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# Fire Restrictions & Closures Operating Plan

## SOUTH CENTRAL MONTANA Fire Restriction Coordination Area

*All state, private, and federal lands within  
Gallatin & Park Counties*



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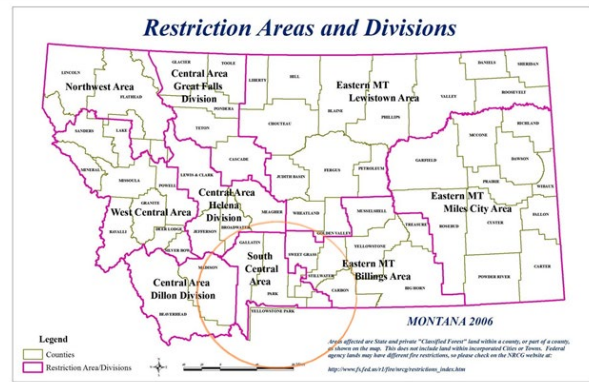
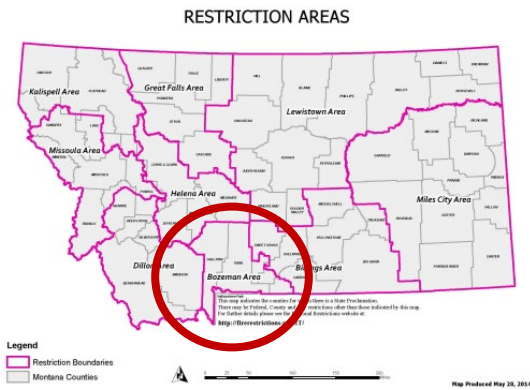
# 2025 – 2030

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## Digest

Page	Update:
4-6	Added Roles and Responsibilities
7-8	Updated USFS verbiage from NRCG Restrictions for USFS & BLM
12	Added verbiage about updating the NR website email contact for updating restrictions.
15	Updated Agency Contacts
16	Updated BLM Field Office Phone #
19	Added DNRC, County Example Templates from the NRCG Guide.
7	Added DNRC PIO Media Contact



## Introduction

The Fire Restrictions and Closure Plan is a localized action plan tiered from the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) Fire Restriction and Closure Plan updated June 1, 2001, updated July 2004, updated May 2007, updated 2020 ) The South Central Montana Fire Restrictions and Closure Operating Plan referred to as “Plan” throughout this document, details the coordination and decision-making process used to implement fire restrictions and closures in the South Central Montana Restrictions Coordination Area, referred to as “Area” throughout this document. *This area has also been referred to as the Bozeman Area on the [NRCG Restrictions & Closures Toolbox](#) website.*

By their nature, fire restrictions and closures impose limitations on the general public and private industry and should be implemented only after increased prevention measures have been taken, human caused fires continue to be a problem, firefighter resources are being drained, predicted fire danger and fuel conditions are worsening, potential high-risk occasions (4th of July, etc.), and predicted weather conditions continue to be hot and dry. *Fire restrictions should be one of the last tools used and are only one component of a successful fire prevention program.*

Small or large-scale area closures have a large negative impact on the public, landowners, industrial operators, and fire agencies. They are implemented only under the most severe conditions, usually when fire danger and fuel conditions are such that firefighters and public safety can no longer be adequately secured. Small closures can be used effectively around on-going fires to secure firefighters and public safety.

## Objectives

- A. This Plan will provide clear direction and responsibility for the coordination and implementation of fire restrictions and closures within the Area.
- B. This Plan will provide standard working, criteria, and process for implementing and rescinding fire restrictions and small-scale closures.
- C. The [Northern Rockies Coordinating Group Fire Restriction and Closure Plan \(v. 2025\)](#) is the parent document to this plan and will provide further guidance on fire prevention and closure procedures for the Northern Rockies Geographic Area, and attached as Appendix B.

## Cooperators

Agencies, governmental entities, and tribes included in the Area will be referred to as the “Cooperators” throughout this document. The Cooperators include:

- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation: Central Land Office
- USDA – Custer Gallatin National Forest: Bozeman Ranger District, Hebgen Ranger District, Gardiner Ranger District & Yellowstone Ranger District.
- Counties – Park County and Gallatin County
- NPS – Yellowstone National Park
- Bureau of Land Management– Butte Field Office
- Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks – Bozeman
- National Weather Service: Great Falls & Billings

This plan will be updated for accuracy and distributed by May 1st of every third year valid and will remain for a period of 5 years after signature. Any signatory to this plan may withdraw their participation for the following year by providing written notification to the Area Restrictions Coordinator by December 31.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Geographic Agency Administrators

The geographic agency administrators are responsible for:

- Incorporating NRCG guidelines into agency policy and procedures manuals.
- Ensuring that NRCG has the support, they need to perform successfully.
- Ensuring the Area Agency Administrators consistently implement restrictions procedures as described in this document.
- Coordinating the implementation, rescission, and public notification of restrictions on a large-scale basis.
- Coordinating the implementation, rescission, and public notification of closures on a large-scale basis.

### Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG)

NRCG is responsible for:

- Developing and maintaining the Restriction and Closure Procedures.
- Ensuring that training is provided to agency personnel and cooperators.
- Providing a Geographic Restrictions Coordinator.
- Providing a clearinghouse for zone restrictions and closure information.
- Providing fire prevention message support as needed.

### Geographic Restriction Coordinator

The geographic restrictions coordinator is responsible for:

- Facilitating the restrictions implementation and rescission process on a geographic basis.
- Monitoring restrictions activity across all Areas.

- Providing an assessment of conditions and issues to the Geographic Agency Administrators.
- Coordinating the need for large-scale closures across all agencies.
- Maintaining a geographic website for restrictions and closures information and serves as the liaison to the webmaster.

#### **Area Agency Administrator and/or Tribal Chairperson**

The Area Agency Administrator and/or Tribal Chairperson is responsible for:

- Ensuring the agency/tribe is prepared to implement closures and restrictions
- Identifying and approving agency specific exemptions.
- Ensuring that agency restriction documents are accurate and approved through their legal counsel.
- Ensuring that their agency follows all measures stated in their restrictions document.
- Ensuring agency implementation and enforcement of restrictions and closures.
- Identifying a lead area agency administrator responsible for facilitating the decision-making and implementation process.
- Annually identify and disseminate any permanent restrictions and closures information.

#### **Lead Area Agency Administrator and/or Tribal Chairperson**

The Lead Area Agency Administrator and/or Tribal Chairperson is responsible for:

- Ensuring coordination across all agencies and tribes within the zone.
- Developing an Area Restrictions and Closure Plan.

Selecting an area restriction /closure coordinator.

- Selecting an area media coordinator.
- Following and endorsing the NRCG Restriction Guidelines.
- Ensuring that the restriction and media coordinators have the tools they need to perform successfully.
- Monitoring the enacted restrictions and providing timely feedback to the area restrictions coordinator.

#### **Area Restriction Coordinator**

The Area Restriction Coordinator (RC) is responsible for:

- Coordinating the decision-making process.
- Gathering all information needed from each cooperator needed to make informed decisions.

Monitoring fire activity, ERC levels as well as prevention efforts.

- Facilitate the restrictions implementation process.
- Coordinating public notification with the media coordinator.

- Communicating and coordinating with neighboring area regarding their restriction and closure activity.
- Monitoring and gathering information for timely rescission of orders.
- Post restriction and closure information on the National and/or State Restrictions website(s).
- Annually facilitate known Agency/Tribal permanent restrictions and closures and provide that information to the Geographic Restrictions Coordinator.

**Area Media Coordinator**

The Area Media Coordinator (MC) is responsible for:

- Developing a zone communications strategy.
- Primary source to release zone restrictions information to the media.
- Posting media release(s) on the National and/or State Restrictions website. • Assist Area Restriction Coordinator to post or link restriction and closure information on the National and/or State Restrictions website(s).

**Custer Gallatin South Central Montana Area Restriction Coordinator and Co-chair:**

GREG COLEMAN	(406) 222-4190	(406) 823-0823
WHITNEY CASEBOLT	(406) 587-6755	(406) 949-0024

**Custer Gallatin South Central Montana Area Media Coordinators:**

**USFS Coordinator:**

Charity Berry	(435) 668-2057	<a href="mailto:charity.berry@usda.gov">charity.berry@usda.gov</a>
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**DNRC Coordinator:**

Hannah Sullivan	(406) 836-7294	<a href="mailto:Hannah.sullivan@mt.gov">Hannah.sullivan@mt.gov</a>
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**BLM Coordinator:**

Cody Phillips	(406) 570-4992	<a href="mailto:cphillips@blm.gov">cphillips@blm.gov</a>
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## NPS Coordinator:

Linda Veress	(307) 344-2015	<a href="mailto:Linda_Veress@nps.gov">Linda_Veress@nps.gov</a>
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The Restriction Coordinator is chosen by the Cooperators in each restriction area and is responsible for coordination of the fire restriction/closure process and implementation of the Plan.

