



# 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](mailto:2023.Colt@firenet.gov)    Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ColtFire>  
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtmts-colt-fire>

**Saturday, July 29, 2023 at 9:00 am**

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**Location:** 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

**Start Date:** 7/17/2023

**Cause:** Lightning

**Size:** 5,475 acres

**Containment:** 3%

**Total Personnel:** 570

**Engines:** 16

**Helicopters:** 5

**Hand Crews:** 14

## KEY MESSAGE

**Structure protection preparation begins before the wildfire starts. Homeowners can prepare by cleaning needles and leaves from roofs and gutters, stacking firewood away from buildings and decks, and reducing close vegetation around their structures to create defensible space.**

## CURRENT STATUS

Crews conducted burning operations on the southeast corner and north side of the fire yesterday. Fire activity was observed as moderate under slightly warmer and drier weather conditions. The overnight infrared flight mapped the fire at approximately 5,475 acres in size, increasing by 223 acres.

Yesterday, crews continued to secure the fire's edge along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road) while additional personnel conducted burning operations on the north side and southeast corner of the fire. The intent of these operations is to eliminate the unburned fuel between the fire's edge and the road allowing crews and engines to be able to mop up in an area of reduced risk that has a high probability of stopping any additional fire movement to the east. Firefighters responded to a 2-acre spot fire north of Colt Lake and were successful in containing it. A Heavy Equipment Task Force continued work reducing vegetation along Forest Road 906 (Beaver Creek Road) in case the road needs to be used as a control line to stop northerly fire spread. On the southwest corner aircraft retardant drops were done to check fire spread while personnel searched for opportunities to construct fire line in locations that have a high probability of success to contain the fire. South Structure Protection worked on structure assessments on Lake Inez. North Structure Protection assisted in operations along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road) while being prepared to respond if conditions changed. Helicopter bucket water drops were effectively used to cool hot spots.

## PLANNED ACTIONS

Crews will hold and secure the eastern control lines along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road) as well as on the north side of the fire where burning operations have taken place. On the southeast corner, crews will continue burning operations and work on securing that area and tying in with Road 646. On the south side, crews will look for potential control features north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River. To the north, the Heavy Equipment Task Force will continue working on control line preparation along the Beaver Creek Road. South Structure Protection will conduct structure assessments and protection work at Lake Inez. A night shift of engines and personnel will patrol and monitor fire conditions. Helicopters and

airplanes will be used to drop water and retardant on the fire as needed.

## **WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR**

The high temperatures in the fire area on Friday will range from 71-81 degrees, with relative humidity levels at 20-30%. Winds will be from the south at 5-9 mph with gusts up to 12 mph. There is a 30% chance of thunderstorms over the area and thunderstorm outflow winds could potentially gust to 30 mph. Fire behavior is expected to be moderate with the active fire edge moving 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.

If conditions rapidly change 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 by clicking on the following link: <https://www.missoulacounty.us/government/public-safety/office-of-emergency-management/evacuation-information>. For evolving Evacuations and Warnings please visit the Missoula County Sheriff's Office Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MissoulaCountySheriffsOffice>.

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
- Lake Inez 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 5407 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 03/0291**) to provide a safe environment for firefighting aircraft operating in the area. An airport closure is in place for the Condon Airstrip (**FDC 07/110**) for firefighting helicopter operations. Remember that temporary flight restrictions also apply to unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones. **If you fly, we can't!**