



Colt Fire Fact Sheet



Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Fire Protection
Lolo National Forest and Flathead National Forest Land Management

NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 1

INCIDENT COMMANDER: BRENT OLSON

Fire Information: 406-247-0922 2023.Colt@firenet.gov Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ColtFire>
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtmts-colt-fire>

Tuesday, July 25, 2023 at 10:00 am

Location: 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/17/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 4,390 acres

Containment: 0%

Total Personnel: 425

Engines: 10

Helicopters: 5

Hand Crews: 11

KEY MESSAGE

A Community Meeting has been scheduled for today, July 25 from 7-8pm at the Seeley Lake Elementary School Gym. Fire personnel will provide updates and be available for questions. The meeting will be live streamed through the Colt Fire Facebook page: <https://facebook.com/ColtFire>

CURRENT STATUS

Gusty winds, low relative humidity levels and the passage of a dry cold front contributed to active fire growth on Monday. An overnight infrared flight mapped the fire size at approximately 4,390 acres. The fire size increased by 1,463 acres. Yesterday, on the east side of the fire crews completed cutting thick underbrush and vegetation along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road) to serve as an indirect control line. This work was tested late in the afternoon as west winds pushed the fire into a two-mile long section of Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). The fire did cross the road in one location burning approximately six acres. Several spot fires were also located. Firefighting resources worked these areas late into the evening hours to control the fire and spots which had crossed the road. Following the passage of a dry cold front the wind direction shifted from the northwest pushing the fire to the southeast. The Structure Protection group continued preparation work in the areas along Highway 83 and around the lakes south and east of the fire by cutting vegetation to create defensible space and setting up pumps, hoses, and sprinklers around structures. Helicopters and airplanes were used to drop water on the fire before afternoon thunderstorms moved through the area and winds speeds made it unsafe for low-level flight operations.

PLANNED ACTIONS

On the east side of the fire near Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler) crews will continue to look for spot fires and make preparations to burnout from the road if necessary. Personnel will also continue to assess fuel reduction needs and control line locations directly adjacent to fire's active southern perimeter and indirectly along Forest Road 552. Personnel on the north side of the fire will work on opening forest roads and work on fire line construction in locations that have a high probability of success to contain the fire.

The Structure Protection Group has been organized into two groups, north and south and will continue structure assessments in the north and structure protection preparations in the south. Helicopters and fixed wing water scooping aircraft will be used to drop water on the fire as weather conditions allow. Firefighter and public safety remain the number one priority as fire suppression work continues.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Temperatures on Tuesday will be 10 degrees cooler than yesterday in the 70-80 degree range after the passage of the cold front. Humidity levels will drop to around 30%. Northwest winds gusting to 15-20 mph forecast on the ridges. Fire behavior will continue to be active and will move along the active fire edges through the heavy dead and down surface vegetation. Torching and spotting are possible in the subalpine fir and lodgepole pine.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES

The Missoula County Sheriff's Office Evacuation Warning and Order summary:

- Residents on Beaver Creek Road (near the summit) are under an Evacuation Warning.
- Mile marker 31 (Beaver Creek Road at the intersection of Hwy 83) south towards Seeley Lake to mile marker 27, and including residences in Rovero Flats, are under an Evacuation Order.
- Residences beginning at mile marker 27, south end of Rovero Flats, to mile marker 25.5 (the intersection of the West Fork of the Clearwater Road and Hwy 83) are under an Evacuation Warning.
- Residences on the north and south ends of Lake Inez are under an Evacuation Warning. The east side of Lake Inez, along Hwy 83, is not under any Warning or Order.

For evolving Evacuations and Warnings please visit the Missoula County Sheriff's Office Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MissoulaCountySheriffsOffice> .

Please be aware that due to the possibility of rapidly changing conditions, an Evacuation Order may be issued with no prior notice or warning. Home and property owners in the surrounding area should remain vigilant and prepared. Have an evacuation plan for family, pets, and livestock; sign up for emergency alerts at Smart911.com; and be familiar with the Missoula County evacuation process and what an order and warning means <https://www.missoulacounty.us/government/public-safety/office-of-emergency-management/evacuation-information> .

The Lolo and Flathead National Forests have closed several forest roads, areas, and campgrounds near the fire area for public safety. The list of current closures includes:

- Forest Road 906 (closed at Highway 83)
- Rainy Lake Campground access road 4357 (closed at Highway 83)
- Rainy Lake Campground
- Alva Lake Campground access road (closed by gate at Highway 83)
- Alva Lake Campground
- Lakeside Campground access road (closed by gate at Highway 83)
- Lakeside Campground
- Forest Road 646 (closed at the junction of FSR 552; FSR 4354; Forest Road 552 (beyond the turn off to west side Lake Inez access
- Forest Road 5507 and 463 closed beyond the West Side snowmobile trailhead (these roads access the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Marshall Wildlife Management Area and Lake Marshall)
- Temporarily closing the Forest System Road loops of the Clearwater (FSR 4370 and 4353) and Richmond (FSR 667 and 720)

TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS

A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place for air space over the Colt Fire (**FDC 3/0291**) to provide a safe environment for firefighting aircraft operating in the area. Remember that temporary flight restrictions also apply to unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones. **If you fly, we can't!**