



Flathead National Forest

Media Release

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Contact: Denise Germann
(406) 758-5252
(406) 249-1714 cell

More Wildland Fire Use Planned on Flathead National Forest

The Flathead National Forest is hosting a public open house on Thursday, May 31, 4-7pm, at the North Valley Community Center in Columbia Fall to share information about and discuss wildland fire use on the forest. Wildland fire use is the management of naturally ignited wildland fires to meet specific resource objectives.

The Flathead National Forest has been successful using wildland fire use as a tool to help restore forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in the Bob Marshall and Great Bear Wilderness Areas for the past two decades. The forest plans to expand the wildland fire use program to suitable areas outside the wilderness.

This season, the forest plans to selectively use naturally ignited fire in suitable areas on the east side of Hungry Horse Reservoir, mostly the higher elevations adjacent to the Great Bear Wilderness, on the west side of the Reservoir including portions of Columbia Mountain, and parts of the Spotted Bear Ranger District.

Hungry Horse-Glacier View District Ranger Jimmy DeHerrera said, "Not all fires started by lightning will be managed as wildland fire use." DeHerrera continued, "A decision to use naturally ignited fire as a tool for resource management objectives will be made carefully and only under certain conditions."

Debbie Mucklow, Spotted Bear District Ranger, said, "Fire is a valuable tool for land managers. When there are values at risk, suppression activities will take priority. But when fire can benefit the forest and wildlife, as well as reduce the risk of larger, more costly and catastrophic wildfires, and we can manage it in a safe manner, we plan to utilize this tool."

The public open house will be an opportunity to discuss wildland fire use with DeHerrera, Mucklow and other Flathead National Forest fire management specialists. For more information or to view a map identifying areas planned for wildland fire use management this season, please visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead or call the Flathead National Forest at 387-3800 or 758-5376.

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