



**NORTHERN ROCKIES
INCIDENT MANAGEMENT TEAM 5**
Joe Sampson,
Incident Commander

INCIDENT STATISTICS

Location: Custer Gallatin NF
3 miles NE of Bozeman, MT
Start date: September 4, 2020
Size: 8,224 acres
Percent Contained: 83%
Cause: Lightning

Resources Assigned:

- Total personnel: 248
- Engines: 6
- Type 2 Hand crews: 6
- Helicopters: 2
- Water tenders: 1

SUMMARY:

The Bridger Foothills Fire started around 3 pm on September 4, 2020. Initial attack forces responded, but were unable to suppress the fire, given the extreme dry and windy conditions.

By that night the fire had grown to about 400 acres. Local resources attempted extended attack on Saturday, but a frontal passage with strong winds pushed the fire to an estimated 7,000 acres. The fire has shown minimal fire behavior on the perimeter in recent days, with interior smokes still visible. Firefighters continue to patrol, mop-up hot spots and secure the fire edge. Resource advisors are evaluating the fire area and coordinating suppression repair.

SAFETY:

There is a Temporary Flight Restriction in place over the fire area. Wildfires are a NO DRONE ZONE. If you fly, we can't. Flying a drone near a wildfire can shut down all air operations.

COOPERATING AGENCIES:

Gallatin County
Montana DNRC
Custer Gallatin NF

BRIDGER FOOTHILLS FIRE

September 17, 2020 - 8:00 a.m.

CURRENT STATUS:

Acreage remains at 8,224 acres. Containment increased to 83%. The south side of the fire, a large portion of the east and west sides, and the large spot east of the fire are contained.

Crews located, isolated, and put out hot-spots interior to the fire's edge on all flanks. Interior heat remains on the northern flank of the fire, and crews will continue to mop-up hot spots and grid the mostly unburned areas where previous spotting occurred. Fire personnel worked with the local Fire Department to assess structures outside the fire area, working from the north to the south. The data collected will be used to document the fire risk for those structures in the event of future fires. Heavy equipment will work to repair and smooth out roads and dozer lines used for the suppression operation. Drift smoke from other fires in the western U.S., settling into the Bozeman area, could affect air operations. Resources no longer needed will demobilize, returning to home units or receiving orders for reassignment to other incidents.

Air operations has no planned missions beyond using UAS today. Personnel are utilizing an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) to locate hot-spots along the fire perimeter on the northern flank. The use of UAS to assess fire activity has less risk, reducing ground-based firefighter exposure in steep, rugged, and rocky terrain. These operations are more cost effective than some traditional aerial operations. The end result is rapid assessment of current fire conditions through the utilization of sensors and cameras not readily available in traditional firefighting aircraft.

WEATHER/FIRE BEHAVIOR:

The fire experienced moderate relative humidity recovery overnight. Temperatures in the mid to high 70s are expected, with relative humidity in the 14-19% range and lighter winds. The area will experience shifting winds this afternoon, to the north on the ridges and to the east in the valleys. Large fuels will continue to smolder, and creeping fire behavior is expected in duff and lighter fuels. Drift smoke from other fires in the West is expected to remain in the greater Bozeman area. Expected fire behavior is low; however, potential for fire remains high, due to extremely dry fuels. The extended forecast calls for increasing clouds on Friday and a 60% chance of rain over the weekend, with measurable precipitation expected (0.3 inch).

CLOSURES/NOTIFICATIONS:

Bridger Canyon Road in its entirety is OPEN to the public. Travelers should SLOW DOWN and watch for fire traffic, as firefighting resources remain in the area.

The Forest has modified the area closure order for National Forest System lands in the Bridger Foothills Fire area. This closes the area, roads, and trails to all human entry within the Bridgers, west of Highway 86 and south of a line from the Brackett Creek intersection ("the Y") extending to the west through Ross Peak to the western Forest boundary. Popular trails like Middle Cottonwood, Bridger Foothills, Sypes Canyon, all Bridger Bowl trails to the ridge and all trails south of Brackett Creek and up and over Ross Peak remain closed. Trail users should refrain from attempting to run the ridge or loop the Bridger Foothills trail; many connector trails are still closed. Visit the [Inciweb page](#), [Closures tab](#), for a detailed description and map of the modified closure.

The Gallatin County Emergency Management Office encourages all residents to be prepared for future emergencies, by signing up to receive emergency notifications through the Community Notification System. Information can be found at <https://www.readygallatin.com/public-warning/community-notification-system/>.



Fire Information Line: 406-219-7052 (8 am to 8 pm)

Media Inquiries: 406-219-7136

Inciweb: inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7144

Email: 2020.bridgerfoothills@firenet.gov

Facebook: CusterGallatinNationalForest