



# 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>

**Saturday, August 5, 2023, at 9:00 am**

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**Location:** 17 miles east of Swan Lake, Montana

**Start Date:** 7/30/2023

**Cause:** Lightning

**Size:** 2,368 acres

**Containment:** 0%

**Total Personnel:** 73

**Engines:** 2

**Type 2 IA Crew:** 1

**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 East Side South Fork Road #38 is closed to public travel and the West Side South Fork Road #895 is closed to public travel near the 15 mile just past the Lid Creek Campground.

## SUMMARY

The Tin Soldier Complex was originally made up of 4 fires burning in timber litter with heavy dead and down fuels.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

Current Acres burned as of the morning of August 5<sup>th</sup>.

- Bruce Fire – 977 acres at 0% containment
- Kah Mtn Fire – 304 acres at 0% containment
- Sullivan Fire – 1,087 acres at 0% containment
- Con Kelly Fire – 0.25 acres – Out.

The Tin Soldier Complex is approximated at 2,368 acres in size and remains 0% contained. Fire activity on Friday was low between the 3 fires. There was no infrared flight last night so an updated acreage was not available.

The Bruce, Kah and Sullivan fires continue to be 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 conducted initial assessments and preparations for structure protection in the above identified areas.

## PLANNED ACTIONS

A masticator and heavy equipment task force were 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. Exposed wood on the hydro-electric facility was wrapped and sprinklers were installed along Addition Bridge.

Fire personnel have started structure protection efforts for the Spotted Bear Ranch, Diamond R Ranch and the Spotted Bear Ranger Station compound that will continue into today. A safety zone is being established on the Spotted Bear Ranger Station compound that should be completed today. Crews will continue to work on improving previous fuel breaks and installing hose line and sprinkler systems around 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 2 fire restrictions are in effect as of August 5<sup>th</sup>.
- A road restriction is in effect for the East and West Side South Fork Roads.
- An area closure is in effect for the front country of the Spotted Bear district as well the Gorge Creek drainage within the Bob Marshall Wilderness area, including Feather, Inspiration, Gorge, Canyon Trickle, and Stadium Creeks.
- 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. This includes the Spotted Bear and Meadow Creek Airstrips! Remember that temporary flight restrictions also apply to unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones. **If you fly, we can't!**

## **WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR**

Cloud cover will keep temperatures cooler than yesterday with minimum relative humidity slightly improved as well. There is a chance of rain showers and slight chance of thunderstorms in the morning, then rain showers likely and chance of thunderstorms in the afternoon.