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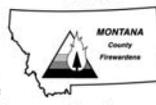
Department of Natural
Resources and Conservation

Montana



Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks

Montana



County
Firewardens

Date: September 15, 2003

Contact: Ann Boucher

(406) 896-5011

STAGE II FIRE RESTRICTIONS STILL IN EFFECT **Fire Restrictions Rescinded in Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area**

Because of additional rainfall and cooler temperatures, fire restrictions in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness Area will be rescinded September 16. The Cathedral Fire closures in the Stillwater and Westfork Stillwater drainages will also be rescinded.

However, extreme fire danger persists in Big Horn, Carbon, Musselshell, Stillwater, Sweet Grass, Treasure and Yellowstone counties, and Stage II Fire Restrictions will remain in effect on private, state and other federal lands within those counties. In addition, the areas generally known as the South Hills near Billings, the Shepherd Ah-Nei area north of Shepherd, and the Acton area northeast of Billings are still closed to motorized vehicles. A human-caused fire near Lockwood burned about 700 acres on Sunday, clearly demonstrating that conditions are still highly favorable for wildland fires.

When working and recreating outdoors, please continue to use caution and honor restrictions to decrease the chance of more human-caused fires and avoid resource and property damage. Anyone who causes a wildland fire intentionally or through negligence may be held accountable for damage and suppression costs.

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Stage II restrictions prohibit any open burning, including campfires. Smoking is allowed only within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials. In addition, motorized vehicles must stay on designated roads and trails, and operating a chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine, blasting or welding is prohibited between 1 p.m. and 1 a.m.

Exemptions are allowed for persons using a fire solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG; for a federal, state, or local officer, or member of an organized law enforcement, rescue, or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty; or for persons with a permit or written authorization allowing the otherwise prohibited act or omission.

For more information, please contact the Custer National Forest at 406-657-6200; BLM at 406-896-5013; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at 406-247-4400; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406-247-2940; Carbon County at 406-446-1595; Stillwater County at 406-321-0204; or your local sheriff's office.

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