



Forest Service News Release

Media Contact: Tod McKay - (406) 363-7122

Facebook: [@discoverbitterrootnf](https://www.facebook.com/discoverbitterrootnf)

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot>

Fire Restrictions Begin Tomorrow

Hamilton, MT, July 16 — Just 4 days after going to “Extreme” fire danger, the highest level possible, the Bitterroot National Forest (BNF) announced today that it is implementing Stage 2 Fire Restrictions beginning tomorrow, due to our record setting temperatures and dry fuel conditions.

“We will be moving directly into Stage 2 fire restrictions this season,” said Mark Wilson, Fire Management Officer. “We decided not to implement Stage 1 restrictions and immediately go to the highest level because we currently meet the conditions for Stage 2.”

The last time the forest implemented Stage 2 fire restriction was in August of 2018. The BNF has never reached “Extreme” fire danger levels this early in the season. Current conditions across the forest are matching the record conditions of 2017 and are already drier than average August conditions.

“With current fire activity and predicted weather, we all need to do everything we can to prevent additional wildfires from starting,” stated Matt Anderson, Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor. “We are asking the public to recreate responsibly and adhere to these restrictions.”

Fire restrictions are intended to decrease the chance of preventable, human-caused fires in the designated areas.

- **Stage II Fire Restrictions will be effective Saturday, July 17, at 12:01 a.m. for all Bitterroot National Forest lands in Montana**, including the Anaconda Pintler and Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Areas in Montana.

STAGE II FIRE RESTRICTIONS: Under the Stage II Fire Restrictions, the following acts are prohibited on federally managed or protected lands, roads, and trails:

1. Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire.
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 closed of all flammable materials.
3. Operating an Internal Combustion Engine.
4. Welding or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame.

Exemptions:

1. Persons with a Forest Service special use authorization, or other authorization specifically exempting them from the effect of this Order. If the authorization allows operation of an Internal Combustion Engine or welding or operating an acetylene or other torch with open flame, such acts are **prohibited from the hours of 1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.** Outside of these hours; a one-hour foot patrol in the work area is required following cessation of these activities.
2. Persons using a device solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the device.
3. Operating generators with an approved spark arresting device within an enclosed vehicle or building or in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the generator.
4. Operating motorized vehicles on designated roads and trails.
5. Emergency repair of public utilities and railroads conducted in accordance with the attached conditions set forth in Exhibit A.
6. Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
7. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
8. All land within a city boundary is exempted.

Anyone caught violating the restrictions could be fined up to \$5,000 and face up to 6 months in jail. They may also be held liable for all suppression costs and damages if they start a fire. Visit www.mtfireinfo.org to learn more about current fire restrictions in place throughout Montana.

BNF wilderness areas in Idaho including the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church River of No Return are not included in the fire restrictions at this time. See forest map for more details.

The ridge of high pressure responsible for our record temperatures is also transporting smoke from wildfires in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington causing widespread hazy skies and smoke impacts. For the latest air quality information visit <http://svc.mt.gov/deq/todaysair>. This site displays particulate concentrations and health effects including a daily 'Wildfire Smoke Update'.

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 for local fire information.

This summer, there have been 34 wildfires on the Bitterroot National Forest; 14 human-caused and 20 lightning fires.

###

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.