



CSKT TYPE 3 TEAM

INCIDENT COMMANDER: ROB BERNEY

Niarada, & Mill Pocket Fires

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Fire Information: 406-647-0446 | 2023.Niarada@firenet.gov



<https://tinyurl.com/NiaradaMillPocketFires>

August 17, 2023

Location: Niarada - 12 miles west of Elmo, MT | Mill Pocket: 3 miles West of Hwy. 28

Start Date: Niarada - 7/30/2023 | Mill Pocket - 7/30/2023 **Cause:** Lightning **Structures Damaged:** 4

Acres/Containment: Niarada-20,365 acres, 85% contained | Mill Pocket- 2,135 acres, 90% contained

Total Personnel: 323 total **Engines:** 20 **Aircraft:** 1 + others available as needed **Hand Crews:** 8

Today, a CSKT Type 3 Incident Management Team, headed by Rob Berney, has taken command of the Niarada and Mill Pocket fires as the Northern Rockies team has timed out. While leadership and command positions on the fire have changed, the crews, equipment and personnel on the ground remain largely unchanged and are in place to continue to build containment on both fires.

The Niarada Fire remained relatively quiet Wednesday as crews continued to focus on building line as direct as possible along the fire's eastern edge closest to Elmo and mopping up from previous firing operations. Crews continue to assess and patrol and mop up (cool areas containing heat) around much of the remaining fire perimeter. Suppression repair work has begun in these areas, including pulling in dozer line berms and blading roads.

Structure protection crews remain outside Elmo near Big Arm, testing sprinkler systems and pumps while working with landowners on additional vegetation management around structures.

The majority of the Mill Pocket Fire is in mop-up status as crews work to ensure the fire's edge are cool and pose little to no threat to containment.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Today, temperatures will begin increasing as humidity levels drop. A very hot and dry pattern is expected to form starting Monday and extending through Wednesday. As vegetation dries out, the potential for more active fire behavior will increase.

CLOSURES AND SPECIAL MESSAGES

Near the Niarada Fire, the Lake County Sheriff's Office has a PRE-EVACUATION WARNING in place for the area that includes Alexander Road, Early Dawn Road, Spring Lane Road, Walking Horse Lane, Windward Heights Road, Wildhorse View, Buffalo Bridge Road, Saddle Drive, Island Butte Lane, Bridle Path, Ten Deuce Way, Cliffview Drive, and Ricketts Road. The remainder of the town of Elmo is in READY status.

A PRE-EVACUATION WARNING means you may be in your home. However, as there still is a risk from both fires, those in this status should not bring back evacuated livestock until the area is downgraded to READY status.

A temporary flight restriction (TFR) is in effect around both fire areas. Do not fly unmanned aircraft (drones) near the fire areas, as that is hazardous for pilots, and the firefighters on the ground who rely on aircraft support. Remember, if you fly, we can't!

FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Stage 2 fire restrictions are in place across the Flathead Indian Reservation as well as Lake, Flathead and Sanders counties. No campfires are allowed, no smoking outside of vehicles, no operating combustible engines from 1 p.m. to 1 a.m., no operating vehicles off designated roads and trails. Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit www.MTFireInfo.org for more fire information across Montana.