

Thompson-Divide Complex

Northern Rockies Type II Incident Management Team
Irv Leach Incident Commander

Daily Fact Sheet Aug. 30, 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: 325

Injuries: 1

Structures Lost: None

20-Person Hand Crews: 2 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 Aug. 31, at 6 a.m., Flathead County Sheriff Chuck Curry will lift the mandatory evacuation order for Essex and the surrounding area and place the community back to the 'Set' Stage of the Ready, Set, Go evacuation model.

Residents are advised to remain prepared to evacuate if conditions again warrant this action. For more information on the evacuation, call the Flathead County Office of Emergency Services at (406) 758-2111.

U.S. Highway 2 will reopen at 6 a.m. Aug. 31, with pilot cars escorting traffic between mileposts 176.8 at Schellinger and 185 at Bear Creek. Escorted vehicles are not allowed to stop in this area. 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/deg/todaysair/> for air quality info.

Closures are in effect for some trails and areas in the vicinity of the fires for Glacier National Park and Flathead National Forest. For more info, see the Glacier NP page <http://www.nps.gov/glac> or for Flathead NF call Hungry Horse Ranger District (406) 387-3800 or go to <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/article/4468/28364/>.

Today, the fire areas had mostly cloudy conditions with light showers and afternoon thunderstorms. Maximum temperatures were greatly reduced and the higher humidity resulted in minimal fire behavior. Cooler conditions and light rains predicted for the next few days will give firefighters new opportunities to build fireline on fire edge.

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: 2,102 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. Minimal fire activity has allowed firefighters to make plans to engage the fire with direct suppression efforts in the Sheep Creek drainage and along a ridge south of Tank Creek tomorrow. Construction of the shaded fuelbreak along tracks across from Goat Lick is completed. The shaded fuel breaks in the areas around Essex, Essex Creek Road, and the County park land is near completion. The logs and slash created by this effort are being moved to a safe location. These shaded fuelbreaks create defensible positions if burning operations are required later. Structural protection measures are in place in Essex. A night shift will continue 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: 840 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. The fire has moved west along a ridge between 2 unnamed tributaries of Granite Creek and northwest toward Patrol Ridge. 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. One engine and crew are using existing roads to monitor fires progress.

Thompson Fire, Glacier National Park

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

Approximate Size: 17,857 acres

Containment: 80%

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. The fire continued to have some activity in the southeastern area of the fire yesterday.

Most of Glacier National Park is unaffected by this wildfire complex and is available for recreational use. The trail over Triple Divide Pass between the Cutbank campground and the Red Eagle Lake campground, including the Medicine Grizzly Lake Trail spur, as well as the Cut Bank drive-in campground and the Atlantic backcountry campground have reopened. Other limited backcountry closures remain in effect for visitor safety. Please visit <http://www.nps.gov/glac/planyourvisit/hikingthetrails.htm> for current information.

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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