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Contact: Kristin Mortenson, DNRC-SWLO Fire Prevention,
970-756-4904 or Kristin.Mortenson@mt.gov

Fire Danger Remains **HIGH** in Missoula Area Outdoor Burning is Still Closed in Missoula County

September 21, 2020 -- Missoula, Montana – Missoula County Fire Protection agencies want to remind residents and visitors that fire danger remains **High** in the Missoula area and that outdoor burning by permit is still **closed**. Some wetting rain and a brief respite in heat and smoke can be deceiving but fire season does not pack up and leave with the retreating summer—the danger of fire remains. The moisture received in our area was helpful but will not be enough to fully replenish our dry fuels at this time. The weather forecast does call for potential moisture Tuesday and a higher than normal chance of precipitation in the six to 10-day outlook, but the forecast also calls for dry, windy conditions later this week. Fire protection agencies will monitor fire danger indices and fuel moistures, but while we wait for consistent moisture to come, please use caution and realize that now is NOT the time to burn that pile of leaves and branches in your backyard. Not only is it a wildfire risk, it's illegal!

Montana has experienced 1,896 fires this year, which have burned 264,723 acres. Of that total, 185 fires were in the Missoula area and 140 (76%) of those were caused by humans. Illegal debris burning is one of the leading causes. Outdoor burning in Missoula County is by permit only, and General Burning Season is closed until March 1, 2021. When fire danger drops and the Missoula County Fire Protection Association (MCFPA) opens fall burning, the only burning that will be permitted is prescribed wildland and essential agriculture burning. Within Missoula City limits, parcels must be at least one acre or more in size to be eligible for an outdoor burn permit and recreational fires are banned year-round, with exceptions for barbecues. Visit MissoulaCounty.us or MCFPA.org for more information on outdoor burning seasons, permits, and current restrictions.

Abandoned campfires are also a leading cause of wildfire in the Missoula area. Cool mornings and warming fires go together but remember that if your campfire is too hot to touch, then it is too hot to leave! Drown, stir, drown some more, then feel. One less spark is one less wildfire! Visit FireRestrictions.us/mt to learn of fire restrictions that are in place throughout Montana.

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