



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>

Monday, July 31, 2023 at 9:00 am

Location: 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/17/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 6,177 acres

Containment: 8%

Total Personnel: 589

Engines: 15

Helicopters: 5

Hand Crews: 15

KEY MESSAGE

Red Flag conditions materialized yesterday in the region with high temperatures, low humidity levels and west winds. These conditions tested the control line preparation work that crews have done on the southeast and east sides of the fire. The preparation work allowed crews to successfully hold the established fire lines and catch spot fires as they developed throughout the afternoon and evening.

CURRENT STATUS

Fire crews completed securing the previous day's firing operations on both the southeast corner and north sides of the fire before the winds increased yesterday. Personnel adjusted to securing and holding the lines as fire activity increased. An early afternoon infrared mapping flight shows an increase in 702 acres for a new size of 6,177 acres. Additional acreage increase is expected due to yesterday's intense fire activity. After completing firing operations on the southeast corner, crews secured and held the control lines and responded to spot fires working to secure them quickly. On the east side along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road) personnel patrolled, held, and mopped up along the control lines. On the north side, crews and equipment took holding actions along the established fire control lines and continued to construct control lines towards the northwest corner. There was active fire near Beaver Lake during the afternoon. On the southwest corner the fire was active and pushed up towards Sunset Ridge near Sunset Peak. On the south side crews worked their way west continuing to look for opportunities to keep the fire north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River. The Structure Protection Groups assisted crews working on the east and southeast while being prepared to implement structure protection plans if needed.

PLANNED ACTIONS

On the south side of the fire four crews will work on control line moving towards the west and keeping north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River. Personnel will look for opportunities to construct fire control lines with the highest probability of success on the southwest corner and west side. Crews will continue to hold and mop up along Forest Road 646 as well as the southeast corner. On the north side, crews will patrol, hold, and start mopping up the fire edge along Forest Road 4356. On the northwest corner crews will continue constructing fire control line from Colt Lake to Beaver Lake. South Structure Protection will assist with holding operations on the east and southeast sides of the fire. A Lindbergh Group has been organized and will be looking at establishing secondary control lines near or adjacent to Forest Road 906. A night shift of engines and personnel will patrol, monitor fire conditions, and engage in suppression actions. Helicopters and airplanes will be used to drop water and retardant on the fire as they are available.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

The high temperatures in the fire area on Monday will range from 80-91 degrees, with relative humidity levels in the mid to upper teens. Winds will be from the west to southwest at 10 mph. These warm and dry conditions will again lead to active, intense fire behavior. Moderate growth is expected with the fire moving through the heavy dead and down surface fuels. 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!**