



MCFPA.ORG

Date: August 19, 2013

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Johnson, 529-7751

Fire Danger EXTREME in Missoula County

Stage I Fire Restrictions Remain in Effect in Missoula Area

August 19, 2013, 11:00 AM- Missoula, Montana – Interagency wildland fire officials with the Missoula County Fire Protection Association (MCFPA) have determined fire danger within Missoula County to be EXTREME.

As folks in the Missoula area can see, lightning strikes ignited multiple fires, and in the last twenty-four hours a few have escaped initial attack. While response times have been typically fast, fires starting in dry, windy conditions present challenges to even the most seasoned of fire crews and aerial resources. Red Flag conditions, high winds and low relative humidity, will foster extreme fire behavior as crews race to get these fires under control.

Fighting nearly 50 fires in a week, and nearly twenty in the last twenty-four hours, interagency fire fighting resources are stretched thin. The area has returned to a condition similar to late July, only now there are fewer resources available. Fire season is in full swing here, and around the west; massive fires in California and Idaho are snatching up firefighting crews, equipment, and aerial resources, resulting in high competition for resources nationally. Local dispatchers increasingly find it challenging to fill orders for crews and aviation assets.

It is absolutely critical that the public, including visitors to the area, does its part to help our fire fighters get a leg up after this lightning bust. Crews continue to be taxed, responding to unattended campfires and unpermitted outdoor burning; Missoula-area crews responded to over a dozen such fires last week. Under Stage I fire restrictions, there are specific locations where campfires are still permitted, and a list of those sites can be found at www.firerestrictions.us. At this time of year, being careless with *any* fire can be extremely dangerous, and can result in property damage and injury to the public and to fire fighters. Before leaving a campfire, you must drown it with water, stir the ashes, and feel for heat.