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# Livingston Ranger District News Release



For Immediate Release  
Date: July 19, 2006, 1300

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## **South Fork Pine Creek Wildfire Continues Burning in AB Wilderness**

Livingston, MT... The South Fork Pine Creek Wildfire continues burning in the Absaroka-Beartooth (AB) Wilderness Area. The fire, visible from most of Paradise Valley is approximately 120 acres in size and continues to burn actively. Although originally considered as a good candidate for wildland fire use, the Forest has initiated suppression activities. The fire currently poses no risk to private land or property.

The wildfire began on Monday, July 17, as a result of dry lightening. It was reported Monday night and was approximately 4 acres. With warm temperatures and windy conditions experienced late Tuesday afternoon the fire grew to approximately 120 acres by Wednesday morning.

“The fire is approaching a pre-identified trigger point where it will become difficult to contain it within the AB Wilderness area,” said Marna Daley, Forest Public Affairs Officer. “Fire weather forecasts have changed and fire behavior is increasing beyond original predictions. Based on these factors, the Forest is initializing suppression resources.”

Helicopters and a small hand crew will begin working the fire today. “People in the Paradise Valley can expect to see helicopters working the ridgeline to the west of the South Fork of Pine Creek today,” stated Daley. “Firefighters will be flown to a safe zone to begin building fireline near the mouth of the Pine Creek drainage. Firefighters will also continue monitoring the fire.”

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5242 Highway 89 South, Livingston, MT 59047  
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin>

The fire is burning in sub-alpine fir, and lodgepole and whitebark pine. With high temperatures and strong afternoon winds in the forecast, the fire is expected to continue increasing in size. Smoke is visible from as far away as Big Timber and Bozeman and will continue settling in the Paradise Valley in the evening. The Pine Creek Campground is still open to the public but people can expect smoky afternoon and evening conditions.

The Gallatin National Forest is closing the Pine Creek Trail #47 and George Lake Trail #184 to ensure public safety. This closure will go into effect today. A public meeting to discuss the fire will be held Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup> at the Pine Creek Church. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

The best place to see the fire is along the East River Road. People are encouraged to find a safe place to pull off the highway. For additional information please contact the Fire Information Center at 406-823-6061 or visit the Forest's website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin/>.

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