Duties include: monitoring the fire restriction guidelines; gathering information from each cooperator needed to make informed decisions (see Appendix E); notifying the NRCG of the Area's impending restrictions or rescinding of restrictions; communicating with neighboring areas on their activity; coordinating restriction orders/rescinding orders and date of implementation; and working closely with the media coordinator on public notification.

### Agency Fire Managers (see Appendix A for list of names):

The Agency Fire Managers or designee are responsible for monitoring the local fire danger, directing prevention activities, informing Agency Administrators, notifying the Area Restrictions Coordinator as conditions indicate the need for fire restrictions, and assist as needed to ensure public/agency notification of restrictions. Fire Managers and Zone Chairs from this group and NRCG Prevention & Ed. & Restrictions Subcommittee members will provide directions and guidance to the Area Restriction Coordinator.

**Authorities** Reference the [NRCG Restrictions and Closures Guidelines](#)

Fire restrictions and area closures can be invoked on State, federal and private lands under federal and State laws. The following are a reference of those authorities:

### Forest Service

Must be implemented/ signed by Forest Supervisor or Regional Forester

General authority for the agency to create and enforce regulations: 16 USC 551 and 16 USC 559 grants authority to The Secretary of Agriculture to make rules & regulations governing the occupancy & use of Forests and enforce those regulations.

The regulations are found in Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations Part 261 [36 CFR Part 261]. Congress criminalized the violation of these regulations in the act, and violations are now categorized as Class B misdemeanors.

### Closure Orders Scope:

36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b) – Closure Orders for both (a) area and (b) roads and trails.

36 CFR 261.50 (e) – Exemptions from Orders

General requirements that applies to all closure orders 36 CFR 261.51 – Posting Requirements, etc.

### Closures order regulations:

36 CFR 261.52 (General Fire Restrictions)

36 CFR 261.52(e) – Going into or being upon an area

36 CFR 261.53 (Special Closures)

36 CFR 261.53 (e) -area closure for health and public safety

## **BLM**

Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Title 43, United States Code, §1701, et. seq.) Title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 9212.2(a).

## **NPS**

Campfires -36 CFR 2.13 (c)

Smoking -36 CFR 2.21 (a)

Fireworks -36 CFR 2.38 (b)

Closures and Public Use Limits – 36 CFR 1.5(a)(1), 1.5(a)(2) and 1.3(a)

## **FWS**

Protection Act of September 20, 1922 (42 Stat. 857; 16 U.S.C. 594) Authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to protect, from fire, lands under his/her jurisdiction and to cooperate with other Federal agencies, States, or owners of timber.

National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, as amended by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 and the Refuge Recreation Act of 1962.(80 Stat. 927)(16 U.S.C. 668dd-668ee)(16 U.S.C. 460k-460k4). Governs the administration and use of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of October 29, 1974 et seq. (88 Stat. 1535; 15 U.S.C. 2201) as amended. Authorizes reimbursement to State and local fire services for costs incurred in firefighting on Federal property.

Sections 302(b) and 301(a) 43, CFR, Part 9210 (Fire Management) 43, CFR, Part 9212 (Wildfire Prevention)

### State of Montana

The parent law for the regulations is Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 76-13-104. Under these regulations, the Administrator of the Forestry Division may invoke fire restrictions by issuing a proclamation.

The Governor must enact a closure under these regulations, not the Administrator, and the regulations provide for the issuance of entry permits. The Montana Governor may also use part of the Military Affairs and Disaster and Emergency Services laws to close an area. MCA 10-3-103(4) defines “disaster” in part, as the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural or artificial cause including, but not limited to, fires. MCA 10-3-103(8) defines “emergency” as the imminent threat of a disaster causing immediate peril to life or property that timely action can avert or minimize. Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks authority to close or restrict recreational activities on lands controlled by the department is found in the Administrative Rules of Montana and MCA 87-1-303.

### Montana Counties

The Montana constitution, as well as Montana Code Annotated, provides counties in Montana the authority to impose restrictions and closures.

7-33-2212. Activity restrictions in high fire hazard areas.

(1) A board of county commissioners may designate areas on private land or on land that is not under the jurisdiction of a municipality or a state or federal agency as high fire hazard areas.

(2) Except as provided in 87-3-106(2), in designated high fire hazard areas, the board may require all persons, firms, or corporations present or engaged in any activity in those areas to cease operations or activities or to adjust working hours to less critical periods of the day.

(3) The presiding officer of the board may control ingress and egress into a high fire hazard area if an emergency or disaster is declared under the provisions of Title 10, chapter 3, part 4.

