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Forest Lowers Fire Danger – Restrictions Lifted Tomorrow

Hamilton, Montana (August 28, 2018) – Due to the recent cooler weather and precipitation, the Bitterroot National Forest has lowered its fire danger to “High”, down from “Extreme”.

Both the forest and Ravalli County will also lift fire restrictions beginning tomorrow, Wednesday, August 29th. This means campfires are again allowed on the forest and also lifts the restrictions (*hoot owl*) on firewood cutting in the afternoon. Fire restrictions will also be lifted tomorrow in the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness east of Sula.

Ravalli County’s restrictions on open burning remain in place. Go to www.firerestrictions.us for an updated list of current County burn bans.

Many locations across the forest received wetting rains over the last several days. Precipitation levels varied, with the southern end receiving the highest amounts. Many weather stations on the West Fork and Darby/Sula Ranger Districts recorded at least a ½ inch of rainfall.

While fire danger has lessened, fire season is not over. Warm, dry conditions will return later this week and fuel moisture content of large diameter materials on the forest floor will remain available fuel for wildfires.

Although campfires can be one of the best parts of camping and provide necessary warmth to hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts, they can also spark wildfires. Please don’t forget your responsibility to maintain and extinguish all campfires. Remember, if it’s too hot to touch, it’s too hot to leave; pour water and add dirt to your campfire until it is cold. One spark is all it takes to start a wildfire. Never leave a campfire unattended.

When fire danger is “high” fires will start from most causes. The fires will spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. All fine dead fuels ignite readily and unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape.

Firefighters have responded to and extinguished 31 wildfires this summer on the Bitterroot National Forest. Due to the quick response of crews, most fires were kept under 1 acre in size.

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