

BITTERROOT  
FRONT PROJECT

FIRE IN THE ROOT  
COUNCIL

THE ROARING  
LION FIRE

BUILDING FIRE ADAPTED  
COMMUNITIES

PREPARING YOUR  
HOME IGNITION ZONE

# RAVALLICOUNTY

SUMMER 2022



PREVENT &  
PREPARE

## THE ROARING LION FIRE

was reported on July 31, 2016 at approximately 2:20 pm about one mile west of the Roaring Lion Creek trailhead.



# COUNTY OF RAVALLI



## RAVALLI COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

215 S. 4th Street, Suite A  
Hamilton, MT 59840  
406-375-6500  
[commissioners@rc.mt.gov](mailto:commissioners@rc.mt.gov)

June 28, 2022

### **RE: Ravalli County Commissioner Support for the Bitterroot Front Project and Fire in the Root efforts**

Dear Ravalli County Citizen,

The Board of Ravalli County Commissioners (BCC) thanks our citizens for being diligent in preventing wildfires in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) and adjacent public lands. The threat of catastrophic wildfire is increasing as fuel loads continue to grow, disease and insects affect forest and recreation activities increase. Ravalli County has some of the highest fire hazard watersheds in the state and nation as identified in the Montana Forest Action Plan.

We have an opportunity to help mitigate the risks and plan for catastrophic wildfires in our community through the following measures:

1. The Bitterroot Front project is a large project in the Bitterroot Range that will reduce fire fuels, improve landscape resilience to disturbances (insects, disease and fire), improve wildlife habitat and contribute to the local economy through jobs and forest products. This project will also improve recreational opportunities and watersheds.
2. Ravalli County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) update. The current CWPP is outdated (2006) and needs to be updated to reflect current conditions and wildfire risk in order to facilitate implementation of wildfire hazard mitigation measures.
3. Private/Public partnership to reduce wildfire risk in the WUI. Wildfire on private property has destroyed homes and left many acres of private property devastated. It is essential for the Forest Service to mitigate fire potential on public lands, but we are also encouraging our private landowners to take action to mitigate fire potential on private lands. Public land treatments alone will not resolve the wildfire threat to our community and we look forward to working collaboratively with the agencies and our private landowners.

- Ravalli County will continue to partner with the Forest Service, Fire in the Root, RC&D and other agencies to provide information and resources to citizens and landowners for fire prevention and mitigation.

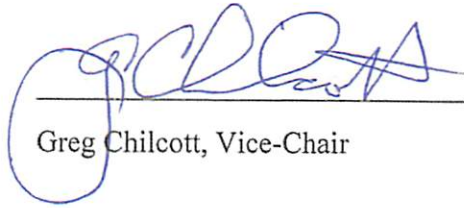
These measures, along with other fire mitigation and active forest management efforts will play a critical role in ensuring resiliency in our community to the threat of catastrophic wildfires. By working together collaboratively, we can mitigate the impacts of wildfire on our community.

Sincerely,

Ravalli County Board of Commissioners



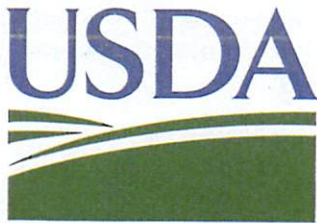
Dan Huls, Chairman



Greg Chilcott, Vice-Chair



Jeff Burrows, Member



## **BITTERROOT FRONT PROJECT**

This Bitterroot Front Project aims to increase forest resiliency by addressing insect and disease risks, reducing risk of high severity wildfire, maintaining/improving wildlife habitat and watershed conditions, as well as maintaining/improving recreation and roads. The 144,000-acre Bitterroot Front Project runs along the eastern edge of the Bitterroot Mountains from north of Florence to south of Darby. The landscape-scale project is by far the largest the Bitterroot Forest has undertaken in the last decade. For more information visit: [fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](https://fs.usda.gov/bitterroot).

## **FIRE IN THE ROOT COUNCIL**

A self-sustaining, local collaborative to implement projects and coordinate wildfire preparedness-prevention activities throughout Ravalli County.