(4) (a) An entity that is conducting official business, an entity having actual residence as a permanent or principal place of abode in the designated area, or an entity engaged in employment that does not present a fire hazard must be allowed ingress and egress unless there is a significant risk to human health or safety; (b) For the purposes of this section, "official business" includes but is not limited to the functions of governmental agencies and the activities of utilities, cooperatives, and telecommunications providers to operate, construct, repair, and maintain utility facilities that are essential to the public.

7-1-101. Self-government powers. As provided by Article XI, section 6, of the Montana constitution, a local government unit with self-government powers may exercise any power not prohibited by the constitution, law, or charter. These powers include but are not limited to the powers granted to general power governments.

7-33-2205. Establishment of fire season -- permit requirements. The county governing body may in its discretion establish fire seasons annually, during which no person may ignite or set any forest fire, slash-burning fire, land-clearing fire, debris-burning fire, or open fire within the county protection area on any forest, range, or croplands subject to the provisions of this part without having obtained an official written permit to ignite or set such fire from the recognized protection agency for that protection area.

## Considerations for Invoking Fire Restrictions

Fire restrictions and closures require a high degree of coordination among all levels within each agency, between all agencies within the restriction area, between restriction areas, and the restriction area and NRCG Restriction Coordinator. This process must be continuous from before the time restrictions are first proposed, through the period of implementation, and until the rescinding of all restrictions/closures.

The Cooperators in the restriction area will continuously monitor number of human caused fire starts, weather, fuel conditions, and other considerations that will indicate when restrictions or closures are warranted.

### Considerations for invoking fire restrictions should include any of the following:

- Higher than normal occurrence of human-caused fires after additional fire prevention activities have not caused that number to decrease;
- Fire danger rating adjective class is at "Very High" or "Extreme";

- Local initial attack resources are at or reaching serious draw-down levels;
- Status and availability of fire suppression resources across the Northern Rockies are at or reaching draw-down levels;
- Adverse fire weather conditions and risks are predicted to continue;
- Numerous wildland fires within the area, or a complex of small fires;
- Public or firefighter safety;
- Unusually high visitor use during any of the above conditions.

**Additional Considerations for Forested lands**

Considerations	STAGE I or Partial Restrictions or Burn Ban	STAGE II or Full Restrictions	CLOSURE
ERC's (3-day average)	90-94 <sup>th</sup> percentile	95-97 <sup>th</sup> percentile	98 <sup>th</sup> + percentile
Live Herbaceous Fuel Moisture	≤ 100%	≤ 75%	≤ 50%
1000-hour Fuel Moisture	≤ 14%	≤ 13%	≤ 12%

Additional criteria found on the South Central Montana Area Agency Fire Restriction and Closure Decision Checklist is used to document decisions by cooperators in the Restriction Coordination Areas when implementing or rescinding fire restrictions. The SCZ Fire Restrictions and Closure Decision Checklist can be found in Appendix E.

**Implementation Procedures**

**As a general guidance, Weekly Restriction Coordination conference calls should begin in mid to late June unless conditions warrant an earlier meeting.** Those required to participate include South Central Area Fire Managers (as listed in Appendix A), or their designee. Although the authority lies with each Agency Administrator, it is customary that their fire managers attend restrictions coordination meetings.

During this meeting or conference call, the Fire Managers report on conditions in their jurisdiction and if any restrictions (and what level) are being considered on their lands. They have the flexibility to decide if all or only a portion of their administrative area needs to be placed under restrictions. **Not all the SC Area must move into restrictions at the same time or be in the same restriction stage, but the other Cooperators need to be aware of restricted lands and stages.** The public should be able to easily understand the location of the lands put under restrictions or closure. Lands that do not meet criteria for restrictions or closures should not be included (i.e. an area that is receiving early snow fall when lower elevations are still experiencing dry conditions).

The final decision to implement **small or large-scale area closures** lies with the Agency Administrator whose land requires the closure. Where more than one jurisdiction is involved, the agency involved will coordinate these closures. The Area Restriction Coordinator will immediately be informed of the decision and will inform other Cooperators within the Area and adjacent agencies and restriction coordination areas. NRCG will be kept informed during the decision-making process.

**Implementing Timeframes** The time frame from moving in and out of restrictions should be sufficient to allow for public and agency notification. Enough time must be given in order to allow for preparation and coordinated issuance of the enabling documentation, exemptions, prevention signing, public notification, etc. Emergency area closures (for example, area closures for a rapidly emerging large fire event), are usually implemented (and lifted) in a more rapid fashion as the situation dictates.

Coordination with adjacent areas and other affected agencies in the restriction area that will be impacted (Disaster and Emergency Services, law enforcement entities, etc.) are essential. The Area Restrictions Coordinator will notify other areas/agencies of the decision to coordinate prevention signing and public information.

