

Colt Fire Update

Southwestern Land Office, Montana DNRC

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Saturday, July 22, 2023

Size: Approximately 1000 acres	Containment: 0%	Cause: Lightning
Start Date: 7/17/2023	Structures Threatened:	Yes
Location: Missoula County, MT	Protection: DNRC	Ownership: USDA Forest Service - LNF
Fuels: Thick timber, heavy dead and down	Information: https://inciweb.wildfire.gov/incident-information/mtmts-colt-fire https://www.facebook.com/MissoulaCountySheriffsOffice	
Resources Committed: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC)• Three Engines• Three Type 2 IA hand crews	Aircraft: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two Type 1 helicopters	The Missoula County Sheriff's Office has issued an Evacuation Orders and Warnings.
Additional resources have been ordered and are en route.		

Fire Summary: The **Colt Fire** has grown to approximately 1000 acres, increasing 400 acres from yesterday and is 0% contained. A Complex Incident Management Team will be in-briefed today to assume command of the fire Sunday, July 23. The fire is actively burning and will continue to grow with the predicted burning conditions.

Ground crews are continuing to perform structure protection northeast of the fire while aviation resources continue suppression efforts by cooling hotspots and slowing the fire's rate of spread. Resources currently assigned include: two Interagency Hotshot Crews, three Type 2 hand crews, three engines, and Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and United States Forest Service Seeley Lake Ranger District personnel. Multiple aviation resources including four CL-415 super scoopers, one very large air tanker, and multiple large air tankers. Fire managers are using all available tools to suppress the, for lives, homes, property,

A drone incursion occurred on Friday, July 21. Fire managers would like to remind the public that when you fly, we can't. It is now a criminal misdemeanor in Montana to fly drones that interfere with fire suppression efforts – with a fine up to \$1,500 and the violator has the potential to be charged with firefighting costs.

Fire Behavior:

The fire is active on all sides and burning in heavy dead and down timber, with frequent torching and spotting.

Weather:

Mostly sunny with some haze is expected over the fire Saturday with southeast winds in the morning varying between 5-12 mph changing to southwest winds in the afternoon. Potential for afternoon gusts of up to 20 mph. Daily temperatures will be in the mid-90s with minimum humidity at 13-18 percent. No precipitation is forecasted.

Planned Actions: Crews will continue working along Colt Road, clearing vegetation, and creating a stronger fuel break. Engine crews will continue structure assessment in the Summit Lake housing area. Incoming resources will start clearing vegetation along the Beaver Creek Road. Aviation resources will continue suppression efforts by cooling hotspots and slowing the fire's rate of spread.

Evacuations & Closures: The Missoula County Sheriff's Office has issued an Evacuation Order for residents along Highway 83, between mile marker 27 and 31 (Rainy Lake to Summit Lake). An evacuation warning has also been issued for residents along Highway 83, between mile marker 15.5 and 27. The Red Cross has set up a shelter at the Blackfoot Community Bible Church in Ovando (209 Birch St.) for people evacuating.

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](https://www.missoulacounty.us/government/public-safety/office-of-emergency-management/evacuation-information); 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>.



Photo from Junction of HWY 200 and HWY 83 of smoke plume from Colt Fire. Photo Cred: Kristin Mortenson