



Date: August 28, 2007

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## Conditions Are Right for Wildland Fires

The summer is winding down, but fire season is still going strong.

As you prepare for camping and other outdoor activities this weekend, remember that Stage II fire restrictions are still in effect in much of southern Montana.

Even the smallest spark could lead to significant wildfire damage to property and natural resources. Before engaging in any outdoor activities, carefully consider the potential for igniting a wildland fire and the possible widespread consequences.

**STAGE II RESTRICTIONS:** Under Stage II, open burning -- including campfires -- is prohibited. Smoking is allowed only in areas cleared of all flammable materials.

Motorized vehicles must stay on designated roads and trails. Operating an internal combustion engine, welding, or using explosives is prohibited between 1 p.m. and 1 a.m.

An exemption for agriculture harvesting is in effect, but those taking advantage of this exemption are urged to have equipment, including spark arrestors, in good working order.

Stage II restrictions apply to all lands within the Crow Reservation and Northern Cheyenne Agency and federal, state, and private lands in Treasure, Sweet Grass, Big Horn, Carbon, Musselshell, Stillwater and Yellowstone counties. Lands within a city boundary are exempted.

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**CLOSURES:** Bureau of Land Management lands are closed to motorized vehicle use within the South Hills Motorcycle Area, Acton Recreation Area, and the Shepherd Ah Nei OHV Area.

Exemptions include fires fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG, or other activities for which there is a permit or written authorization. However, an exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity. Anyone who causes a wildland fire intentionally or through negligence will be held accountable for damage and suppression costs.

For more information about fire prevention and how to create defensible space around your home, please contact the Custer National Forest at 406-657-6200; Bureau of Land Management at 406-896-2917; Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation at 406-247-4400; Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks at 406-247-2940; Carbon County at 406-446-1595; Stillwater County at 406-321-0204; Sweet Grass County at 406-932-5143; Yellowstone County at 406-256-2775; or your local fire department or sheriff's office.

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