

NEWS RELEASE

**USDA Forest Service
Bridger-Teton National Forest
P.O. Box 1888
Jackson, WY 83001**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: July 5, 2001
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Eleven Fires Burning on Bridger-Teton National Forest

A storm front that produced a large amount of lightning passed over the great basin yesterday, turning north into western Wyoming and sparking numerous forest fires on the southern end of the Bridger-Teton National Forest. Presently, crews from the Bridger-Teton National Forest are managing eleven forest fires. Nearly all of these fires occur on the southern end of the forest, near the Middle Ridge of the Wyoming Range. An additional fire burns on the northern end of the Forest, north of Togwotee Pass, and yet another burns on the southeastern portion of the Forest, near the Bridger Wilderness.

The Haynes Fire Danger Index, measured on a scale of 1-6 with 6 being the highest, is listed as a 6 for today's fire conditions. The Lightning Activity Level, measured on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, is a 3 for today, adding to volatility of present conditions.

Most of the eleven fires are small in nature and are minimally staffed with 2-4 firefighters. However, three fires have presented a more serious management challenge and have been summarized below, by management priority:

1. **Deer Creek Fire.** Burning 30 acres as of 8:00 AM July 5. 8 Smoke Jumpers deployed on initial attack. Three twenty-person hand crews have been ordered as well as a Type I Helicopter (a heavy unit, such as a Chinook). This fire presents a significant concern in the event of a wind shift that could blow the fire into heavier fuels.

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2. **Murphy Lake Fire.** Burning less than two acres as of 8:00 AM July 5. One type VI engine from Grand Teton National Park (an Interagency Engine with a 3 person crew) has been deployed along with a 10 person Initial Attack Hand Crew. A Type IV heavy engine (750 gallon water capacity) has also been ordered to assist with this fire. This fire presents a significant concern in the event of wind shift that could blow the fire into heavier fuels. Additionally, fire management resources for this fire are limited.

3. **Rim Fire.** Less than one acre as of 8:00 AM July 5. A seven-person hand crew presently manages this fire. This fire presents a significant concern in the event of wind shift that could blow the fire into heavier fuels. Additionally, fire management resources for this fire are limited.

In addition to the three high priority fires listed above, wind shifts, coupled with present weather conditions could quickly increase the size of any of these fires. Additional concerns exist in the form of "sleepers." Sleepers are fires that have been smoldering slowly, producing little if any smoke, but can flare-up unexpectedly, requiring greater response pressures.

As western Wyoming was affected by the previously mentioned storm system after many other forests in the great basin, fire suppression personnel and equipment are difficult to procure. To remedy any slow response times, reconnaissance flights are being performed at least twice today to look for new fires and assess those presently burning. For updates, please contact the Bridger-Teton National Forest at (307) 739-5500. Regular updates will follow.

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