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Contact: Kristin Mortenson, DNRC-SWLO Community Preparedness & Fire Prevention Specialist, 406.381.7451 or Kristin.Mortenson@mt.gov

Fire Danger Lowered to **HIGH** in Missoula County – Caution Still Urged When Outdoors!

Missoula, Montana – Widespread rain and sustained cooler temperatures have prompted fire protection agencies to lower the fire danger in Missoula County to **HIGH**, effective immediately. Caution when outdoors is still urged as when fire danger is high, dry grasses and needles ignite easily and fires can spread rapidly and may be difficult to control. Unattended campfires are likely to escape, and high intensity burning is likely to occur on slopes and concentrated grassy areas. Outdoor burning remains closed.

“Hotter, drier conditions are predicted to return, so we need to continue to be very careful. It is still fire season,” cautions Philip Keating, Assistant Fire Chief with the Missoula City Fire Department. “Rain can lead to complacency, but we need to remain diligent in doing our part to prevent wildfire starts. High temperatures and drier conditions will return, so please do not burn your debris piles and make sure to properly extinguish your campfires.”



On average, three out of every four wildfires in Missoula County are human caused. Please keep Smokey Bear and Missoula County fire protection agencies happy by doing your part to prevent a wildfire start. Enjoy our wonderful outdoors but attend your campfire and use established fire rings. Drown your campfire with water, stir the coals and embers, then drown again and make sure the campfire is cool to the touch before leaving it. If it is too hot to touch, it is too hot to leave. Recreational fires are illegal within Missoula City limits, and there are areas in Montana that are currently in fire restrictions, so be sure to know the rules and restrictions where you are playing. Visit www.MTFireInfo.org for more information on fire restrictions across Montana.

Equipment and vehicle sparks are also a top cause of wildfire, so be careful when haying or pulling a trailer. Cut hay when conditions are cooler and there is no wind, and always have a fire extinguisher, water, and tools nearby. Trailer chains that are too long can drag on roadways and produce hundreds of sparks. Make sure safety chains are crossed and a minimum of five inches from the ground. There have been a number of recreational vehicle fires this year as well, so be sure to keep your RV well maintained and do not park it over tall grass.

And remember, outdoor burning season is closed in Missoula County, so your burn permit is invalid. Visit MCFPA.org to learn more about outdoor burning seasons, rules, and fire prevention tips.