



Foss Lake Fire AM Update

Sunday, May 22, 2016, 10:00 a.m.

MNICS Team C, Brian Pisarek, Incident Commander

Fire Information

Web address: <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4740/#>

Email: FossLakeFireInfo@gmail.com

Phone: 218-208-4544

Location: US Forest Service office, 1393 Hwy 169, Ely, open 8 a.m.–8 p.m.

Size: 1008 acres **Containment:** 30 percent **Fire Start Date:** May 19, 2016

Resources: 6 crews, 2 helicopters, 2 engines, 1 water tender, 180 total personnel

Current Situation: There was little growth on the fire yesterday. Accurate mapping data from handheld and aircraft GPS units resulted in the large increase in acreage. Along the east side of the fire, crews installed fire hose along a quarter mile of saw line. On the west side, they continued constructing saw line northward, nearing Clark Lake. Aircraft assisted ground crews with water drops. Two crews camped overnight on Clark and Crab Lakes, allowing them early access to the fireline this morning. A third crew will camp on Crab Lake tonight. Today, on both the east and west sides of the fire, firefighters expect to connect their saw lines as they work toward each other from the north and south. Four engines will be on the Wolf Lake and North Arm Roads today, prepared to respond to new fire starts that could occur. Four Forest Service wilderness rangers are on Crab and Cummings Lakes to ensure public safety for those who might be unaware of the closures. They also continue to work with firefighters who are camping by helping them with wilderness and camping protocols. Firefighters from the Lake Vermilion Fire Brigade and Morse/Fall Lake Fire Department, with their two fire boats, continue to assist the firefighting efforts and Burntside Lake residents through their presence on the lake. Members of the St. Louis County Sheriff's Rescue squad continue to make contact, both by boat and road, with property owners on the west end of Burntside Lake.

RED FLAG WARNING

Critical fire-weather conditions across northeast Minnesota prompted the National Weather Service to issue a red flag warning today—for gusty winds and very dry conditions—in effect from noon to 7 p.m. The statewide planning/preparedness level was raised yesterday to 5, the highest level.

Weather and Fire Behavior: Weather today will be dominated by high winds this afternoon, again from the south, gusting to 25 mph. Sustained winds will be 10–15 mph. Whitecaps are expected to remain on lakes after 10 p.m. as winds will continue overnight. Fire-behavior analysts say there is potential for a very active fire day (for example, single-tree or group-tree torching, short crown runs, and some rapid fire spread). Smoke might be visible to residents and visitors in surrounding communities. However, smoke does not necessarily mean the fire is growing larger: burning “islands” of unburned forest within the fire perimeter could be burning more actively.

Safety Message: The towns of Ely, Winton, Tower, or Soudan are not threatened. Residents on the west side of Burntside Lake should be aware of changing weather conditions today.

Closures: The Forest Service **does not currently recommend** BWCAW travel south of Big Moose, Big Rice, and Bootleg Lakes. Just one BWCAW entry point—Crab Lake entry point #4—is officially closed; all other entry points remain open. The following BWCAW portages and lakes/streams, including campsites, are closed:

- portage Burntside Lake to Crab Lake (entry point #4)
- portage from Cummings Lake to Korb Lake; portage from Cummings Lake to Korb River
- lakes and associated portages: Crab, Boulder, Phantom, Battle, Sprite, Meat, Clark, Glimmer, Hassle, Saca, Little Crab, Korb, Maxine, Barefoot, Little Jig, Silaca, Coxey Pond, Lunetta, Schlamn, Soroll, Glenmore, Western, Blick, Chad, Dugout, and Pine.
- Pine Creek east of Trout Lake
- portage from Trout Lake to Pine Lake

Closure signs are posted at normal access points to delineate the closure area. The closure order and map are located at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/closures/4740/>.