Council meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 pm at the Victor Hall as well as via Zoom. They are open to the public and interested individuals are welcome to come get involved! Link to zoom: <https://mt-gov.zoom.us/j/85963155729>. Follow us on Facebook @FireintheRoot



## THE ROARING LION FIRE

“The Roaring Lion Fire was reported on July 31, 2016 at approximately 2:20 pm about one mile west of the Roaring Lion Creek trailhead. The initial active fire behavior coincided with a cold front that produced strong winds and low relative humidity. The rapid onset of high fire intensities and firebrand (lofted burning embers) spot ignitions in the heavy fuels of the drainage bottom and north aspect slopes lead to rapid fire growth rates that exceeded initial attack and later fire suppression efforts. The wildfire burned actively for 4 to 5 hours with areas of crown fire (active tree canopy fire spread) and torching trees that likely produced showers of firebrands downwind within ¼ to ½ mile ahead of the flaming front. The corresponding weather conditions during the period between 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm were warm temperatures, low relative humidity, and persistently strong winds. The fire burned an area of 3,642 acres along with all home destruction on the first day.” A total of 16 homes were destroyed. **Jack D. Cohen, PhD Research Physical Scientist, Missoula, MT**

### Fuel Mitigation Opportunities



SCAN ME



<https://bit.ly/FIRMitigation>

### RESOURCES



**Thayer Jacques**  
1801 N. First Street, Hamilton  
406.210.0373  
TJacques@mt.gov  
[www.dnrc.mt.gov](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov)



**Byron Bonney**  
1709 N. First Street, Hamilton  
406.544.5126  
bitterrootrcd@cybernet1.com  
[www.bitterrootrcd.org](http://www.bitterrootrcd.org)



**United States Department of Agriculture**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Stacy Welling**  
1709 N. First Street, Hamilton  
406.361.6186  
stacy.welling@usda.gov  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)



**Andrew Amidon**  
1801 N. First Street, Hamilton  
406.375.6511  
Aamidon@rc.mt.gov  
[https://ravalli.us/](http://https://ravalli.us/)

Are you a landowner concerned about the health of your forested property? Do you live in a fire-prone area? Do you have unhealthy or hazardous tree fuel build-up that needs to be thinned? Hazardous Fuels Treatment Grant funding is available to assist private landowners and communities living in the WUI within Ravalli County. To learn more about these programs reach out to the contacts here or visit [fireintheroot.org](http://fireintheroot.org) by scanning the QR code above.



Request a FREE

# WILDFIRE HOME RISK ASSESSMENT

VISIT FOR MORE:

[www.fireintheroot.org](http://www.fireintheroot.org)



FREE service to help residents identify their risk from wildfire. A local fire professional will assess your home and property's vulnerabilities to wildfire and provide recommendations on steps you can take, should you choose to, to better prepare and protect your family, your home and your property from wildfire. To request a free risk assessment, visit [fireintheroot.org](http://fireintheroot.org) or scan the QR code above.



# Stay With Your Burn Pile.



- ✓ Check with your fire department for burning regulations and permit requirements.
- ✓ Avoid burning on dry, windy days, when a fire can easily get out of control.
- ✓ Be prepared. Keep water, a fire extinguisher, and a shovel nearby.
- ✓ Never leave your burn pile. Stay until it is completely out.

FireInTheRoot  [www.fireintheroot.org](http://www.fireintheroot.org)

## Sign up for Emergency Notifications

Register your home or mobile phone for emergency notifications of evacuations or other severe emergencies in your area.

Scan the QR code with your mobile device to sign up!



## Stay Informed with Ravalli County Sheriff's Office mobile app

Receive general and emergency notifications and other information from our Sheriff's Office on your mobile devices.

Scan the QR code with your mobile device to download.



SCAN to download!



Ravalli County outdoor burning season is open March 1 - November 30. Closures may occur due to fire danger. All outdoor burning requires a FREE permit, which can be renewed annually. Burn permits also need to be activated every time you burn. Visit [app.egovmt.com/burnpermit](http://app.egovmt.com/burnpermit) or scan the QR code below to obtain, renew or activate your burn permits. Keep your piles small, only burn natural materials and vegetation and have water and tools nearby. Never leave your burn unattended and please do not burn on windy days. Visit [fireintheroot.org](http://fireintheroot.org) for more info on burn permits and safe burning tips!

