



Tin Soldier Complex Fact Sheet

Flathead National Forest Land Management

FLATHEAD INTERAGENCY TYPE 3 TEAM

INCIDENT COMMANDER: MIKE WEST

Fire Information: 406-758-6458

<https://inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident-information/mtfnf-tin-soldier-complex>

Thursday, August 3, 2023, at 10:30 am

Location: 17 miles east of Swan Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/30/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 2,061 acres

Containment: 0%

Total Personnel: 50

Engines: 3

Masticators: 1

Water Tender: 1

Heavy Equipment Task Force: 1

Note: Additional personnel from the Spotted Bear District are “on loan” and assisting with fire related operations. Priority will be given for initial attack if any other fires on the Spotted Bear District are detected.

ATTENTION

To provide for public and firefighter safety, the West Side South Fork Road #895 will be closed to public travel at the 42 mile and the East Side South Fork Road #38 will be closed to public travel at the 37.5 mile.

SUMMARY

The Tin Soldier Complex is made up of 4 fires burning in timber litter with heavy dead and down fuels associated with a fire scar from 2003. The Tin Soldier Complex is located on the Spotted Bear Ranger District of the Flathead National Forests, approximately 17 miles east of Swan Lake. Fire activity has included torching, spotting, and active consumption of heavy fuels. The fires associated with the Tin Soldier Complex started by lightning on Saturday, July 30th.

Current Acres burned as of the morning of August 3rd.

- Bruce Fire – 889 acres at 0% containment
- Kah Mtn Fire – 257 acres at 0% containment
- Sullivan Fire – 914 acres at 0% containment
- Con Kelly Fire – 0.25 acres – Contained and controlled.

An overnight infrared flight mapped the Tin Soldier Complex at approximately 2,061 acres in size and it remains 0% contained. Fire activity on Wednesday increased in the afternoon and remained into the evening.

Fire personnel have contained and controlled the Con Kelly Fire. The Bruce, Kah and Sullivan Fires are being managed with point source protection to protect values at risk. Values at risk include Stony Communications Site, hydro-electric plant, Heinrude residential community, commercial guest ranches and the Spotted Bear Ranger Station compound. Fire personnel have been conducting initial assessments and preparations for structure protection in these identified areas.

PLANNED ACTIONS

A masticator and heavy equipment task force was utilized to establish a fuel break around the Wilderness Lodge and the hydro-electric facility. A hose line has been laid along the established fuel break and sprinklers have been set up around the Wilderness Lodge. Fire personnel will start structure protection efforts to include hose line and sprinkler systems for the Spotted Bear Ranch, Diamond R Ranch and the Spotted Bear Ranger Station compound.

EVACUATIONS, CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS

Evacuation: An evacuation has been issued by the Flathead County Sheriff for Heinrude community.

Restrictions/Closures:

- Stage 1 fire restrictions are currently in effect. Stage 2 fire restrictions will take effect on August 5, 2023.
- A road restriction is in effect for the East and West Side South Fork Roads.
- A closure is in effect for the front country of the Spotted Bear district.
- A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place for air space over the Tin Soldier Complex to provide a safe environment for firefighting aircraft operating in the area. Remember that temporary flight restrictions also apply to unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones. **If you fly, we can't!**

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

Hot, dry, windy conditions expected through Thursday. It is expected to be partly cloudy with a max temperature of 75-80F. West 5-7 mph winds shifting to the northwest 8-10 mph in the afternoon.

A potential for cooler temperatures and higher humidities exists Friday through the weekend. Chance of thunderstorms and showers starting Saturday through early next week.