

# Bridger-Teton National Forest Fire Prevention Plan 2016



## **Background**

The Bridger-Teton National Forest (BTNF) has increasingly high visitor use due to its proximity to Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks and extensive on-forest recreation opportunities. Many visitors are unaware of the costs and threats to human safety from unwanted wildland fires.

Recent development of homes on lands bordering the National Forest has increased the potential for wildland fires in the urban/wildland interface. The wildland/urban interface issue is a significant concern for the Forest, as well as local on counties fire managers. Planning, coordination, and cooperation on the local level with county and rural departments, Wyoming State Forestry Department, and the Bureau of Land Management along with public education will enhance our ability to manage this situation.

While the majority of wildland fires on the Bridger-Teton are lightning caused, unwanted human-caused fires are a significant part of the Forest fire load. The ten-year average for wildland fires is 66% lightning caused and 34% human-caused. Abandoned campfires are the number one human-caused fire cause on the Bridger-Teton Forest.

## **Objectives**

The primary objective of the Bridger-Teton fire prevention program is to reduce the number of human-caused wildland fires and to increase understanding about the role of fire in resource management by implementing effective and efficient wildland fire prevention programs (FSH 5109.18).

These objectives will be attained in a cost effective manner within Fire Management direction of the Bridger-Teton Forest Plan. The safety of employees as well as the public will guide all actions.

## **Prevention Program Emphasis**

The Bridger-Teton prevention program seeks to modify human behavior and change attitudes related to wildland fire held by visitors to the Forest and lands managed by cooperating agencies, as well as homeowners who live in the surrounding wildland-urban interface areas. The program will target historic problem areas, address unique situations, and be designed to serve the communities within our areas of responsibility.

The ecological role of wildland fire in healthy ecosystems and the management of wildland fire by fire managers will be an integral part of information and education activities. Education and prevention efforts are designed to help the public understand why there is a need to reintroduce fire in to the ecosystem while recognizing the importance of preventing unwanted wildfires.

Prevention/Education emphasis and programs include:

- The role of fire in ecosystem management through educational programs for both internal and external audiences.
- The concepts and principles of Firewise and Defensible Space to homeowners and community members and educate them on their responsibility in relation to wildland fire risk;
- Fire prevention/education programs in local schools and other venues.
- Participation in special events such as parades, fairs, festivals and expos
- Making public contacts during routine patrols is one of the primary methods to directly interact with the public on the forest.

Prevention Technicians will develop their own emphasis areas for their respective zones following the Forest objectives. These programs may also be an interagency effort communicating fire prevention messages beneficial to our interagency partners.

### **Prevention Organization**

Primary responsibilities for prevention on the Bridger-Teton are assigned to three GS-7 prevention/education personnel. One Prevention Technician is assigned to each of the three zones on the Forest.

The GS-9 Forest Prevention Officer is unfilled at this time and there are no plans to fill this position in the near future.

The Forest Fuels Specialist and Assistant Forest Fire Management Officer (FMO) will provide coordination for the Forest prevention program for the 2016 season.

### **Fire Prevention Personnel Responsibilities**

The Zone Fire Prevention/Education Specialists are responsible for the development, implementation and administration of each Zone Fire Prevention/Education Program.

Prevention personnel may also serve as Public Information Officers during local incidents by coordinating with fire managers and the Forest Public Affairs Officer (PAO) involving media releases and information dissemination. They are responsible to post incident information, updates, and other messages to the Teton Interagency Fire website, Inciweb, and the Bridger-Teton website as appropriate.

Fire prevention personnel will be available to assist in inspecting administrative sites, campgrounds, and other Forest Service permitted sites.

Fire Prevention on the Bridger-Teton is considered a team effort. All fire personnel are expected to play a role in educating forest visitors about fire prevention issues such as properly extinguishing all campfires, fire severity, defensible space, and other fire management activities.

