



## Forest Service News Release

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### Forest Moves to Very High Fire Danger

**Hamilton, MT, July 25** — Hot, dry conditions continue to dry fuels out, prompting the Bitterroot National Forest to raise fire danger to VERY HIGH, effective immediately.

Very high fire danger means that fires start easily from all causes, and immediately spread rapidly. Small fires can quickly become large fires and exhibit extreme fire intensity. These fires can be difficult to control and will often become much larger and longer-lasting fires.

Spring and early summer rains have resulted in a tall, thick crop of grasses that are now starting to dry and cure, increasing the likelihood of a larger, more intense fire. Even in the timbered stands, heavy fuels like standing dead trees and logs are already extremely dry. Continued hot and dry weather is predicted for the next several days including a chance of thunderstorms, lightning, and gusty winds.

It is imperative that residents and visitors alike exercise caution when recreating outdoors. Please follow these fire safety tips:

- ✓ Keep campfires small and completely extinguish them before leaving camp. Always add water, stir it, and make sure all embers are out. If it's too hot to touch, it's too hot to leave! It is illegal to have unattended campfires.
- ✓ Smokers should light up only in areas cleared of all flammable debris. Cigarette butts should never be thrown from vehicle windows.
- ✓ Fireworks are illegal on public lands: every forest, every campsite, every day. Never light fireworks in the woods.
- ✓ Ensure your vehicle is properly maintained, with nothing dragging on the ground. A loose safety chain or dangling muffler can send a shower of sparks into dry vegetation.

- ✓ Keep vehicles off dry grass. The catalytic converter may contact the vegetation and start a fire.
- ✓ Recreational shooting? Take precautions! Never shoot into dry vegetation and always make sure you're shooting in a safe location, away from roads, trails, campsites, and occupied areas. Be aware that shooting exploding targets is prohibited on National Forest System lands. For more information visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/know-before-you-go/shooting>.
- ✓ Know before you go. Always check with your local Ranger Station prior to your trip to get the most up-to-date information on fire danger and fire restrictions for the area. Visit [www.mtfireinfo.org](http://www.mtfireinfo.org) to learn more about restrictions that are in place throughout Montana.

Please also do not burn any debris piles. Outdoor burning season is closed in Ravalli County, so your burn permit is invalid. Visit [fireintheroot.org](http://fireintheroot.org) to learn more about outdoor burning seasons, rules, and fire prevention tips.

Unmanned aerial systems (UAS), or drones, should never be flown near or around wildfires. To learn more about Forest Service policy regarding UAS visit <https://www.fs.usda.gov/managing-land/fire/aviation/uas/responsible-use>.

This year, firefighters on the Bitterroot National Forest have extinguished 6 human-caused fires and 17 lightning fires.

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](https://www.facebook.com/DiscoverBitterrootNF) for local fire information.

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