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# GLACIER SUSPENDS ISSUANCE OF BACKCOUNTRY PERMITS

September 08, 2017 at 12:07 pm | Hungry Horse News

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Smoke obscures the sun Thursday in the Two Medicine area of Glacier National Park.

Glacier National Park announced Friday that it would issue no new overnight backcountry permits, saying the Park expects extreme fire activity this weekend, with the possibility of dry thunderstorms and increased wind.

Isolated dry thunderstorms are possible tonight and Saturday, followed by gusty winds Saturday afternoon into Sunday associated with a cold front passage.

There are no backcountry evacuations at this time, and there is no immediate threat at this time to backcountry users. People can still go on day hikes. Most trails east of the divide remain open, though most trails west of the divide are closed.

Hiking is a tough go west of the divide anyway — smoke has choked the Park the past several days.

The intent of this action is to reduce the number of people overnighting in the backcountry. In the event of a new fire start or rapid growth of existing fires, the park has significantly fewer resources available, due to ongoing fire operations, to assist a large number of people out of the backcountry.

At this time, the Park hasn't projected when it would start re-issuing permits.

The Park is currently fighting three large fires and is preparing for the potential of a fourth, the Kenow Fire coming down from Canada near Goat Haunt.

The Sprague Fire is more than 13,000 acres above Lake McDonald, burning a large swath of land from Walton Creek to Mount Brown. The Adair Peak Fire is burning on a ridge on the south side of Logging Lake.

The Elder Creek Fire lies on the Montana and British Columbia border, and started on the Canadian side on Sept. 2. It is currently 2,055 acres, with 260 acres on the U.S. side. Firefighters have begun implementing structure protection around the Kishenehn Patrol Cabin and surrounding areas.

The Kenow Fire burning in Canada could potentially impact Waterton Lakes National Park and northern portions of Glacier National Park. As a precaution, firefighters have started on some structure protection in the Goat Haunt area of Glacier National Park.

The weather is expected to improve by the middle to end of next week, with the potential for rain and high country snow above 7,000 feet.

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CONTACT US

(406) 892-2151

PO BOX 189, 926 Nucleus Avenue

Columbia Falls, MT 59912