### **Human-Caused Fires**

Abandoned and unattended campfires are the leading human-caused fire issue on the Forest. Every summer prevention and recreation patrols detect and report the numbers of campfires that have been left burning and cite Forest visitors for this violation (36 Code of Federal Regulations 261.5). In general, the numbers have been trending upwards (see chart below). As a result, educating Forest visitors on how to responsibly enjoy a campfire remains a large focus of the Bridger-Teton National Forest Fire Prevention Program.

Fire Prevention Specialists will track human caused fires throughout the summer to identify trends. Educational programs, media campaigns, and prevention products will be developed specifically to address various causes when appropriate.

The average number of human caused fire starts has been trending downward over the past forty years while the average number of human caused acres is trending upward.

**BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST 40-YEAR FIRE HISTORY**

	Human	Human Acres	Lightning	Lightning Acres	Total Fires	Total Acres
40yr Average	30	6211.03	38	6984.61	67	13127.92
30yr Average	24	8147.93	39	9108.80	62	17257.71
20yr Average	20	5927.22	41	5984.97	62	11912.20
10yr Average	19	10624.93	36	6545.60	55	17170.55
5yr Average	16	17078.94	32	7117.49	48	24196.50
2013	18	9.20	37	2220.25	55	2229.45
2014	9	161.10	18	86.95	27	248.05
2015	22	10.10	8	46.60	30	56.70

Reported Unattended/Abandoned Campfires*							
Year	D1	D2	D3	D4	D6	D7	Total
2015	1	8	19	72	15	7	122
2014	3	4	18	60	13	12	110
2013	5	2	15	97	12	12	143
2012							47
2011							62
2010	6	2	7	61	7	21	104
2009	4	3	27	108	9	31	182

\* Numbers reflect only those fires that were discovered. The high numbers in D4 are the result of location (next to two high visitation National Parks and Jackson Hole being a destination spot), and a higher number of Forest Employees available to patrol the district. D7 is becoming increasingly popular and is also experiencing growth due to local industry and tourism. A more systematic approach to tracking and documenting unattended and abandoned campfires was established in 2013 and therefore a jump in numbers is reflected.

**Zone Prevention Plans**

Prevention Technicians will prepare a more site specific Zone Fire Prevention Plan for their areas. Zone Prevention Plans will target historical and potential fire causes in priority locations during the most effective time periods and will emphasize patrolling certain areas during times of high fire danger or during times of high use. The zone plan will also identify specific public events, such as parades, rodeos and school events where fire prevention activities are planned for the season. Zone plans will be posted on the "O" drive at: O:\NFS\BridgerTeton\Program\5100Fire\SO\5110WildfirePrevention

### **Zone Sign Plans**

Prevention Technicians are responsible for preparing a Zone Fire Prevention Sign Plan. The Sign Plan will depict the location and description of each sign on the unit. The plan will determine a maintenance schedule for signs and describe when signs will be changed. Signing can be one of the most effective prevention actions taken in the field if done in a timely fashion. The plan will include locations of permanent prevention signs, Fire Danger Rating signs, as well as additional locations that will be posted during fire restrictions. An example of a sign plan is located in Appendix B. The three zone sign plans will be located on the "O" drive at:

O:\NFS\BridgerTeton\Program\5100Fire\SO\5110WildfirePrevention

### **Preparedness**

The Forest will use the Fire Danger Operating Plan Preparedness Levels (Appendix J) as a guide to establish prevention priorities at the designated Regional Preparedness Levels.

### **Fire Restrictions**

Fire restrictions will be coordinated locally with western Wyoming counties and federal land management agencies.

The current BTNF restriction template is posted on at:

O:\NFS\BridgerTeton\Program\5100Fire\SO\5110WildfirePrevention\restrictions

The official order will be reviewed by a law enforcement officer to ensure it follows Regional direction and then signed by the Forest Supervisor.

Fire Prevention personnel are a critical resource when fire restrictions are implemented. Duties include:

1. Work with Law Enforcement Officers's and District Staff to distribute the official Special Order to field going personell, frontliners, and other key internal and external audiences.
2. Post and remove restriction signs per the sign plan in a timely manner.
3. Patrol and educate the public about the reasons for the restrictions.
4. Enforce restrictions as appropriate.

