



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>

Friday, August 4, 2023 at 10:00 am

Location: 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/17/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 7,179 acres

Containment: 23%

Total Personnel: 599

Engines: 15

Helicopters: 5

Hand Crews: 14

KEY MESSAGE

“Mop Up” is a wildland firefighting term used to describe engines and crews using water along the fire’s edge to quench the flames and using tools to mix the water into the burning material until extinguished. It also involves searching for and extinguishing areas of heat along the fire line.

CURRENT STATUS

Fire activity remained highest in the southwestern corner of the fire due to the persistent dry conditions over the area. However, a forecast change in the weather pattern calls for cooler temps, higher humidity levels, and a chance of rain. The overnight infrared flight estimated the fire size to be 7,179 acres.

Yesterday in the southwest corner of the fire, crews and heavy equipment moved in to start construction of a control line along the leading edge of the fire from Forest Road 9570 south towards Sunset Ridge. Crews continued to construct handline along the south side working to the west and staying north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River. The terrain through this area continues to get more difficult requiring crews to work carefully and deliberately to ensure their safety. On the east side, along Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road), engine crews continued to patrol and mop up. On the north side, patrolling and mopping up were also the priority work tasks. Along the west side crews tied in handlines and set up pumps and hose directly along the fire’s edge to aid in mop up and control. The Structure Protection Group patrolled the Highway 83 corridor and continued to assess structure protection needs for the Lindbergh Lake area.

PLANNED ACTIONS

In the southwest corner of the fire heavy equipment and crews will continue to construct control lines working to tie in with Sunset Peak and to support the goal of keeping the fire north of Sunset Ridge. Along the west side crews will continue to prepare line and use hose lays to secure and mop up along the fire edge. On the north and east sides of the fire, engines will patrol, hold, and mop up working towards additional containment. Crews will focus on one area of heat in a forest regeneration stand along Forest Road 646. Crews that have been working from east to west on the south side of the fire north of the West Fork of the Clearwater River will continue handline construction. The crews are working in steep terrain and the handline construction is slow and steady going. Helicopters will be used to cool hot spots and slow fire spread. The Structure Protection Group will continue structure protection assessment work in the Lindbergh Lake area and will be patrolling the Highway 83 corridor and other identified structure zones.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

On Friday, high temperatures in the fire area will range from 79-82 degrees and relative humidity levels ranging from 25-34%. There is a 30-35% chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon. Winds will be from the northwest at 10 mph with gusts up to 15 mph. It will be another warm and dry day which could lead to 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 Warning.
- 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 new, smaller Temporary Flight Restriction is in place for air space over the Colt Fire (**FDC 3/7867**) 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!**