

# Highline Fire Update

## Payette National Forest

United States Department of Agriculture  
500 North Mission Street  
McCall, ID 83638



**Contact:** Jack West, Public Information Officer, 850-445-7929

**Date:** Tuesday, September 5, 2017

**For More Information:** <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5500/>

## Highline Fire Facts

**Location:** The Highline Fire and Goat Fire are both burning on the Payette National Forest, Krassel Ranger District, entirely within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness (<https://tinyurl.com/y8qomgpm>), approximately 23 miles east/northeast of Warren, Idaho.

**Date of Origin:** July 28, 21017 @ approx. 7:00 p.m.

**Cause:** Started by lightning

**Current Size:** Highline Fire: 67,942 acres / Goat Fire: 480 Acres

**Current Situation:** The Highline Fire continued to be extremely active yesterday. Portions of the fire in the headwaters of Ramey and Silver Creeks pushed to the west, south and east. After making a run northeast from Queen Creek towards Mule Creek Point the day before, the fire has been slowed due to adverse winds and less favorable topography. On the northwest corner of the incident, the fire is now moving southwest in the Harlan Meadow area through thick timber. The western flank continues to move towards Sheepeater lookout, but isn't anticipated to make a major run in that direction. In the Lodgepole Creek drainage, the fire is well positioned to make a run towards the headwaters of Hand Creek in the area of Rock Rabbit Lookout. Predicted weather conditions through Wednesday will support rapid fire growth, large column development and long range spotting with areas of crown fire. A RED FLAG Warning is in effect until 10:00 p.m. Wednesday evening. A Haines level of 6, indicating unstable atmospheric conditions, will remain over the fire through Wednesday evening with gusty north to northeast winds. Temperatures will remain well above normal for this time of year, and daytime humidity will remain in the mid-teens. Poor humidity recoveries of 25 to 35 percent are expected above the valley inversion Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. The earliest chance for thunderstorms remains Thursday afternoon and evening, with a better chance on Friday afternoon. Point protection efforts will continue at Root Ranch and Cold Meadows. Firing operations will begin around Root Ranch if necessary. Fire progression towards additional Management Action Points and Values at Risk including Butts Point Lookout, Snowshoe Mine, Fern Creek Cabin, as well as priority areas along the Salmon River Corridor between Lantz Bar and Corn Creek Boat Launch and Campground will be monitored. Stonebraker and Chamberlain Guard Station continue to be monitored by air. Fire progression southwest towards Smith Creek, Big Creek and the Edwardsburg community will be closely monitored to determine the need for additional resources. Point protection actions have been completed at Lower Chamberlain Bridge, Arctic Point and Rock Rabbit Lookouts. Resources will be assessing point protection needs of Values at Risk to the south. The Goat Fire exhibited moderate growth as it began to experience more favorable winds.

**Percent Containment:** The Highline and Goat Fires have no current containment. They are lightning-caused, natural fires burning in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness. Firefighters are conducting point protection which is a wildfire response strategy that protects specific assets or highly valued resources from the wildfire without directly halting the continued spread of the wildfire. Points or zones being protected may be communities, individual structures, areas of high resource value, etc. Continued wildfire spread may be desirable in order to achieve management objectives or may be inevitable due to extreme burning conditions, safety concerns to firefighter exposure, inaccessible terrain, or other limitations.

**Fire Management Strategy:** The Payette National Forest has selected a monitor/point protection fire management strategy as the fire is burning within the Wilderness, started naturally by lightning and burning in the right place, at the right time, with the right resources, for the right reason. This management approach allows the Highline Fire to play its natural role in the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness to achieve ecological benefits for enhancement of forest health and wildlife habitat, while protecting values at risk and providing for firefighter and public safety. Suppression actions will be taken where lightning fires pose serious threats to life and/or property within wilderness or to life, property or natural resources outside of wilderness. Monitoring and point protection will continue to be the course of action and point protection will be implemented for values at risk if threatened by the fire.

**Fire Resources:** Fire crews assigned include the Boise Interagency Hotshot Crew, the Teton Wildland Fire Module, and the Salmon-Challis Crew #7. Crews and miscellaneous overhead are spiked-out at Root Ranch. Firefighters may need to conduct burnout operations and point protection to protect Root Ranch, Cold Meadows, and values along the Salmon River Corridor. Fireline leadership, safety officers and paramedics are also with the crews. Crews are being supported (food, water, equipment, supplies) with a Type 3 helicopter and fixed wing aircraft. A total of 85 personnel are assigned to the overall incident. An Incident Command Post is setup in McCall to coordinate all fire response and support actions.

**Values at Risk:** Root Ranch, Cold Meadows Guard Station, Lower Chamberlain Bridge, Arctic Point, Butts Point, Sheepwater and Rock Rabbit Lookouts, and values along the Salmon River corridor from Corn Creek to Lantz Bar. Threats to the historic structures at Stonebraker and Chamberlain have been reduced. Infrastructure located along the Salmon River Corridor include the Salmon River Lodge, Corn Creek Boat Launch and Campground, Horse Creek Bridge, Stub Creek and Lantz Bar Guard Stations, and Fern Creek Cabin. Root Ranch is a private inholding with 12 structures. Cold Meadows Guard Station has five administrative buildings at the site. Point protection has been successful in safeguarding and protecting structures. There have been no losses or damage to any structures.

**Fuels and Terrain:** These fires are burning through a diverse and variable landscape due to a history of large fires in the area. Vegetative communities can be described as ranging from sparse grass/brush on the lower to mid-slopes of the Salmon River, through a zone of ponderosa pine/Douglas fir on the canyon's upper slopes to a mixture of Lodgepole pine/subalpine fir at the highest elevations. Previous fires left a mosaic of conditions in the timber fuel types, with areas of relatively clean understories to areas of jackstraw dead and down with an over-story of regeneration. The most significant fire movement has been through areas of heavy dead and down fuels in association with a timber over-story. The fire has burned very active when the relative humidity is less than 16%; wind gusts are greater than 20 mph; temperatures greater than 80 degrees and a Haines Index of 4 or more. Typical burn periods are from mid-day to early evening.

**Injuries:** None to-date

**Closures:** The **Chamberlain Airstrip is closed** due to fire activity. The **Cold Meadows Airstrip is closed** due to runway conditions. A Forest Area Closure Order is also in effect for the Highline Fire area. Please visit the following link for the Highline Fire Area Closure Order:  
<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/article/5500/40016/>.

**Fire Restrictions:** The Payette National Forest is under [STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTIONS](#). [Click this link for designated sites](#) where campfires are allowed. If a site is not signed as being a designated site, then campfires are not allowed at that site. There are no fire restrictions in the Frank Church River or No Return Wilderness. For more information: <http://www.idahofireinfo.com/p/wilderness-fire-restrictions.html>.

**For More Information:** Follow the Payette National Forest on Twitter at [@Payette Forest](#), and on Facebook at [U.S. Forest Service – Payette National Forest](#). Subscribe to email updates via GovDelivery at <https://goo.gl/R2fDJr>. If you have a question, please email us at [payettefireinformation@gmail.com](mailto:payettefireinformation@gmail.com). Visit <https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/5500/> for more information on the Highline and other fires throughout the nation and [www.idahofireinfo.com](http://www.idahofireinfo.com) for information on fires throughout the state of Idaho.

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