5. Work with the Public Affairs Officer to write and distribute news releases, and update the Teton Interagency Fire website, Inciweb, and the Bridger-Teton website as appropriate.

The Wyoming Fire Restriction website provides information on restrictions within the state of Wyoming. The link is: [http://www.wy.blm.gov/wy\\_fire\\_restrictions](http://www.wy.blm.gov/wy_fire_restrictions).

Restriction information will also be posted on the National Fire Restriction site: <http://firerestrictions.us/>

### **Severity Requests**

The Assistant Forest FMO will coordinate with Zone FMO's, and the Forest Fire Staff Officer to determine fire prevention needs during times of severe fire danger. Zone Fire Prevention Technicians will work with the Zone FMO's to develop appropriate severity requests for fire prevention needs.

### **National Fire Prevention and Education Teams**

Forest fire managers should consider the use of National Fire Prevention Education Teams (FPET) during periods of severe burning conditions, unusually high fire occurrence, when the majority of fire resources are committed, during periods of preparedness levels four/five, or when fire restrictions are implemented. The Bridger-Teton has hosted FPET teams in the past during large incidents with great success and routinely sends prevention personnel from the Forest to participate on teams elsewhere. The exact makeup of FPETs depends upon local needs. A typical team consists of a team leader, public information officer, one or more prevention specialists, and optional trainee or other team members as the Forest deems necessary for the work to be performed.

If the Forest elects to bring a team in to assist with fire prevention efforts, an effort will be made to make it an interagency team working with any other appropriate partners. The Forest Assistant FMO will coordinate the team in-brief, provide daily oversight to the work completed by the FPET, and conduct a closeout with the team upon completion of the assignment.

### **Fire Prevention Partnerships and Cooperatives**

The Bridger-Teton prevention staff works closely with Teton Interagency Fire which is comprised of the Forest, Grand Teton National Park, Teton County, Sublette County, Lincoln County, Bureau of Land Management, Wyoming Game and Fish, Wyoming State Forestry Division, and US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Forest is also a member of the East Idaho Interagency Fire Prevention Cooperative. The purpose of these partnerships is to promote fire prevention, education, and safety in the communities in the surrounding areas.

### **County Hazard Mitigation Plans**

In accordance with the National Fire Plan and 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy, all of the counties in Wyoming have completed Community Wildfire Protection Plans which include a county hazard mitigation plan. These plans are located on the Teton Interagency website. The Bridger-Teton National Forest assisted in the development of plans for Teton, Sublette, and Lincoln counties which fall within the boundaries of the Forest. Prevention personnel will assist with the implementation of prevention activities as identified in the county plans.

### **Program Accomplishments and Evaluation**

At the end of each fiscal year, the Assistant Forest FMO will coordinate completion of the Prevention Year End Report. The report will highlight prevention and education activities that took place throughout the year, as well as present information on numbers and types of human-caused fires. Included in the summary will be statistics on the number of abandoned campfires per District, and any other key fire statistics. The summary will be included in the Bridger-Teton Annual Fire Report.

Appendix B

Zone Prevention Sign Plan and Information example (not the complete plan)

**West Zone Fire  
Prevention Signs  
Greys River Ranger  
District**



Location: Greys River Ranger District

GPS: N.

W.

Description: Smokey Bear Fire Danger Rating Sign

(low, moderate, high, very high and extreme

Date: Change As Required



Location: Greys River

Rd., Sheep Ck. & Smiths

Fk.

GPS: SF- N. 42° 31' 26.1"

W. 110° 53' 38.9"

GPS: GR- N. 43° 09' 06.7"

W. 110° 59' 48.9"

GPS: Sh- N. 42° 51' 56.7"

W. 110° 42' 5.1"

Description: Message/ Fire  
Restriction Board

Date: Change As Required



Location: Kiosk/Greys

River Rd.

GPS: N. 43° 09' 03.9"

W. 110° 59' 47.2"

Description: Fire Danger Rating Sign  
Also, Prevention Message/"No  
Fireworks"

Dates: FDR Change As Required.