



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>

Sunday, July 30, 2023 at 9:00 am

Location: 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/17/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 5,475 acres

Containment: 6%

Total Personnel: 568

Engines: 15

Helicopters: 5

Hand Crews: 14

KEY MESSAGE

The National Weather Service has issued a Red Flag Warning today from 3:00pm until 9:00pm. A combination of low humidity and gusty winds will lead to critical fire weather conditions.

CURRENT STATUS

Yesterday, firefighters continued firing operations, control line construction, and holding operations on three sides of the fire. Fire activity increased due to higher temperatures and lower humidity. There was fire growth yesterday but an exact figure on acres added is unavailable since there wasn't an overnight infrared mapping flight.

On the southeast corner of the fire, crews continued firing operations to secure the fire's edge along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). Firing also occurred just north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River, going east towards Forest Road 646. These areas on the fire's southeast corner is where most of yesterday's smoke was visible. The intent of this operation is to eliminate the unburned fuel between the active fire and the control lines. On the east side of the fire, crews working to increase the containment percentage by mopping up along Forest Road 646, moving north. Mopping up involves putting water on the fire to quench the flames, and using tools to mix the water into the burning material until extinguished. Helicopter bucket water drops were used to support burning operations. On the fire's north side along Forest Road 906 (Beaver Creek Road) and other roads, the Heavy Equipment Task Force continued to prepare control lines and mitigate fuels along roadsides in locations that have a high probability of success to contain the fire. South Structure Protection worked on structure assessments and preparation. North Structure Protection assisted in operations along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road) while being prepared to implement structure protection plans if conditions changed.

PLANNED ACTIONS

On the southeast corner of the fire personnel will continue firing operations and secure the line north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River and tie in with Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). Crews will continue to hold and mop up along the eastern control lines along Forest Road 646. On the north side, crews will hold and secure the fire along Forest Road 4356 and look for opportunities for fire control line from Colt Lake to Beaver Lake. North and South Structure Protection will assist with burning operations and holding operations on the east and southeast sides of the fire. Structure Group remains ready to respond for structure protection as needed. 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 Sunday will range from 74-89 degrees, with relative humidity levels dropping as low as 16-18%. Winds will be from the west/southwest at 10-20 mph with gusts up to 25-35 mph. Warm and dry conditions will occur leading to active fire behavior. Moderate growth is expected with the fire 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!**