



For Immediate Release Contact: Chris Johnson 529-7751

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Fire Danger MODERATE in Missoula County Outdoor Burning by Permit Remains “Open”

Effective June 14 – Missoula County, Montana – Warm temperatures and a recent lack of precipitation have combined to dry the heavy, dead fuels on the forest floors in western Montana, making them susceptible to wildfire. Recent lightning strikes have kindled fires in snags. However, the grass and shrubs are near their peak of moisture content this time of year, so fires ignited in dead fuel spread more slowly on the green vegetation. To reflect that mixed condition, Missoula County Fire Protection Association (MCFPA) member agencies have moved fire danger signs to “MODERATE.”

The move to MODERATE is in-step with the Bitterroot and Lolo National Forests, which have also made the move up from LOW. For professional firefighters, the move is indicative of a start to fire season in the area. In fact, dozens are firefighters from Missoula are in Arizona and Alberta.

Wildland fire agencies would like to extend a large “Thank You” to the thousands of Missoula County residents who have been careful when burning debris piles this spring. Fire crews have responded to only a handful of burning debris piles this spring. The good news: green grass slowed the spread of those unattended fires and kept the fires at a manageable size for responding crews. A common denominator in most wildfires that are caused by debris burning is the fact that the pile was lit and left unattended while heat still remained in the pile.

We ask that the public remain vigilant and on-scene when burning debris piles. Because of the decreased risk to fire spread due to greenness, outdoor burning by permit remains open in Missoula County and will remain open until fire danger increases. More information regarding burning by permit can be found at <https://app.mt.gov/burnpermit/>

We are asking the public to be careful with campfires: keep fires small, and never leave fire unattended until it is cold to the touch, dead-out. Keep water at the ready when using a campfire, and use a shovel to mix and stir the water, burning material, and dirt together to put it out.

Please “like” the Missoula County Fire Protection Association on Facebook, and get information on our webpage: www.mcfpa.org. For up to the minute information from MCFPA member agencies, follow us on Twitter.

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