



#### Bitterroot National Forest

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# News Release

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## Forest Lowers Fire Danger – Cautions Fire Season Not Over

Hamilton, Montana (September 9, 2020) – Due to the recent cooler weather and precipitation, the Bitterroot National Forest has lowered its fire danger to “High”, down from “Very High”.

Many locations across the forest received some rain/snow over the last several days. Precipitation levels varied, with the area just north of Lake Como receiving the most at .34” and the Darby Ranger Station at .30”. The other weather stations across the forest recorded lesser amounts.

While fire danger has lessened, fire season is not over. Warm, dry conditions will return later this week and continue for the next two weeks as no significant weather patterns bringing precipitation are forecast at this point.

Although campfires can be one of the best parts of camping and provide necessary warmth to hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts, they can also spark wildfires. Please don’t forget your responsibility to maintain and extinguish all campfires. Remember, if it’s too hot to touch, it’s too hot to leave; pour water and add dirt to your campfire until it is cold. One spark is all it takes to start a wildfire. Never leave a campfire unattended.

Fall firewood cutters should operate chainsaws equipped with spark arresters in the cool morning hours and keep a shovel and fire extinguisher nearby. Keep vehicles on established roads and trails and avoid driving over dry grass and brush that could easily be ignited by hot exhaust systems. Pay attention to those items that can cause a spark, such as chains on a trailer. Cigarette butts should never be thrown from vehicle windows and refrain from smoking in wooded, grassy, or brushy areas.

Open burning is currently prohibited in Ravalli County. Camp and cooking fires are still allowed. Visit [www.firerestrictions.us/mt](http://www.firerestrictions.us/mt) to learn more about fire restrictions that are in place throughout Montana.

When fire danger is “high” fires will start from most causes. The fires will spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. All fine dead fuels ignite readily and unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape.

To date, there have been 47 wildfires on the forest this summer; 14 human caused and 33 lightning fires.

Help do your part to keep our safe places safe by recreating responsibly and preventing wildfires, visit [www.BeOutdoorSafe.org](http://www.BeOutdoorSafe.org) to learn more.

For more information about fires in Montana and other fires across the country, visit <http://inciweb.nwcg.gov> or follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF](http://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF) for local fire information.

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