

Tin Soldier Complex Fact Sheet



Flathead National Forest Land Management

FLATHEAD INTERAGENCY TYPE 3 TEAM

Fire Information: 406-758-5314

INCIDENT COMMANDER: MIKE WEST

Email: 2023.tinsoldiercomplex@firenet.gov

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

Wednesday, August 16, 2023, at 10:00 am

Location: 17 miles east of Swan Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/30/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 2,880 acres

Containment: 0%

Total Personnel: 70

Engines: 2

Type 2 IA Crew: 2

Wildland Fire Module: 2

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.

SUMMARY

Last night a UAS (Unmanned Aerial Systems) drone flight above the fires found that the Kah Mountain and the Sullivan Fires grew in size and merged together. These fires will now be known as the Sullivan Fire. The Bruce Fire also had some increased activity into the Bruce Creek and Stony drainages.

An Infra-Red (IR) flight did not occur last night to map this increased growth; we will update this acreage as soon as we get a new IR flight. The Tin Soldier Complex is estimated at 2,880 acres in size and remains 0% contained. Estimated acres burned as of the morning of Wednesday, August 16th.

- Bruce Fire – 1034 acres at 0% containment
- Kah Mtn Fire – 557 acres at 0% containment
- Sullivan Fire – 1,289 acres at 0% containment
- Con Kelly Fire – 0.25 acres – Out.

Due to the hot and dry weather projected for the next few days, fire behavior is expected to increase across the complex. Smoke columns from the Tin Soldier Complex may be visible from the Flathead Valley.

PAST AND PLANNED ACTIONS

Today’s actions will include ongoing structure protection efforts for the commercial guest ranches, Spotted Bear Ranger Station compound, Heinrude residential community, and other infrastructure in the area. Crews will continue fuels reduction, slash removal, structure prep, and daily testing of the sprinkler systems and water pumps for all values at risk. Mechanical equipment finished the fuel break to the north, south and west side of FS Road #895 adjacent to the Heinrude community. Structure protection for Spotted Bear Lookout is complete.

EVACUATIONS, CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS

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

Restrictions/Closures:

- Stage 2 fire restrictions are in effect as of August 5th.
- An area closure is in effect for the Hungry Horse Reservoir, the front country of the Spotted Bear district as well the Gorge Creek drainage within the Bob Marshall Wilderness area due to the Stadium Fire.
- A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place for air space over the Tin Soldier Complex to provide a safe environment for fire aircraft operating in the area. This includes the Spotted Bear and Meadow Creek Airstrips! Remember that temporary flight restrictions also apply to UAS or drones. **If you fly, we can’t!**

WEATHER

Today’s weather is expected to be mostly sunny with hazy conditions in the afternoon. Temperatures are expected to be in the mid to high 90s, with winds out of the Southwest 5-8 MPH changing to West 10-13 MPH this afternoon. Critical fire weather concerns have prompted a Fire Weather Watch for the area on Thursday due to the combination of hot, dry, and windy conditions.