

NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RUMORS OF PUBLIC LAND CLOSURES UNFOUNDED

Missoula, Montana – State and federal fire management officials across Montana today threw cold water on recent rumors of public land closures stemming from high fire danger. Calls from concerned tourists and homeowners to fire dispatch centers and agency offices prompted officials to issue assurances that no restrictions or closures are planned at this time.

“We encourage people to visit public lands in Montana, but to be extremely careful,” Dan Bushnell, public information officer with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) said. “If people build a campfire, they should be sure it is out before leaving, taking care to properly dispose of burned charcoal briquettes and coals. We are also urging people to have in their possession a shovel, axe and bucket when recreating on public land.” He added that the potential for a repeat of last summer’s fire season exists unless we receive some significant precipitation over the next few weeks. “We are experiencing very dry and windy conditions across the State, drier than at this time last year,” Bushnell said.

The agencies have been preparing for another severe fire season through increased fire fighting personnel, equipment, training, other resources and working with homeowners and communities. Homeowners can do their part to prevent property damage by cutting back small trees, shrubs and grasses near their homes. Rain gutters and roofs should be checked for pine needles and other debris accumulation.

Officials will continue to monitor fire danger and will issue restrictions as necessary. Some counties have issued restrictions on general open burning. Contact your local DNRC, Bureau of Land Management or Forest Service office for more detailed information.

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