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Fire Danger **VERY HIGH** in Missoula County

Residents and Visitors Asked to Use Caution When Outdoors

Missoula, Montana – Hot and windy conditions are drying fuels out, prompting Missoula County fire protection agencies to raise the fire danger in the Missoula area to **VERY HIGH**, effective immediately. Very high fire danger means that fires start easily from all causes, *immediately* spread rapidly, and increase quickly in intensity. There are no fire restrictions in place in the County at this time but outdoor burning by permit remains closed. Residents and visitors are urged to use extra caution when outdoors due to the dry fuels and windy conditions, and to visit www.MTFireInfo.org to learn of local fire activity and fire restrictions that are in place throughout Montana. For information on local air quality and tips and tricks for dealing with the wildfire smoke settling in throughout the area, visit www.montanawildfiresmoke.org. The smoke is due to local and regional (Oregon and Idaho) wildfires and conditions are expected to clear towards the end of the week.



A Red Flag warning covering the Missoula area has been issued for Wednesday, September 7 from noon until midnight. A Red Flag Warning means that warm temperatures, very low humidities, and stronger winds are expected to combine to increase fire danger and the potential for extreme fire behavior.

“Fire managers watch our fuel moistures and predicted weather closely, and the fire danger arrow is moved accordingly,” explains DNRC Community Preparedness & Fire Prevention Specialist Kristin Mortenson. “It may move up and down many times in a season because we are responding to actual conditions on the ground and that is a dynamic situation. We hope the public watches the arrows closely and responds accordingly as well. We should always be extra careful with our sparks when working and playing outdoors, but when that arrow is moving up, residents and visitors should use extra caution and carefully consider how, where, and when they might want to mow, smoke, or have a campfire. Double check those trailer chains. Avoid anything that could cause a spark on windy days—especially when a Red Flag Warning has been issued.”

On average, 75% of Missoula County fires are human caused, which are 100% preventable! Unattended and/or escaped campfires are the top culprit for human caused fires in Missoula County this year, but a number of wildfires have also started from illegal debris burning, vehicles, and mowing. For more information on fire prevention visit www.MCFPA.org or follow us on Facebook @MissoulaCountyFireProtectionAssociation.