



Balsinger, Woods Creek, and American Fork Fires Update

Wednesday, September 1, 2021 – 10:00 am

Fire Department City of New York Type 2 Incident Management Team

Richard DePrima, Incident Commander – Balsinger and Woods Creek Fires

Custer Gallatin National Forest Type 4

Wes Woodrome, Incident Commander – American Fork Fire

Special Notes: This will be the last Fire Update in this format. Due to minimal fire activity, InciWeb will be updated Monday, Wednesday, and Friday by the US Forest Service, unless significant changes occur. Please refer directly to the Helena-Lewis & Clark and Custer Gallatin National Forests home and Facebook pages for additional fire information.

Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest home page: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/hlcnf/>

Helena Lewis and Clark National Forest Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/HLCNF>

Custer Gallatin National Forest home page: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/custergallatin/home>

Custer Gallatin National Forest Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/CusterGallatinNationalForest>

At 6:00am, on Thursday September 2nd 2021, the transition of command of the Woods Creek and Balsinger Fires will occur. The Woods Creek Fire will be commanded by the Martinez Type 3 IMT. The Balsinger Fire will be turned back over to the US Forest Service. The FDNY Type 2 IMT greatly appreciate the overwhelming welcome, support, and cooperation from our Agency Administrators, co-operators, and the community during our deployment.

Current Situation: Work continues today to strengthen containment and contingency lines and mop-up hot spots. Cooperating agencies have approved suppression repair plans, and crews continue to repair hand and dozer lines to mitigate impacts to natural and cultural resources. Control lines still needed to prevent fire spread will remain in place until fire season has ended. Other repair activities include pulling back berms and installing water bars to prevent soil erosion and water run-off.

Balsinger Fire

Location: 5 miles W of Neihart, MT | **Acreage:** 8,584 | **Containment:** 77% | **Start date:** July 9, 2021 | **Personnel:** 57

There has been no fire growth. Firefighters and engines continue to patrol and mop up along containment lines. Smoldering among the heavier fuels within the fire perimeter is possible. Crews will continue patrol, mop-up, and suppression repair in Divisions I and T. Division R remains unstaffed. Steep, inaccessible terrain and heavy fuels in Division R make direct attack along the north edge unsafe for firefighters. Equipment is being back-hauled, including hose lays and pumps.

Woods Creek Fire

Location: 16 miles NE of Townsend, MT | **Acreage:** 55,411 | **Containment:** 90% | **Start date:** July 10, 2021 | **Personnel:** 342

Minimal fire activity is expected again today. Crews continue to monitor and patrol for hot spots along the perimeter and work to improve contingency lines. Crews in Division Q and Division S completed chipping and mastication along contingency lines. Suppression repair continues in Divisions O, A, and Y. Interior smokes may be visible, but minimal heat near the fire perimeter. Interior fuels may continue to burn until there is a season-ending event.

American Fork Fire

Location: 24 miles SW of Harlowtown, MT | **Acreage:** 21,892 | **Containment:** 75% | **Start date:** July 17, 2021 | **Personnel:** 60

Repair efforts continue on the American Fork fire. Crews are removing snags from the campgrounds and roads to make the area safe for the public. There are the occasional hold ups as strong winds can hamper tree felling activity. The Shields Loop is being graded. Preparations are being made for re-seeding the areas effected by suppression. Seed and equipment have been ordered and is en-route. The Baer Team, led by Dale White, will arrive today. This incident will continue “right-sizing” as necessary to maintain financial responsibility while keeping production. Today, the Martinsdale information board will be dismantled.

Weather and Fuel Conditions: Temperatures return to slightly below normal for early September starting today, with chances for showers and thunderstorms Thursday night and Friday as a weak disturbance moves through the area. Warmer and drier conditions build in over the coming weekend. If no precipitation is received, we will continue to see smoldering, creeping and an isolated tree torching.

Evacuation Notices: For more information or questions on evacuations, please contact your local county sheriff's office.

American Fork Fire: No evacuations are active. All pre-evacuation notices have been rescinded.

Balsinger Fire: The Cascade County Sheriff's Office has rescinded all pre-evacuation orders for Belt Park, the area from the Belt Creek Ranger Station to Monarch, and from west of Monarch to the confluence of Pilgrim Creek and Belt Creek.

Woods Creek Fire: The Broadwater County Sheriff's Office has lifted all evacuation and pre-evacuation orders and warnings for all areas of the Woods Creek Fire on the Broadwater County side. The Meagher County Sheriff's Office has lifted the pre-evacuation for the area east of Camas Creek Road and north of North Fork Woods Gulch Creek to Luppold Road. On the east side of the fire, the area south of Burt Ranch Road and west of Camas Creek Road is in pre-evacuation status. A pre-evacuation notice remains for residents on Birky Road and Ramspeck Lane and for Grassy Mountain residents.

Closures, Advisories, Restrictions

Areas around the fires are closed for public safety. Please respect the closure signs. Traffic on closed roads creates safety hazards for firefighters and emergency vehicles.

Temporary flight restrictions remain in place over the American Fork Fire area. Wildfires are a no-fly zone for unauthorized aircraft, including drones. **If you fly, we can't.** <http://knowbeforeyoufly.org>.

Closure areas:

Balsinger Fire: <https://go.usa.gov/xFhHP>

Woods Creek Fire: <https://go.usa.gov/xFhHy>

American Fork Fire: (Custer Gallatin NF) <https://go.usa.gov/xFhH9> (Helena-Lewis and Clark NF) <https://go.usa.gov/xFhHd>

Bureau of Land Management Butte and Lewiston Field Offices: Woods Creek Fire closures <https://go.usa.gov/xFMGG>

Fire restrictions:

Helena - Lewis and Clark National Forest is in Stage 1 fire restrictions. For details see: <https://go.usa.gov/xFhyt>

Custer Gallatin National Forest is in Stage 1 fire restrictions. For details, see: Item one in the Alerts and Notices page and select section: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/alerts/custergallatin/alerts-notice>

For Additional Information:

American Fork Fire -- Forrest Ford PIO -- 406-223-5630 (8am - 4:30pm)

Balsinger Fire -- White Sulphur Springs Ranger Station -- 406-547-3361 (8am - 4:30pm)

Woods Creek Fire -- Townsend Ranger Station -- 406-266-3425 (8am - 4:30pm)

American Fork Fire InciWeb: inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7681

Balsinger Fire InciWeb: inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7624

Woods Creek Fire InciWeb: inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7649

Smoke information: <https://fire.airnow.gov/#> or
<https://svc.mt.gov/deq/todaysair/smokemostrecentupdate.aspx>

Statewide fire restrictions: www.MTFireInfo.org

