



## SOUTHWEST AREA TYPE 2 INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM Dave Bales, Incident commander

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### **Sucker Creek Fire Update**

August 30, 2015, 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** South of Mt Baldy, on the boundary between Flathead and Lewis and Clark National Forests near Badger Pass, on the north edge of Swift Reservoir, west of BIA 1 and southwest of Horn Lake.

**Date of Origin:** August 13, 2015

**Size:** Approximately 49, 644 acres

**Percent Contained:** 0%

**Closures:** Badger Creek Area and BIA Route I road (Heart Butte Road), south of Browning.

The Spotted Eagle Fire was started by a lightning strike near Spotted Eagle Mountain in the southern Badger-Two Medicine area. On 8/28, due to dry temperatures and gusty winds the fire rapidly grew towards the west crossing the southwestern boundary of the Blackfeet Reservation. The town of Heart Butte and surrounding Badger Creek areas north to Palookaville road were ordered to evacuate later that afternoon. A Red Cross Center was established in the ACA Complex located at 80 Heart Butte Rd in Browning, Mt, where a community meeting was held yesterday to inform the evacuees about the current status of the fire. No structures are reported to have been affected by the fire.

Yesterday, (8/29), ten Volunteer Fire Departments (VFD), joined other fire crews in conducting a reconnaissance of the burn area, identifying locations for containment lines and performing burn out operations along BIA Route 1 road to remove fuel. Four air tankers were able to drop retardant in the vicinity of Heart Butte in support of efforts to protect the town and other structures in the area. Heavy smoke and gusty winds limited their activities.

The Volunteer Fire Departments, which include Cutbank, Valier, West Valley, Sunburst, Teton, Babb, Dupuyer, Heart Butte, East Glacier and Browning, have thus far been the backbone of this firefighting effort. "On Friday evening the fire grew from approximately 200 acres to close to 50,000 acres. The VFD's were very instrumental in protecting the community of Heart Butte. It has been an honor working with the community as they have come together during this incident." said Alan Sinclair, Deputy Incident Commander for the Southwest Area Incident Management Team 4.

Today, (8/30) the resources are sixteen engines, including the VFDs and 3 that belong to the National Guard, 2 graders, 2 National Guard water tenders. The Gila Hotshots also arrived on

the fire having been recently released from the Bench Mark Fire located west of Augusta. A type I helicopter is available, however the gusty winds predicted for today may limit their ability to engage with the firefighting efforts. The strategy for today is to continue the reconnaissance of the fire, conduct more burn out operations, and create containment lines in the Horn Lake area.

The primary objectives of the firefighting efforts are firefighter and public safety; to make the area around Heart Butte safe for families to return to their homes as quickly as possible.

**Cooperators:** the Blackfeet Nation, Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife, Pondera County Sheriff's Office, Glacier County Sheriff's Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northwestern Energy, Blackfeet Nation Tribal Council, Blackfeet Nation Fire Department, Blackfeet Nation Police Department, Heart Butte Volunteer Fire Department, Pondera County Commissioner, Red Cross, and Salvation Army.

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