



Meridian Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Fire Information: 406-502-8205

[Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF Wildland Fire Information Facebook](https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-meridian)
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-meridian>

October 15, 2024 6:00 p.m.



Incident Commander: Jim King

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 2,797 acres as of 06:00 PM 10/15/2024

Resources on Site: 2-Type 1 helicopters, 1-20-person hand crew, 6-Type 6 engines.

Total Personnel: 54

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 that are currently in close proximity to the fires edge.

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 increased by 1,372 acres today after it got established in timber across FS Trail 6019 and moved to the east/northeast to the top of Cliff Lake Bench. Resources conducted a successful firing operation around structures to reduce available fuel and increase depth between the fires edge and the structures. Two Type 1 helicopters were used to drop water during the firing operation and provided aerial views and information of the fires spread. The rest of the fire showed moderate fire activity throughout the day. Madison County Sheriff's office spoke to homeowners on Sundance Bench and Madison Valley Ranches and updated them on the fire situation. An additional Type 1 helicopter was ordered and will be on scene for tomorrow's shift.

"Do Not Report" signs remain in place at 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 are still in place at the MT DOT Rest Area at Lyons Bridge and Cliff/Wade Lake Campground. 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.

Barriers are in place 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 is in place at Cliff and Wade Lake Campground to limit traffic into the campground. Additional barriers are in place at Hoodoo Pass and Miller Flat to reduce ATV/UTV traffic in the fire area. Fire resources will be focused on protecting critical values at risk, 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 02:00 PM until dark burning approximately 1,372 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 had the most activity and will have active fire behavior through the afternoon as well.

Tomorrow's forecast will be similar to today's weather until the evening where the next significant weather change is forecasted. This will bring the potential for strong, gusty winds up to 35 mph during the day followed by a chance of rain in the evening followed by 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.

