



FACT SHEET



Wildfire Update

September 4, 2015

Contact: Public Information Officers: Glenda Scott, Bob MacGregor, Peri Suenram
Phone: Note New Phone Number 406-847-9974 or 406-827-0731

What: Clark Fork Complex (numerous fires)

Cause: Lightning

Location: N. Idaho and NW Montana, Nearby Towns include Heron, Noxon, MT and Clark Fork, ID

Jurisdiction: Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) and Kootenai National Forest (KNF)

The Northern Rockies Wildland Fire Management Team has assumed command of all fires in the Napoleon and Clark Fork Complexes and will manage them as the Clark Fork Complex under the command of Diane Hutton.

The Clark Fork Complex is a collection of the following fires:

Scotchman Peak (IPNF): 2057 acres

Whitetail (IPNF): 1870 acres

Sawtooth (KNF): 2465 acres

Marten Creek (IPNF): 6 acres

Napoleon (KNF): 8957 acres

Government (KNF): 399 acres

Yesterday's Activities: Fire activity remained light across the Clark Fork Complex on Thursday. There was no extension of the perimeters and fire behavior was limited to interior creeping and smoldering with very occasional single tree torching. The majority of heat detected was on the south end of the **Napoleon** Fire, along Pillick Ridge between the lobes in Blacktail Creek and Gin Gulch. There are also some hot areas on the west flank of Napoleon in the upper drainages on Star Peak. The majority of work on the **Whitetail** Fire consisted of back-hauling of equipment no longer needed along the 332 Road. One resident of the Dry Creek area was happy to see much more equipment headed down the hill than up, signifying the crews were feeling much more confident with their ability to keep the fire within existing lines. Construction of a shaded fuel-break, south of the Napoleon Fire on the north side of Highway 200, neared completed. A shaded fuel-break is an area where a percentage of the trees are cut leaving widely spaced stems whose canopies are far enough apart that they won't support a crown fire. Crews mopping-up 100 feet into the black west of Highway 56 on the Napoleon Fire found fewer and fewer hot-spots to deal with. They are also removing excess equipment from the fire-line to staging areas. Saw crews continue to drop the most dangerous snags and damaged trees. Structure protection ahead of the **Sawtooth** Fire concentrated on the north side of the Eagle View Estates, crews looked at the best ways to protect homes in the unlikely event of the fire moving toward the sub-division.

Todays Planned Actions: Firefighters at the Amber Bear Incident Command Post heard about the heroic actions of Clark Fork firefighter William Brashear during the Great Idaho Fire of 1910, whose clear thinking saved a crew of 10 in the course of a burn-over in the Dry Creek Drainage. Pockets of large fuels will continue burning on Friday and the forecasted northeast winds may cause occasional single-tree torching, especially on the south side of the Napoleon Fire. Ten loads of gravel will be distributed on the roads around the Whitetail Fire to fix ruts caused by heavy equipment use. The shaded fuel-break along Highway 200 should be completed today and equipment from that area will be moved to the northeast side of the Government Fir to strengthen the line there along private property. Hose-lays through the Ross Creek Cedars will begin today as a precautionary measure. The structure protection activities in the Eagle View Estates should be completed on Friday. Aggressive mop-up will target the few remaining hot-spots along the Highway 56 corridor. Personnel and equipment will continue to be demobilized in an on-going "right-sizing" of the Clark Fork Complex based on the projected weather conditions.

Forecasted Weather: Friday should start out sunny and cool with temperatures in the valleys in the 60s and down in the 50s on the ridgetops. Humidity will be between 20 and 30%. On Friday afternoon the wind will shift to the northeast and that will be the harbinger of a precipitation event that should drop between ¼ and ½ inches of rain on Friday night and Saturday. The northeast winds may cause some torching on the south side of the Napoleon Fire before the rain starts. Meteorologist Scott Carpenter, who has done such a great job of forecasting weather events and presenting at various public meetings, will be headed home to Salt Lake City after a job well-done.

Evacuations: The following area in Montana is under a Pre-evacuation Notice: all residences south of mile mark 20.5 along the Highway 56 Corridor to the Highway 200 intersection, including Angel Island, Bull Lake Estates, Eagle View Estates, East Fork Bull River Road and the South Fork of Bull River, also the residences north of Highway 200 from mile marker 6 to the Highway 56 intersection (approximately 4 miles); and the residents of Old Bull River Road. A Level 1 Evacuation Order is in effect for an area in Bonner County, Idaho. This area is bounded by the State Line on the east, River Road (south of the Clark Fork River) on the north, the main fork of Johnson Creek on the west and the Shoshone/Bonner County Line to the south. Level 1 is a pre-evacuation notice that informs residents that they should have plans in case the fire moves in their direction.

Closures: An area closure order exists on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest around the Scotchman Peak Fire. A closure order on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest that closes the 332 Road, the 1066 Road and the 1021 Road at the intersection with the 332 Road, in the local area remains in effect. The Idaho Panhandle National Forests and the Kootenai National Forest have instituted area and trail closures around many of the fires in the Clark Fork Complex; please consult the websites for the respective Forests at the Idaho Panhandle <http://www.fs.usda.gov/ipnf> or the Kootenai <http://www.fs.usda.gov/kootenai> for the latest updates. Closures on the Idaho Panhandle will likely last through the Labor Day Weekend to ensure public safety.

For the latest fire information and photos, visit <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/4531/>. Stay current with the Idaho Panhandle National Forest on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/USFSIPNF> and the Kootenai National Forest at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/kootenai/home>



Faces of the Fire: Noxon Engine Crew
Photo by Bill Rosch