



Colt Fire Fact Sheet



Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Fire Protection
Lolo National Forest and Flathead National Forest Land Management

NORTHERN ROCKIES TEAM 1

INCIDENT COMMANDER: BRENT OLSON

Fire Information: 406-247-0922 2023.Colt@firenet.gov Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ColtFire>
<https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtmts-colt-fire>

Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 9:00 am

Location: 15 miles northwest of Seeley Lake, Montana

Start Date: 7/17/2023

Cause: Lightning

Size: 4,937 acres

Containment: 0%

Total Personnel: 522

Engines: 13

Helicopters: 5

Hand Crews: 13

KEY MESSAGE

Smoke may be visible from locations along Highway 83 northeast of the fire as crews conduct burning operations along the west side of Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). This road is being used as a fire control line and a safe location for firefighters to work on securing the fire edge.

CURRENT STATUS

Fire activity remained moderate on Wednesday even as temperatures started trending a few degrees warmer and relative humidity levels started dropping a few points lower. The overnight infrared flight mapped the fire at approximately 4,937 acres in size. The fire size increased by 547 acres since July 25.

On the east side of the fire crews continued to work on securing the spot fires located east of Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). Burning operations were conducted along the west side of Forest Road 646 to secure segments of the fire's edge. On the south side, the fire edge remained held up just north of the river. Crews continued to search for locations to work on direct fire line along the West Fork of the Clearwater River. On the north side, crews and heavy equipment continued to work on reducing vegetation along Forest Road 906 (Beaver Creek Road) and looked for access routes and opportunities to work on fire line construction in locations that have a high probability of success to contain the fire. The Structure Protection groups continued to work on structure assessments and preparation work along the Highway 83 corridor, Inez Lake, Lake Alva, Pierce Lake, Rovero Flats, Beaver, and Lake Lindbergh areas. Helicopters were effectively used to drop water and cool hot spots when needed.

PLANNED ACTIONS

Crews will continue to secure the spot fires on the east flank of the fire and continue to burn ground vegetation in select locations between the fire's edge and Forest Road 646 (Colt/Uhler Road). On the south side, crews will work to hold fire spread by constructing direct hand line where appropriate and continue to assess road systems as potential control features near the West Fork of the Clearwater River. On the north side of the fire a Heavy Equipment Task Force and crews will continue working on vegetation removal and control line preparation along the Beaver Creek Road. The north and south Structure Protection Groups will conduct structure assessments, remove fuels, and install water handling equipment where needed. Helicopters will be used to drop water on the fire and have been very effective when needed. As fire suppression work continues, firefighter and public safety remain the number one priority.

WEATHER AND FIRE BEHAVIOR

The temperatures on Thursday will range from 64-69 to 73-78 degrees depending on the location on the fire, with relative humidity levels as low as 20%. Winds will be from the northwest at 10 mph with gusts up to 15 mph. There is a 20% chance of thunderstorms over the area. Fire behavior is expected to be moderate and will move along the active fire edges through the heavy dead and down surface vegetation. Torching and spotting are possible in the subalpine fir and lodgepole pine.

EVACUATIONS AND CLOSURES

The Missoula County Sheriff's Office Evacuation Warning and Order summary:

- Residents on Beaver Creek Road (near the summit) are under an Evacuation Warning.
- Mile marker 31 (Beaver Creek Road at the intersection of Hwy 83) south towards Seeley Lake to mile marker 27, and including residences in Rovero Flats, are under an Evacuation Order.
- Residences beginning at mile marker 27, south end of Rovero Flats, to mile marker 25.5 (the intersection of the West Fork of the Clearwater Road and Hwy 83) are under an Evacuation Warning.
- Residences on the north and south ends of Lake Inez are under an Evacuation Warning. The east side of Lake Inez, along Hwy 83, is not under any Warning or Order.

For evolving Evacuations and Warnings please visit the Missoula County Sheriff's Office Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MissoulaCountySheriffsOffice> .

Please be aware that due to the possibility of rapidly changing conditions, an Evacuation Order may be issued with no prior notice or warning. Home and property owners in the surrounding area should remain vigilant and prepared. Have an evacuation plan for family, pets, and livestock; sign up for emergency alerts at Smart911.com; and be familiar with the Missoula County evacuation process and what an order and warning means <https://www.missoulacounty.us/government/public-safety/office-of-emergency-management/evacuation-information>.

The Lolo and Flathead National Forests have closed several forest roads, areas, and campgrounds near the fire area for public safety. The list of current closures includes:

- Forest Road 906 (closed at Highway 83)
- Rainy Lake Campground access road 4357 (closed at Highway 83)
- Rainy Lake Campground
- Alva Lake Campground access road (closed by gate at Highway 83)
- Alva Lake Campground
- Lakeside Campground access road (closed by gate at Highway 83)
- Lakeside Campground
- Lake Inez Campground
- Forest Road 646 (closed at the junction of FSR 552; FSR 4354; Forest Road 552 (beyond the turn off to west side Lake Inez access
- Forest Road 5407 and 463 closed beyond the West Side snowmobile trailhead (these roads access the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Marshall Wildlife Management Area and Lake Marshall)
- Temporarily closing the Forest System Road loops of the Clearwater (FSR 4370 and 4353) and Richmond (FSR 667 and 720)

TEMPORARY FLIGHT RESTRICTIONS

A Temporary Flight Restriction is in place for air space over the Colt Fire (**FDC 3/0291**) 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!**