



Sawlog Fire

Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest



Fire Information: 406-683-3920

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61563603874079>

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

May 6, 2025 10:00 a.m.

Incident Commander: Richard Griffin (Type 3 IC) and Kyle Errecart (Type 3 IC Trainee)

Location: 15 miles northeast of Wisdom, MT in the Sawlog Creek drainage

Start Date: 05/01/2025

Cause: Undetermined – under investigation

Size: 1,500 acres (estimate from a helicopter mapping operation)

Resources Assigned: 3 crews; 3 engines; 1 helicopter

Total Personnel: 121

Containment: 10%

CURRENT STATUS/PLANNED ACTIONS:

With temperatures in the upper 30s to low 40s yesterday, the Sawlog fire behavior was limited to creeping and smoldering. The fire area received significant precipitation, with snow at higher elevations. The large, heavy fuels continue to smolder despite the precipitation; overall fire behavior is expected to pick up as warmer and drier weather returns mid-week.

On the western edge, engines continued to patrol along Highway 43, providing structure assessments, a structure protection plan, and a river access plan. Access to the fire over the high-water conditions in the Big Hole River will improve with the arrival of a boat to ferry firefighters across.

On the northern flank and working to the east, the smokejumpers scouted for opportunities to construct helispots and potential control lines; they have progressed significantly with "mop-up" of hot spots along this flank of the fire. They will continue to secure this section, working to completely extinguish all heat 66 feet interior to the fire's edge before calling this section contained.

The helicopters were unable to fly yesterday due to the weather but will look to reposition to the helibase in Wise River today. A UAS (unmanned aircraft system) arrived and will be utilized for infrared mapping and other data gathering operations in areas inaccessible by foot and thick with hazard trees or "snags."

Though helpful with moderating fire behavior, the precipitation will likely complicate access to the fire area. Muddy road conditions, requiring UTVs for access, are not conducive to travel by standard vehicles. Firefighters will be conscious of limiting impacts to roadbeds and natural resources.

Additional resources are arriving. An Incident Command Post will be established at Wisdom Airport.

Conditions, including dry fuels and gusty winds, precluded firefighters from implementing any strategic firing operations as a firefighting tactic. The fire activity, including most of the acreage gain during the burning period on May 3rd, was driven by the dry fuels and gusty winds that aligned with the topographic features of the drainage.

Fire investigators will continue their search to determine the fire's cause. Neither the Forest Service nor the BLM had any prescribed fires (commonly referred to as "controlled burns") in that area.

WEATHER, FUELS, AND FIRE BEHAVIOR:

Today's weather will be slightly warmer, with temperatures in the mid to low 50s and relative humidity 31-36%. Winds will be from the east at 5-10 mph. The forecast for mid-week calls for a warming and drying trend as a ridge builds over the fire area. Temperatures will likely approach the upper 70s to low 80s by Friday. According to the extended forecast, no measurable precipitation is predicted for the next week or so.

The fire is burning mainly in sagebrush and Lodgepole pine timber. The north-facing slopes in the area consist of a high "dead and downed" fuel component in a mixed conifer forest, and numerous "snags" or hazard trees are present. This fuel combination poses additional hazards for firefighters and affects on-the-ground progress. Ensuring firefighter safety and protecting life and property are of the utmost importance during any incident.

The fire has exhibited moderate to extreme fire behavior, with 3 to 5-foot flame lengths in the sagebrush and isolated torching, group torching, and crown runs through the tops of the trees in the timbered areas. When winds have aligned with the orientation of drainages, fire behavior has been extreme. Fuel conditions, during this time of year (pre-green up), are extremely dry.

The fire footprint from the 2021 Alder Fire is located to the east, and the fire footprint from the 2021 Christensen Fire lies to the south.

CLOSURES:

For public safety reasons, the Bureau of Land Management has issued a temporary closure for the Sawlog dispersed camping area, located at the Big Hole River ford site. Specific closure language can be viewed on the [Sawlog Fire Inciweb page](#), Closures tab.