



Meridian Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Fire Information: 406-865-0941

[Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF Wildland Fire Information Facebook](https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtbdf-meridian)
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October 16, 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: Undetermined

Size: Estimated at 4,005 acres as of 6:00 PM 10/16/2024

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

Total Personnel: 74

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 prioritized critical values at risk that are currently nearest the fire's edge.

There are several factors involved in making wildfire management decisions. These factors include firefighter safety, resource availability, threats to public safety and property, 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 was active today, burning in timber between FS 209 road (West Fork of the Madison Road) and FS 1209 road (the Cliff Lake Bench Road). Fire progression was to the north-northeast, given the southerly winds. The fire spotted across FS 1209 road. The northern and eastern flanks of the fire exhibited active fire behavior, with group torching and short-range spotting. The southeast flank burned into the Goose Fire footprint from 2021. The western and southern flanks did not exhibit significant growth today.

Ground resources utilized two large helicopters and two VLATs (Very Large Air Tankers) to aid in slowing the fire's progression to the north. Firefighting personnel continued to secure and protect the West Fork Cabins.

Fire managers coordinated with the Madison County Sheriff's Office, who issued an evacuation warning to homeowners on Sundance Bench and in Madison River Ranches at 2:00 p.m. this afternoon. Fire managers also coordinated with range permittees to move cattle from the affected fire area.

Tomorrow's plan is to reassess the fire perimeter location, weather conditions, and critical values at risk, focusing the main suppression efforts on the northeast flank nearest the private land and structures. Private landowners affected by the fire are encouraged to pay close attention to forecasted weather conditions, as they may affect changes in evacuation status.

"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 weather forecast calls for a chance of rain Wednesday evening followed by rain and snow Thursday and Friday. A winter weather storm warning is in effect from Thursday morning into Friday morning. Overnight temperatures will bottom out in the low 20s, with daytime high temperatures only reaching into the mid-30s.

If forecasted conditions materialize, fire behavior will be moderated significantly.

CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS:

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

