

Wildfire Awareness Month



For Immediate Release

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May is Wildfire Awareness Month in Montana

HELENA, MT – Communities, families and organizations are urged to join together in May to become more prepared for wildfire season. May has been designated as Wildfire Awareness Month, and the purpose is to raise awareness about wildland fire safety, community preparedness, hazardous fuels mitigation, and fire prevention.

According to the National Interagency Fire Center, nearly 2.5 million acres, an area the size of Yellowstone National Park, are burned each year by human-caused wildfires. In Montana, top causes of wildfires change through the course of the season: escaped debris and agricultural burns in the spring; escaped or unattended campfires in the summer; and sparks from dragging trailer chains, lawn mowers, chainsaws or field machinery in the late summer and early fall when grasses are cured and ripe for ignition.

Here are a few ways to prevent and prepare for wildfires:

- Clean out gutters, roofs and other areas where debris has settled
- Avoid burning on windy days and never leave a burn pile unattended
- Maintain equipment to reduce sparks and check that trailer chains do not drag
- Create an evacuation plan and practice the route with family members
- Practice campfire safety by ensuring your fire is dead out before leaving the campsite
- Keep the space around your home clear of dense vegetation
- Help your community by organizing a wildfire preparedness event

Preparedness is a shared responsibility. Encourage others in your community to take steps to prepare for wildfire season. Visit www.firesafemt.org to see preparedness activities happening near you.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

www.keepgreen.org www.ready.mt.gov www.redcross.org/prepare www.wildlandfirersg.org/

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Wildfire Awareness Month is being organized by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Keep Montana Green, FireSafe Montana, and the Governor's Office of Community Service.