

Ravalli County Commissioners Office

From: McKay, Tod G -FS <tgmkay@fs.fed.us>
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Subject: News Release: New firewood permits available
Attachments: Firewood Permits - 2015.docx

New Firewood Permits Available

Hamilton, Montana (March 31, 2015) – Personal firewood cutting permits for 2015 will go on sale this Wednesday, April 1st at all Bitterroot National Forest offices.

The permits are good for one year and allow woodcutters to take up to 12 cords of firewood. A cord is the amount of tightly piled wood in a stack four feet high by four feet wide by eight feet long.

Permits can be purchased weekdays at any Forest Service office from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. New in 2015 -- the forest is lowering the cost to \$5.00 per cord, and is no longer requiring woodcutters to use load tickets. There is still a \$20 or four cord minimum purchase.

Personal use wood permits allow you to remove downed timber or to cut standing dead trees under most conditions on National Forests and Grasslands, and Bureau of Land Management lands within Montana, Northern Idaho, and portions of North and South Dakota. It's important to check with the local ranger station to see if there are any specific local restrictions or requirements.

Woodcutters must have their firewood permit with them while harvesting wood, keep their vehicles on designated roads and trails, have an approved spark arrester on chainsaws and splitters and carry a shovel and fire extinguisher. No wood can be cut or gathered within 150 feet of streams, creeks or waterways. Firewood gathering is also prohibited in all developed recreation areas, campgrounds and along Wild and Scenic River Corridors.

Forest officials would like to remind woodcutters of the Slash Piling Requirements and is asking the public for help in keeping ditches clear of woody debris. Piling requirements include:

- Pile slash away from roads, ditches, power lines, or telephone lines.
- A rake should be brought along for cleaning road surfaces of debris.
- Locate piles 15 feet away from the base of live trees, and keep them 6 to 10 feet in diameter and a minimum of 5 feet in height.
- Do not build piles on top of down logs or rotten stumps or have objects that extend more than 3 feet from piles which will be burned by Bitterroot National Forest crews during the appropriate conditions.

Woodcutters should also use caution while driving on Forest Service roads. Many remain snow covered and icy at higher elevations. Roads at lower elevations are wet and muddy and the soft roadbed can easily be damaged by vehicle traffic.

For more information and guidelines check the firewood permit and firewood cutting handout available at all Bitterroot National Forest offices or visit www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot.

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