



Rice Ridge Fire Update

Tuesday, September 5, 2017; 9:30 AM
Northern Rockies Incident Management Team
Greg Poncin, Incident Commander

Fire origin: July 24, 2017, 1.4 miles northeast of Seeley Lake Montana.

Fire Information: (406) 813-0527 Hours: 7am – 9pm

Email: RiceRidgeFire@gmail.com

Websites: Inciweb: <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5414>

Missoula County Sheriff: <https://tinyurl.com/ya93jpuf>

Powell County Sheriff: <https://tinyurl.com/powell-sheriff>

Facebook: Lolo National Forest Facebook Page

Missoula County Sheriff Facebook Page

Greg Poncin's Northern Rockies Type 1 Incident Management Team assumed command of the fire at 6 am this morning.

Community Meeting Tonight: Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at the Ovando Elementary School Gym at 6:00 pm.

Evacuations and Warnings:

Powell County evacuation order: includes the Monture Cabin area and all of the Coopers Lake area north and east of Ovando respectively.

Powell County evacuation warning: includes all other areas of Powell County north of Highway 200 between the Missoula County line on the west and the Lewis and Clark County line on the east.

Missoula County evacuation orders and warnings: all remain in effect.

Residents of Missoula County should sign up for **Smart911** at <https://www.smart911.com/> to receive updated messages about potential evacuations. Powell County residents can download **CodeRED** available through the Sheriff's website.

Evacuation Shelters:

Seeley Lake: Camp Paxson on Boy Scout Road

Ovando: Ovando Elementary School Gymnasium

Missoula: A Red Cross shelter site is located at the UCC Church, 405 University Avenue, in Missoula. Anyone seeking shelter may call the Red Cross of Montana at 1-800-272-6668.

Summary: Yesterday the Rice Ridge fire and the Reef fire grew together towards the north within the Bob Marshall Wilderness adding the majority of increased fire acreage. However, additional fire growth also occurred to the south from the Monture Cabin area east along Spread Creek, Upper McCabe Creek and West Fork Creek. Firefighters worked on a slopover below Forest Road 720 on the primary control line north of the Town of Seeley Lake, and did line improvement throughout the Seeley Lake area, including the bottom of Morrell Creek. A large spot fire to the east of the main fire (within the 1988 Canyon Creek fire scar) grew significantly in the North Fork of the Blackfoot River directly north of the North Fork Trailhead. An inversion over the entire fire area did not allow any aircraft to fly in support of fire operations.

Incident Statistics

Size:	118,550 acres
Containment	2 %
Injuries:	11
Cause:	Lightning
Structures Threatened	1084
Structures Lost (Residences)	0
Outbuildings Lost	0
Estimated cost	\$30.6 million

Resources

Hand Crews:	15
Engines:	80
Helicopters:	3
Dozers:	38
Water tenders:	28
Total Personnel:	787

Today: Firefighters will continue to hold, mop up and improve line on the Seeley Lake side of the fire, including the use of heavy equipment to extend fire line to the north and southeast. Heavy equipment will be used for indirect line construction whenever possible. They will conduct burnout operations along a portion of the Cottonwood Road (477) later in the afternoon if weather conditions are favorable. The inversion and smoky conditions will continue today which may again eliminate air support. Group tree torching with upslope crown runs are likely with the potential for spotting. Structure protection forces will work along the Hwy 83 corridor, Kozy Korner, Double Arrow Subdivision, the Big Sky Lake area, Monture Guard Station and begin structure assessment in the Upper Blackfoot Ranch community.

Please do not stop along the highways to view fire activity. It creates a significant traffic hazard. In addition to traffic hazards, stopping along the highways impedes firefighter traffic, impacts the safety of firefighters and citizens, and increases the chances that the fire could escape control lines.

Fire Information Locations: Staffed fire information is available at: Seeley Lake Rural Fire Department and the Seeley Lake PO, 3172 Mt Highway 83 N in Seeley, Rovero's Ace Hardware 3186 MT Hwy 83 N, in Seeley Lake, Sinclair Service Station 44676 MT200 East in Greenough, Intersection of MT200 and MT 209 east of Ovando, and the Blackfoot Mercantile in Ovando.

Firewise: For information on how to improve the chances of your homes and structures surviving a wildfire, visit the Firewise website at www.Firewise.org.

Evacuation/Closure Information: Evacuations and road closures are based upon the need to provide for safety of the public and firefighters, current fire behavior, forecasted weather, and planned suppression operations. Fire officials, Missoula and Powell County Sheriff's Offices, and Montana Department of Transportation will evaluate the evacuation and road closures daily. The Incident Commander, Missoula County Rural Fire Chief, and the Missoula and Powell County Sheriffs appreciate your patience and will work hard to get you back into your homes as soon as it is safe to do so. Go to the Sheriffs Offices' Facebook pages for the most current information.

The Red Cross has opened a shelter at the University Congregation Church located at 405 University Avenue in Missoula. For Missoula County animal sheltering call Animal Control at 541-7387 and leave a message.

Drones and TFR: The Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR) for the Lolo Peak Fire remains in effect. **The restriction includes "drones" or unmanned aerial vehicles. If drones are detected, air operations stop. "If you fly, we can't!"** If you see a drone in the fire area, including the evacuation areas, report it immediately to 406-272-5433. Please provide your name, phone number, location and time you observed the drone. Your cooperation is needed to insure the safety of our pilots.

Stage II Fire Restrictions are in effect for Missoula and Powell Counties and across the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests. Additional information can be found on Inciweb.

Closures: Multiple closures related to Rice Ridge Fire suppression efforts are in effect for public lands managed by the Lolo National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, Montana DNRC, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

The fire is under the jurisdiction of the Lolo National Forest and the Montana Department of Natural Resources (MTDNRC). **Montana National Guard** soldiers are providing assistance to the Missoula and Powell County Sheriffs' offices in road closures and evacuation programs.

Missoula County residents can receive emergency notifications of critical alerts via their choice of text, phone and/or email by signing up at **Smart911.com**. Residents in Powell County can download the **CodeRED** to their mobile devices to receive critical information notifications.

Cooperators: Seeley Lake FD, Missoula County Sherriff, Missoula County OEM, Montana DNRC, Montana Fish and Wildlife and Parks, Montana DOT, American Red Cross, Montana Highway Patrol.