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For Immediate Release

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Fire Danger VERY HIGH in Missoula County

Outdoor Permit Burning Remains CLOSED

July 17, 2017, 1:00 PM- Missoula, Montana – Interagency wildland fire officials with the Missoula County Fire Protection Association (MCFPA) have determined fire danger within Missoula County will remain VERY HIGH.

Recent days have seen temperatures in the nineties and grasses continuing to cure. This fine, dead fuel is the primary carrier of fire in the wildland, and when fires get established in this fuel type they spread out of control rapidly. Multiple grass fires, caused by lightning, have escaped initial attack in the last week, some transitioning into the forest with rapid rates of spread. All fuels, both live and dead, have dried to the point that fires will quickly spread out of the control of initial attack resources. We can't afford anyone to be careless during activities that have the potential to start a fire.

Outdoor debris burning by permit has been closed for some time now, and we want to thank the community for supporting the cessation for the remainder of fire season. Missoula County residents need to know that our wildland firefighters face a long, arduous fire season even without having to respond to human-caused fires. Dozens of fires were sparked in Saturday's storm and all wildland fire agencies are busy doing initial attack. The men and women on the front lines, and those who face long hours in support of their efforts behind the scenes, have their hands full. The more careful we are with fire, the less danger our first responders will face.

Fire danger is approaching EXTREME. Campfires are still allowed outside of the city limits of Missoula, but people need to know that one careless moment can have devastating results on our neighbors and visitors.

At no time should a campfire ever be left unattended, until it is dead-out and cold to the touch. Do what firefighters do: **DROWN** with water, **STIR** with a hand-tool, & **FEEL** with a bare hand to make sure the fire is out before leaving. One less spark, one less wildfire.