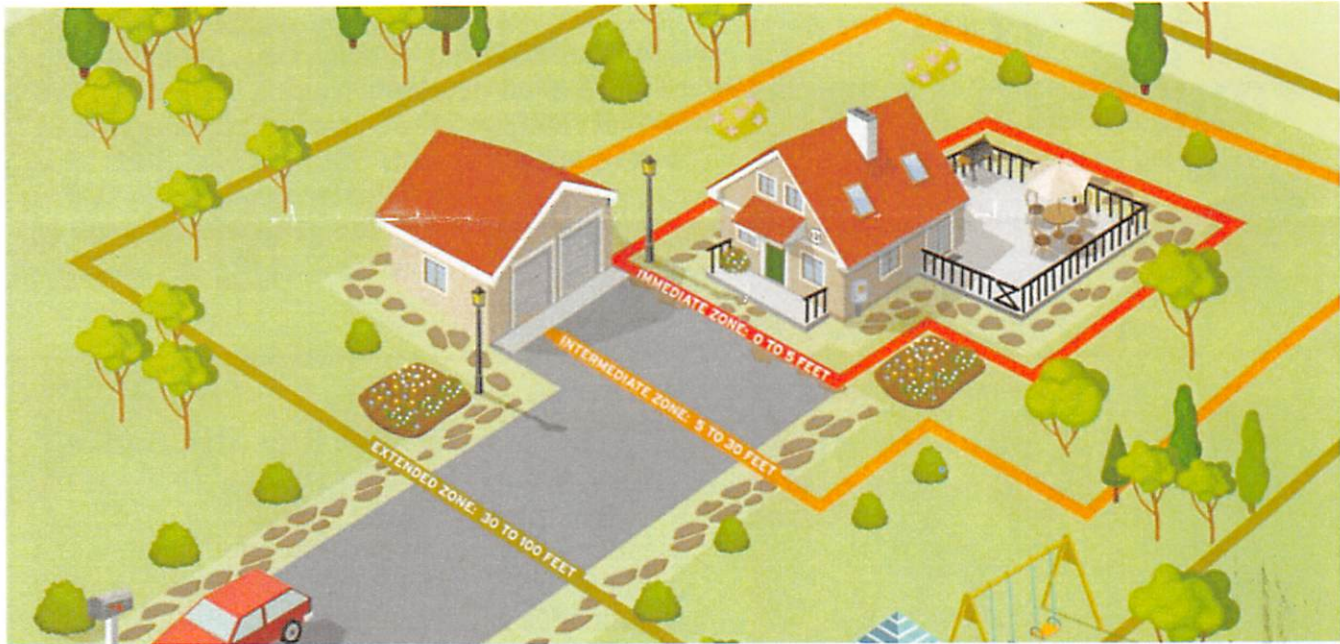


# BUILDING FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES

Wildfires do not stop at property boundaries. Your property is part of a larger community and preparing for wildfires is the responsibility of everyone within the community. To better live with fire in Montana, each one of us must **take action** to create more fire adapted communities. Visit <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/> for more information.



A fire adapted community is one that understands the risk that wildfire poses and acts before, during and after a fire so that the community is more resilient to negative wildfire impacts. Because all residents of a community are impacted by wildfire, everyone in a community—from renters and homeowners to policy makers and government agencies—shares responsibility for becoming more fire adapted. Let's become Fire Adapted together!



## PREPARING YOUR HOME IGNITION ZONE

### Zone 1: Immediate zone around your house

- 0-5 feet next to your home and its attachments (wooden decks, fences and sidewalks).
- This area should comprise of non-combustible materials including paves, concrete and bare dirt.
- Incorporate ignition resistant materials into your house and surrounding structures.
  - Roofs, decks, doors, vents, etc.
  - To find out more, find the FireSafe Montana Ignition Resistant Construction Guide on the Fire in the Root website.
- Keep gutters, roofs and eaves free of pine needles and leaves.
- Reduce embers that could pass through vents in the eaves by installing 1/8-inch metal mesh screening.

- Replace or repair any loose or missing shingles or roof tiles to prevent ember penetration.
- Repair or replace damaged or loose window screens and any broken window screens or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- Select fire resistant plants into your landscape.
  - Learn more about Fire Adapted Vegetation on the Fire in the Root website.
- Remove any dead trees, bushes and leaves from the immediate zone of your house.
  - Especially juniper trees and shrubs.

### Zone 2: Intermediate Zone 5-30 feet from the structure

- Trees and clumps of trees should have 18 feet of spacing between the tree tops (crowns).
- Prune trees 6 to 10 feet up from the base of the tree. Trim tree limbs that overhang the house.
- Remove vegetation under trees to prevent fires from reaching the canopy of the trees.
- Firewood stacks and propane tanks should not be located in this zone. If there is not enough space to move your woodpile 30 feet away, simply cover it with a canvas tarp.
- Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches.
- Tree placement should be planned to ensure the mature canopy is no closer than ten feet to the edge of the structure.
- Tree and shrubs in this zone should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break up the continuity of the vegetation across the landscape.
- Create 'fuel breaks', like driveways, gravel walkways and lawns.

### Zone 3: Extended Zone 30-200 from the structure

- The goal here is not to eliminate fire, but to interrupt the fire's path and behavior to keep flames small and on the ground.
- Dispose of heavy accumulations of ground litter/debris.
- Remove dead plant and tree material.
- Remove small conifers growing between mature trees.
- Remove vegetation adjacent to storage sheds or other outbuildings within this area.
- Trees 30 to 60 feet from the home should have at least 12 feet between canopy tops. \*
- Trees 60 to 100 feet from the home should have at least 6 feet between the canopy tops\*

\* The distances listed for crown spacing are suggested based on NFPA 1144. However, the crown spacing needed to reduce/prevent crown fire potential could be significantly greater due to slope, the species of trees involved and other site-specific conditions. Check with your local forestry professional to get advice on what is appropriate for your property. \*

## TREE SPACING

