



Northern Rockies Coordination Group Northwest Montana Zone

August 21, 2006

For More Information Contact:

Denise Germann, Flathead National Forest 758-5252, cell- 249-1714

Marcy Goheen, Kootenai National Forest 882-4451

Michelle Smith, Montana DNRC 751-2271

Northern Rockies
Coordination Group

NW Montana Zone
Member Agencies

Montana DNRC
Northwestern Land
Office

U.S. Forest Service
Flathead National
Forest

U.S. Forest Service
Kootenai National
Forest

National Park Service
Glacier National Park

U.S. Fish & Wildlife
Service
Flathead/Swan Area
Refuges

Flathead County

Lake County

Lincoln County

Sanders County

Vegetation is Drying- Potential is High For Fire Activity

Vegetation is quickly drying, or curing, in Northwest Montana and the potential is high for fire ignition and fire activity.

Flathead County Fire Warden Rick Trembath said, "This is a critical time when fine fuels, such as grasses, are drying and dying. This contributes to quick ignition, and provides more available fuels ready to burn." Trembath continued, "We are seeing more dry cold fronts come through, and with them comes some wind, which will help to carry the fire. Trembath suggests that everyone use extreme caution during the next few weeks.

Fire management agencies, including rural fire departments, continue to respond to fire starts across Northwest Montana. Some of the most recent fire starts have been holdovers from lightning activity that happened up to two weeks ago, and other fire starts have been human caused.

Flathead County has responded to several roadside fires and agricultural fires. Trembath suggests that smokers extinguish cigarettes properly, and adhere to Stage I Fire Restrictions which allows smoking in vehicles, buildings or areas cleared of flammable materials in a 3-foot area around the smoker. It is recommended that anyone involved in agricultural activities have an extinguisher readily available.

Flathead and Kootenai National Forests and the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) continue to respond to abandoned campfires and holdover fires from previous lightning activity. During Stage I Fire Restrictions, fires are only allowed in developed or improved sites. The public is encouraged to call a local forest service or DNRC office prior to their camping trip or outdoor experience for fire restriction information.

Stage I Fire Restrictions prohibit the use of fireworks. Trembath said, "We continue to see some fire starts from fireworks. Fireworks are prohibited!"

Stage I Fire Restrictions remain for Northwest Montana. For more information, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/fire/nrcg/> or contact a local Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources and Conservation or National Park Service Office or your local fire department.