

Enclosures sent  
to planners for  
their files.  
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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
AND CONSERVATION

Forestry Division - Fire & Aviation Bureau



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RECEIVED

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Ravalli County Commissioners

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February 5, 2014

Dear County Commissioners and County Planners:

Wildland fires in Montana continue to increase in frequency and intensity. With this increase comes the growing safety risk to firefighters and the public. The continual expansion of homes being built in rural and wildland-urban interface (WUI) areas only adds fuel to the fire. In addition, the rapidly expanding WUI adds many complications to wildland firefighting, i.e. evacuations and structure protection.

The Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation is dedicated to protecting lives, property and natural resources on state and private lands by providing resources, leadership and coordination to ensure safe and aggressive fire suppression.

Enclosed you will find the following resources:

- "Rural homes must be more fireproof, study finds" article written by Brett French and published in the Billings Gazette on 12/17/13
- Guidelines for Development within the Wildland-Urban Interface, required by MCA 76-13-104(8) to be developed by the MT DNRC, 2009
- Construction Techniques, Administrative Rules of Montana, Title 24. Labor and Industry, Chapter 321. Wildland Urban Interface Fire Mitigation, 2012
- International Wildland-Urban Interface Code, International Code Council, 2012

Montana fire organizations and agencies are dedicated to the vital role of public education and awareness programs to address the escalating wildland fire situation. Becoming informed on what the adoption of a WUI code could have on WUI fire mitigation is critical and strategically complements the existing WUI fire prevention programs. It is never too early to start addressing solutions to a situation that only continues to put human lives at risk and comes with a hefty price tag.

Please review the resources provided and share with your planning department. We are working with the Montana Association of Counties and Montana Association of Planners to host a workshop for you to take a closer look at the International Wildland-Urban Interface Code and how it would affect Montanans. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bruce Suenram, Deputy Chief

If you have any questions or concerns do not hesitate to contact your DNRC Area Manager.

Mike O'Herron 406-542-4302