



**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: 173
- Engines: 5
- Type 2 Hand crews: 3
- 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 18, 2020 - 8:00 a.m.

### CURRENT STATUS:

Acreage remains at 8,224 acres. Containment remains at 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 were successful at gaining some containment on the northern flank, where the burn was "dirty" and left a jagged edge.

Crews patrolled and "mopped-up" hot spots interior to the fire's edge on all flanks. Fire personnel and local Fire Department representatives continued to assess structures outside the fire area, starting north of the fire and progressing southward. 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. Resources no longer needed are demobilizing and traveling home, as the organization downsizes.

Personnel utilized an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) to locate hot-spots along the fire perimeter on the northern flank. The system detected an area of interior heat in a pocket of green fuel inside the fireline; crews were able to locate the specific area and address the heat.

### WEATHER/FIRE BEHAVIOR:

The fire experienced moderate relative humidity recovery overnight. Slightly warmer temperatures (high 70s) are expected today, with relative humidity in the 15-19% range. Winds will increase ahead of a cold front, potentially gusting to 25 mph in the afternoon. Smoke from other fires in the western U.S. will linger in the Bozeman area, but is expected to be somewhat less today.

Large fuels will continue to smolder, and creeping fire behavior is expected in duff and lighter fuels. Expected fire behavior is low; however, potential for fire remains high, due to extremely dry fuels and near critical weather conditions. The forecast calls for much cooler weather and a chance of rain showers through the weekend.

### 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/>.

With the near critical fire weather conditions, personal responsibility and prevention of the next ignition is of utmost importance in preventing the next wildfire. Take extra precaution when having campfires; put them dead out and cold to the touch before leaving. Refrain from parking vehicles on dry grass and make sure all power equipment is in good working condition.

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

Media Inquiries: 406-219-7136

Inciweb: [inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7144](https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/7144)

Email: [2020.bridgerfoothills@firenet.gov](mailto:2020.bridgerfoothills@firenet.gov)

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