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Fire Danger Lowered to **VERY HIGH** in Missoula Area Stage II Fire Restrictions Still in Place

Missoula, Montana – Widespread precipitation and cooler temperatures throughout the Missoula area have prompted Missoula County fire protection agencies to lower the fire danger in the Missoula area to **VERY HIGH**, effective immediately. The movement of the arrow back reflects the current and short-term predicted conditions, but residents and visitors are urged to still use caution when outdoors— Very High fire danger means that fires start easily from all causes, and *immediately* spread rapidly and increase quickly in intensity. Sporadic monsoonal moisture is often of short duration and coverage, which limits the “fuel moistening” benefits. We are still experiencing drought across western Montana and will be returning to above normal temperatures and low relative humidity by the end of the week. Due to these factors as well as many others—including a shortage of available firefighting resources region-wide and high volume of public use of our wildlands—the Missoula Area will remain under Stage II fire restrictions.

Fire danger measures the potential in an area for a fire to ignite, spread, and require suppression. Restrictions are intended to reduce human-caused fires. “Missoula, Ravalli, and Mineral counties together have dealt with 18 new wildland fires since August 1st and one-third of those were still caused by humans! We can’t control the lightning, but those human sparks are 100% preventable,” according to Kristin Mortenson, Community Preparedness & Fire Prevention Specialist with the DNRC’s Southwestern Land Office.

Under Stage II restrictions, the following acts are prohibited until rescinded:

1. Campfires.
2. Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.
3. Operating motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails.
4. The following acts are prohibited from 1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.:
 - o Operating a chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine.
 - o Blasting, welding, operating acetylene torch or other activities that generate flame.
 - o Using an explosive.

Note: A one-hour foot patrol in the area is required following cessation of all activities as identified in (4).

For more information on fire prevention visit www.MCFPA.org. Residents and visitors are also encouraged to visit www.MTFireInfo.org for information on fire restrictions and active fires occurring throughout Montana.



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