

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

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NEWS RELEASE

Bitterroot National Forest

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United States
Department of Agriculture
Bitterroot National Forest
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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August 6, 2014

FIRE RESTRICTIONS BEGIN TOMORROW

Hamilton, MT, – Recent hot and dry weather along with afternoon thunderstorms and frequent lightning, prompted fire management officials this week to implement Stage 1 Fire Restrictions. The Bitterroot National Forest along with other land management agencies across the region is implementing the restrictions effective Thursday, August 7th at 12:01 a.m.

Stage 1 Fire Restrictions prohibit building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire. Smoking is also prohibited unless within an enclosed vehicle or building, or in areas cleared of all flammable debris. Cigarette butts should never be thrown from vehicle windows.

Campfires will only be allowed within developed campgrounds or recreation sites which contain a Forest-provided metal or concrete fire ring. Campfires will not be permitted at sites on the Bitterroot National Forest that do not have a Forest-provided fire ring. See below for a list of designated sites. These restrictions do not apply to wilderness areas.

“The decision to go to Stage 1 restrictions was based on numerous factors including weather, declining fuel moistures, and the number of human-caused and natural fires,” said Mark Wilson, Bitterroot National Forest Fire Management Officer. “Unfortunately we continue to find abandoned campfires on the forest including this past weekend, and there have been over 60 human-caused fires across the region. It’s hotter and drier than you realize and we are asking the public to be extremely careful with any fire.”

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.

Developed campgrounds or sites where campfires are permitted on the Bitterroot National Forest include:

- Stevensville Ranger District - Charles Waters Campground, Larry Creek Group Site, Blodgett Creek Campground, Gold Creek Campground.
- Darby Ranger District - Black Bear Campground, Schumaker Campground, Lake Como Recreation Area (Three Frogs Campground, Como picnic sites, Lower Campground, Rock Creek Campground, Three Sisters Group Site)
- Sula Ranger District - Martin Creek Campground, Jennings Camp Campground, Indian Trees Campground, Spring Gulch Campground, Crazy Creek Horse Camp, Crazy Creek Campground, East Fork Guard Station, McCart Lookout, and Two Good Cabin.
- West Fork Ranger District – Sam Billings Memorial Campground, Rombo Campground, Slate Creek Campground, Alta Campground.

So far this summer, Bitterroot National Forest fire crews have responded to and extinguished 41 wildfires. Due to the quick response of crews, most of the fires were kept under 1 acre in size.

For more information about Stage 1 Fire Restrictions visit www.firerestrictions.us

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