at Lyons Bridge and Cliff/Wade Lake Campground. Barriers remain in place at Hoodoo Pass and at Miller Flat to reduce ATV/UTV traffic in the fire area. The smoke from this fire along with other fires west of here will pool in low areas along the Madison and West Fork Madison tonight.

Tomorrow's actions will involve placing barriers at the junction of FS RD 209 and 1209 (West Fork and Jack Pine) to limit vehicle traffic to Miller Flat and onto Cliff Lake Bench. Another barrier will be placed at Cliff and Wade Lake Campground to limit traffic into the campground. Fire resources will be focused on scouting the fire, locating and assessing values, finding viable features to reduce fire spread, and working available aircraft in areas where they can be successful.

These actions are designed to allow fire personnel to protect the identified values at risk while operating in areas that have much better access and egress to safety.



WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR:

The fire was very active from 03:00 PM until dark burning approximately 700 acres in those four hours. This was the most activity witnessed on the fire since it started. It is expected to remain active tomorrow on the Cliff Lake Bench, especially in patches of mature timber while the young lodgepole stands will have reduced fire behavior. The west aspect between the West Fork Madison and Cliff Lake Bench will have active fire behavior through the afternoon as well.

Tomorrow's forecast will be similar to today's weather. Wednesday, 10/16 is when the next significant weather change is forecasted. This will bring the potential for strong, gusty winds up to 35 mph followed by a chance of rain and snow Thursday and Friday. After that it is forecasted to remain cold with low temperatures in the teens and low 20s into 10/26.

CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS:

There are no fire restrictions on the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest, or any area closures pertaining to the Meridian Fire.

