

**Glenda Wiles**

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**From:** McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmckay@fs.fed.us>  
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**Subject:** Bitterroot NF - Wildfire Update  
**Attachments:** Fire Fact Sheet 7-19-18.docx



# FACT SHEET

## Wildfire Update

**July 19, 2018**

**Contact:** Public Affairs Officer – Tod McKay  
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**What:** Reynolds Lake Fire Update  
**Discovered:** July 17th  
**Location:** 35 miles SW of Darby, MT – West Fork Ranger District

**Summary:** The lightning-caused Reynolds Lake Fire burning on the border of the Bitterroot and Salmon-Challis National Forest, on the edge of the Frank Church Wilderness grew to over 1,000 acres yesterday pushed by strong winds of up to 30mph over the fire area. Most of the activity was on the east and south sides of the fire. Growth was slowed somewhat as the fire burned into the Saddle Fire from 2011. The west perimeter is holding thanks to multiple fire retardant drops yesterday by large air tankers. See below for air stats from yesterday.

There are no structures threatened. Forest Road #044 to the Reynolds Lake Trailhead is currently closed.

**Current Size:** 1,068 acres. The fire is 0% contained.

**Resources on Fire:** There are currently 80 firefighters, including two Hotshot crews and three helicopters assigned to the fire which is being actively suppressed, under a full suppression strategy. The helicopters are assisting with bucket work to help control the spread. Several large air tankers are on order again today and will be performing retardant drops in key locations to check fire growth.

**Additional Resources:** Two 20-person Hotshot crews, three engines, and a water tender have been ordered and are in route to the Reynolds Lake Fire.

**Fire Behavior:** There was active group torching and short-range spotting yesterday due to very strong westerly winds. Much of the fire growth was wind driven. Active fire behavior is

planned again this afternoon with winds in the forecast and short crown runs and group torching expected. Continued fire spread to the north and east.

**Planned Actions:** Firefighters will continue constructing hand line today around the west and north sides of the fire anchoring off of Forest Road #044 to keep the fire out of the head of Blue Joint and Deer Creek. Continue to utilize aircraft to moderate fire behavior and spread.

**Safety Concerns:** Firefighter safety remains a top priority. The fire is burning in very rugged and remote terrain with heavy fuels including dead standing and down timber. Numerous snags are in the fire area which presents a safety threat to firefighters in high wind situations.

**Weather:** Winds will continue this afternoon, but not at the strengths seen over the fire on Wednesday. Humidity will again be low, into the low to mid-teens. Continued hot and dry conditions are expected over the next week with no relief in sight, highs in the mid-80s to low-90s.

**Air Statistics:** The three helicopters working on the fire yesterday dumped 63,160 gallons of water on the fire. Two large air tankers flying out of Missoula and a Very Large Air Tanker (VLAT) from Moses Lake, WA. dumped 54,209 gallons of fire retardant helping establish a perimeter that firefighters on the ground are now working to reinforce.

**Fire Danger:** Fire Danger is currently "High" on the Bitterroot National Forest. Fires can spread rapidly and quickly increase in intensity after ignition. Small fires can become large fires and exhibit extreme fire behavior and unattended campfires are likely to escape. These fires are difficult to control and often become longer-lasting fires.

Open burning was closed last week in Ravalli County due to increased fire risks. Camp and cooking fires are still allowed.

**2018 Fire Season:** Firefighters have responded to 4 lightning wildfires this summer on the Bitterroot National Forest.

**Inciweb:** For the latest on the Reynolds Lake Fire including photos and maps visit <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5954/>

*Please note: Drones are dangerous if flown near wildfires. Drones can interfere with wildland fire air traffic that are necessary to suppress fires and could ground firefighting aircraft due to safety concerns. Learn more at <http://www.nifc.gov/drones>.*

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