



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 18, 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- 1,869 acres, 90% contained

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

Firefighters continued to build containment on the east side of the Niarada Fire from Spine Road south and are working to connect firelines, string hose lays and mop up what few hot spots remain as they brace for critical fire weather today. Crews will be assessing lines to ensure they hold and douse any residual heat that might threaten the line.

What little open line remains is limited to the southern portion of the fire perimeter. Crews have reported isolated heat since Monday's strategic firing operations added several hundred feet of depth to the line in that area. The remainder of the fire as well as the Mill Pocket Fire is being watched closely to ensure nothing escapes containment with firefighters mopping up where needed and working on suppression repair.

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

A CSKT Type 3 Incident Management Team took command of these fires Wednesday and has retained the majority of assigned crews and equipment to ensure there are sufficient personnel for the tasks that remain.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

A Red Flag Warning is in effect for the area with critical fire weather impacting both the Niarada and Mill Pocket fires ahead of an anticipated cold front. Winds up to 40 mph and humidity in the teens are forecast through this evening with possible rain this weekend and into next week.

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 over the fire area and pilots should obtain up-to-date information about TFRs from the FAA or flight service. Do not fly unmanned aircraft (drones) near the fire areas under any circumstance. Drones are 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.