

## Glenda Wiles

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**From:** MACO <MACO@mtcounties.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 6, 2017 12:15 PM  
**To:** MACO  
**Subject:** Hunting and fire safety

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**From:** Harold Blattie  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 06, 2017 11:26 AM  
**To:** MACO <MACO@mtcounties.org>  
**Subject:** Fwd: hunting and fire safety

Commissioners,

Please see the response below from the Governor's Office to a county commissioner request that the Governor consider limiting hunting hours to mornings due to the extreme fire conditions.

Harold

Harold Blattie, Executive Director  
Montana Association of Counties  
Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Schafer, Adam" <ASchafer@mt.gov>  
**Date:** September 6, 2017 at 10:27:03 AM MDT  
**To:** "Blattie, Harold" <hblattie@mtcounties.org>  
**Subject:** hunting and fire safety

Hi Harold,

FWP put out a statement and info for hunters last week regarding fire safety that you might consider sharing with your members. Mike Volesky at FWP can also provide you or any commissioners with more information and he can be reached at 444-4600. If you are getting a lot of inquiries it might be worth a 10 minute phone call with Mike, who offered to explain FWP decision making on this issue. Let me know if I can help facilitate that call or if you need anything more at the moment. Thanks - Adam

**Contact: Laurie Wolf • 406-444-4038 • [lwolf@mt.gov](mailto:lwolf@mt.gov) or Greg Lemon • 444-3051 • [glemon@mt.gov](mailto:glemon@mt.gov)**

### **HUNTERS BE CAREFUL!**

People are asking about how the dry conditions and fire danger will affect hunting seasons. FWP is not recommending that the Fish and Wildlife Commission close hunting seasons. "Because of widely variable conditions and different types of hunting scenarios across the state, that is a decision rightly left

to an individual landowner, a block management cooperater, or a land manager. If a private landowner or a land management agency such as the Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management makes the decision to restrict or postpone hunting or other activity on their property, that is a decision we respect and accept," said FWP Director Martha Williams.

Williams continued, "It is critical to be careful, and be safe. Hunters have to take personal responsibility to prevent wildfires and keep themselves and the property and lives of others safe. In conditions like these, hunters should only drive on pavement or gravel roads." Due to fire danger, currently more than 80 block management areas (BMAs) are restricted or closed at the request of landowners.

FWP asks hunters to be safe by following these fire safety precautions:

- Park your vehicle on bare ground or ground completely void of vegetation.
- Drive only on paved and well graveled roads.
- After you leave an area, wait for few minutes to make sure that a fire has not started where your vehicle was parked.
- Bring along a fire extinguisher or water-filled weed sprayer, shovel or axe.
- Camp only in designated camping areas.
- Smoke only inside buildings or vehicles.
- Check on any fire restrictions in place in the area where you are hunting.
- Consider limiting activity until fire danger lessens.

#### **MORE INFO:**

The most current list of closed BMAs can be found on the FWP website at [fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunterAccess/blockman/](http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/hunterAccess/blockman/). Those who do not have access to the internet can check in with their FWP regional office. Closure signs are also posted onsite at BMAs.

For FWP lands, hunters and recreationists should check updates on fire-related restrictions and closures at state parks, fishing access sites or other FWP properties online at [fwp.mt.gov/news/restrictions](http://fwp.mt.gov/news/restrictions).

In Montana, fire restrictions are often coordinated with land management agencies and the counties. Typically, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks follows the lead of the county where its land is located. However, fire restrictions can vary from county to county depending on local conditions. A good online resource is <https://firerestrictions.us/>. You can search for Montana and find the latest restrictions, by county. To go directly to the Montana page, click <https://firerestrictions.us/mt/>.

Being knowledgeable about current restrictions and fire safe behavior will help us all prevent more wildfires. Below are resources for more information on fires and restrictions: [Inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/27](http://inciweb.nwcg.gov/state/27) is a multiagency website that serves as a clearing house for active fire information across the country. It's easy to search for Montana and see most of the active fires burning in the state. Each fire has its own web page with current information, such as area closure maps, fire activity and any evacuation notices.

Be aware that in many instances fire managers will close the area around the fire to ensure public and fire fighter safety. These local closures could include areas people might want to hunt or camp, so checking in here is a good step in making sure you have the latest information.

Another great resource is the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's interactive wildland fire map: [gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/firemap](http://gis.dnrc.mt.gov/apps/firemap). This interactive mapping tool shows all of the fires burning in the state and gives the user an idea of recent fire activity. Users can select different layers to

view various information and for those folks concerned about specific locations, the base layer provide a high-resolution map or aerials of Montana.

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