Preparations for unstable weather are focus on Sprague Fire
Tuesday, August 29, 2017

The fire perimeter is estimated at 1,575 acres. Yesterday saw a small increase of about 50 acres of growth, with the fire slowly backing its way down Lincoln Ridge into the Lincoln drainage. The Sprague Fire was started by lightning on August 10, 2017. Burning in a mixed conifer forest, the fire is located in steep, rugged terrain approximately nine miles northeast of West Glacier, Montana. Firefighters continue to reduce fuels around structures, and utilize helicopter bucket drops when necessary. Helicopter bucket work cooled portions of the fire along Snyder Creek and west of Sperry Chalet on Monday.

Hot, dry weather is expected the next two days, with a cold front arriving Tuesday through Thursday. This cold front will bring the chance of light precipitation and dry thunderstorms through Wednesday. Cooler weather is expected in the Sprague Fire area for Thursday and Friday with increased fire activity due to breezy conditions.

In preparation for the predicted unstable weather, firefighters were flown into the Mount Brown Lookout yesterday. The crew successfully secured the protective wrap and continued with fuels reduction around the structure.

Fire managers are protecting values at risk and evaluating structure protection needs. Values at risk include the Mount Brown Lookout, Sperry Chalet, backcountry cabins and campgrounds, structures in the Lake McDonald area, and trail infrastructure such as footbridges. The Snyder Lake Trail hoselay was extended by about 500 feet adding ten more sprinklers in an effort to delay the fire crossing Snyder Creek.

Firefighters are staged at Sperry Chalet. Structure protection is in place, including two water tanks, hose lays and sprinklers. The chalet is located in a rocky, subalpine environment with sparse vegetation. Fire managers are confident that these structure protection measures and personnel can protect the historic buildings if needed.

Smoke may continue to settle into low-lying areas when air temperatures cool at night and in the early morning hours. If you encounter smoke while driving, slow down, turn on your headlights, and watch out for people and wildlife. Montana Wildfire Smoke Updates are available on http://svc.mt.gov/deq/todaysair/. If it’s smoky in one area of the park, there are often other areas of the park with better visibility. Smoke conditions vary in intensity, location and duration with fire activity. You can monitor current conditions on the park’s webcams at http://go.nps.gov/glacwebcams.

Firefighter and visitor safety remain the number one priority of this incident. There have been no crew accidents, injuries, or illnesses. Visitors can help keep crews safe by driving slowly where firefighters are working. Please remember that you are sharing Going-to-the-Sun Road and US Highway 2 with firefighters.

Less than 1% of the park is affected by the fire, and most areas of the park are open and operating as usual, including the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The Sprague, Snyder, and Lincoln Creek drainages and associated trails, from Lake McDonald Trailhead on the west and Gunsight Pass on the east, are closed to all use. Visit http://go.nps.gov/glacconditions for trail, road, and campground information.

Fire Information Line: 406-888-7077
Inciweb: https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5510/ (fire updates, maps and photos, air quality info, and park webcams)
Facebook: https://facebook.com/GlacierNPS
Twitter: https://twitter.com/GlacierNPS