

Thompson-Divide Complex

Northern Rockies Type II Incident Management Team
Irv Leach Incident Commander

Daily Fact Sheet Aug. 29, 7:00 p.m.



Fire Information: (406) 387-4854/ (406) 314-1669, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.

Evacuation and Highway Closure Information: Flathead County EOC, (406) 758-2111, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.

Resources - Total Personnel: 316

Injuries: 1

Structures Lost: None

20-Person Hand Crews: 1 Type-1 and 3 Type-2, 1 Wildland Fire Management Module (8), 1 Helitack Crew (10)

Air Support: Helicopters (2 Type-1 & 2 Type-3),

Engines: 17

Heavy Equipment: 15

The Thompson-Divide Complex is comprised of the Sheep and Granite Fires on the Flathead National Forest and the Thompson Fire in Glacier National Park. The Sheep fire is the incident priority as it is approaching US Hwy. 2 and the BNSF railway and is threatening the community of Essex.

On August 27, Flathead County Sheriff Chuck Curry ordered a mandatory evacuation of Essex and the surrounding area because of increased activity on the Sheep Fire. For more information on the evacuation, call the Flathead County Office of Emergency Services at (406) 758-2111. The American Red Cross has established an evacuation center at West Glacier Elementary School at 160 Old Bridge Rd (800) 272-6668.

Highway 2 is closed between mileposts 176.8 at Schellinger and 185 at Bear Creek. BNSF trains and Amtrak are running intermittently. Call 511 or visit <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/alerts.shtml> for current road status. For more information on Amtrak call (800) 872-7245.

Stage II Fire Restrictions are in effect for northwestern Montana.

Visit <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/todaysair/> for air quality info.

Closures are in effect for some trails in the vicinity of the fires for Glacier National Park and Flathead National Forest. For more info, please see the Glacier NP page <http://www.nps.gov/glac/upload/8-22-15-closures-web.pdf> or for Flathead NF call Hungry Horse Ranger District (406) 387-3800. An area closure around the Granite and Sheep Fires in the Great Bear Wilderness is in place. Contact Hungry Horse Ranger District for more information. The order and map are posted at <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/article/4468/28364/>.

The predicted cold front arrived in the area of the fires in mid-afternoon. Peak winds did not reach the levels anticipated. This and the presence of a heavy layer of smoke kept fire behavior reduced. Once the front passes this evening, humidity will increase. On Sunday, there is a 70-80% chance of showers. Temperatures will be reduced and humidity higher as we enter the new week. A series of weak disturbances will come through the area over the next week which will result in reduced fire activity.

Sheep Fire, Flathead National Forest

Link to <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4468/>

Structures At Risk: 200+ structures, BNSF has several wooden snowsheds and 1 trestle, utilities infrastructure

Approximate Size: 1,595 acres

Containment: 0%

Structures Lost: None

Fire Update: The Sheep Fire is on the Flathead National Forest and burning in very steep terrain with limited access. The fire is about 1 mile south of Essex and about 1/8 mile from the train tracks between Tank Creek and MacDonald Creek. The fire has not crossed Sheep Creek to the south. Fire activity was limited today because of the persistence of smoke. Construction of the shaded fuel break around Essex is near completion. The logs and slash created by this effort are being moved to a safe location. Efforts tomorrow include reducing fuels along Essex Creek Road about to the Marion Bridge using a feller-buncher to make it more defensible if burning operations are performed later. Crews may also begin fuels reduction efforts on County park land on the south side of Essex. Helicopters had limited opportunities to drop water on the fire because of reduced visibility. Structural protection measures are in place in Essex. Night shift continues to monitor fire movement and patrol the Essex area and Walton compound for any encroaching fire activity.

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Granite Fire, Flathead National Forest

Link to <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4468/>

Approximate Size: 701 acres

Containment: 0%

Fire Update: The Granite Fire is burning in very steep terrain in a mixed conifer forest. The fire is located west of Marias Pass and south of Hwy. 2. The fire started in the Great Bear Wilderness and has moved north out of the Wilderness. Yesterday, the fire moved to the west along a ridge between 2 unnamed tributaries of Granite Creek and northwest toward Patrol Ridge. The crew that implemented structure protection on Granite Cabin was flown out after completing their mission. Crews have implemented structural protection measures on other facilities in the fire's vicinity. Crews have established locations for fireline construction and possible shaded fuel break opportunities when sufficient crews become available for their construction. Helicopter bucket drops were little used today because of limited visibility. The fire did cross the no-name creek on the north side and slowly progressed toward Patrol Ridge.

Thompson Fire, Glacier National Park

Link to <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4468/>

Approximate Size: 17,857 acres

Containment: 20%

Structures At Risk: 2 historic cabins

Structures Lost: None

Fire Update: The Thompson Fire is located in remote south-central backcountry of Glacier National Park about 15 miles east of the West Glacier entrance in the Thompson and Nyack drainages west of the Continental Divide. All fire personnel have been removed from this fire. It will be monitored from the air for any increased fire activity. Pumps and hose lays are in place in case a future need arises. It continued to have some fire activity in the southeastern area of the fire today.

Most of Glacier National Park is unaffected by this wildfire complex and is available for recreational use. Limited backcountry closures are in place. For more specific visitor information, please see the website <http://www.nps.gov/glac/index.htm>.

The Thompson Fire has not impacted park roads. The Going-to-the-Sun Road is open.

For information on the Reynolds Creek fire, please visit <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4405/#>

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