



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, August 1, 2023 at 10:00 am

Location: 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/17/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 6,704 acres

Containment: 8%

Total Personnel: 589

Engines: 15

Helicopters: 5

Hand Crews: 15

KEY MESSAGE

“Firing operations” is terminology used to describe the use of fire to burn wildland fuels between a control line and the fire’s flaming front. When successful, the main fire will slow or stop advancing since the fire’s fuel has been removed.

CURRENT STATUS

The fire remained active on Monday as temperatures increased and relative humidity levels dropped. Firefighters continued holding efforts on all sides of the fire. The overnight infrared flight mapped the fire at approximately 6,704 acres in size, an increase of 527 acres. Acreage numbers have been updated based on the availability of overnight infrared mapping flights.

Yesterday, on the southeast corner of the fire crews held the fire line and monitored for spot fires. Helicopters were used to cool hot spots as needed. Along the east side personnel mopped up and worked towards increasing containment along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). On the north side, crews and equipment took holding actions along the established fire control lines, monitored for spot fires, and continued to construct control lines. Along the west side crews worked upslope from Colt Lake taking the opportunity to work on direct fire line. With active fire on the southwest corner, aerial retardant drops were made to slow fire spread. Crews continued to work on direct handline construction working east to west and north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River. The Structure Protection Group patrolled Highway 83 and the structure protection zones as well as worked on structure assessments in the Lindbergh Lake area.

PLANNED ACTIONS

On the east side firefighters will continue to hold, secure, and mop up along the line and Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). Along the north side there will be a combination of indirect control line preparation along Forest Road 906 as well as holding the existing lines and watching for spot fire activity. Crews will continue their work around Beaver Lake and Colt Lake on the northwest corner of the fire area. A plan for access and indirect control line construction has been prepared for the west side of the fire. These plans will start to be implemented as crews can be shifted from other parts of the fire area. Aircraft will continue to be used if needed to keep the fire checked up on the southwest corner. On the south side, crews will work on direct control line moving from east to west while north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River. The Lindbergh Group will continue structure protection assessments. The night shift of engines will patrol and monitor fire conditions. Helicopters and airplanes will be used as they are available.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Tuesday will be another warm and dry day. High temperatures in the fire area will range from 80-92 degrees, with relative humidity levels dropping to 10-20%. These will be some of the lowest humidity values experienced so far on the fire. Winds will be from the west at 10 mph with gusts up to 12 mph. These warm and dry conditions could create active 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!**