On the ground signing and media messages must be coordinated so the messaging is in line with the implemented restrictions and MUST be understandable and easily visible by the general public. Signing will be done by the jurisdiction responsible for the restriction. Once a restriction document (special order or proclamation) is signed, all employees and area cooperators should be notified immediately as to when the restriction will go into place. If more than one jurisdiction is going into a restriction it should be coordinated at the weekly call and a specific date and time should be agreed upon, if possible.

**Document** to provide for interagency standardization across various ownerships, the wording for the two restriction stages as set forth in the *“NRCG Restriction and Closure Procedures 2025-2030” should be used in restriction official documents (See Appendix F)*. Each agency shall have enabling documentation pre-written with the standardized wording.

News releases will be issued immediately to provide the public with as much advance notice as possible, one day at minimum. This is the responsibility of the South Central Montana Area Media Coordinator. News releases, brochures, PSA’s, etc., will be pre-written and agreed upon by all agencies in the Area. The use of a fire information/media team to coordinate restriction press releases could be employed if deemed necessary by the Cooperators.

All Cooperators in the Area will send a **signed** copy of their restriction orders, with designated exempted campfire sites attached, by e-mail to the Area Restriction Coordinator as soon as they are signed. If cooperators go into closure, a list of exemptions will be attached to the closure document and sent to the restrictions coordinator.

The Restrictions Coordinator and/or Media Coordinators will update the National Restrictions Website by emailing restriction document to [mtrestrictions@mt.gov](mailto:mtrestrictions@mt.gov) and CC [julia.berkey@mt.gov](mailto:julia.berkey@mt.gov) and [madi.talley@mt.gov](mailto:madi.talley@mt.gov). Updates can be seen on the [mtfireinfo.org](http://mtfireinfo.org).

The Restrictions Coordinator will distribute (via e-mail) minutes of conference calls and summaries of decisions made by the area restriction coordinating group and the proposed timetable for implementing restrictions and small-scale closures.

## Rescission Procedures



As with the implementation procedures, when one or more of the cooperators determine that restrictions should be rescinded or that the current stage be reduced, the Restriction Coordinator will be contacted, and they will discuss at the weekly restrictions conference call.

When conditions subside, the same decision criteria used to implement the restriction will be used and discussed to rescind the standing order(s), proclamation(s) and resolutions(s).

The rescission of fire restrictions or closures requires rescinding documentation similar to enabling documentation that was used to enter into the restrictions or closures. The Area should plan implementation and rescission of restrictions for predicted long-term conditions and should be based upon the best available science. Care should be taken to not react to every small fluctuation in risk, weather, and

fire danger, thus avoiding an up-down syndrome which could result in confusion and lack of support from our publics.

The Restrictions Coordinator and/or Media Coordinators will update the National Restrictions Website by emailing restriction documents to [mtrestrictions@mt.gov](mailto:mtrestrictions@mt.gov) and CC [julia.berkey@mt.gov](mailto:julia.berkey@mt.gov) and [madi.talley@mt.gov](mailto:madi.talley@mt.gov). Updates can be seen on the [mtfireinfo.org](http://mtfireinfo.org).

## Communications Plan

Notification of key contacts, general public, and employees concerning the implementation of Fire Restrictions or Closures is essential and should be accomplished immediately so as to avoid confusion. Contacts need to be told who, what, why, when, and to what degree they will be affected.

The Area Restriction Coordinator or media coordinators will ensure orders and appropriate wording to better explain the restriction or closure be published on the NRCG Restrictions and Closure Website at: [https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/nrcg/restrictions\\_closures/restrictions\\_and\\_closures.htm](https://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/nrcg/restrictions_closures/restrictions_and_closures.htm)

Cooperator associations like BFPA and FiresafeMT.org, etc., may also publish information on fire restrictions and closures. Key contacts will be advised in a timely manner about decisions concerning implementation or rescission of restrictions or closure, see Appendix C (Contact List). This can best be handled through group e-mail process.

Each Cooperator is responsible for notifying their employees and higher-level administrators as well as any contractors or others that are doing business within the jurisdiction.

The general public will be notified through a combination of media releases, PSA's, prevention signing, and personal contacts facilitated by the respective agency public information officers.

**See Appendix C for the Media contact list.** This list will be reviewed and updated annually as contacts change.

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## APPENDIX A:

### SC MT Area Coordinators & Fire Management Officers/ Fire Wardens

<b>BOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>WK #</b>	<b>CELL #</b>	<b>Email</b>
<b>Greg Coleman (Chair)</b>	Park Co. DES	406/222-4188	406/223-4866	<a href="mailto:gcoleman@parkcounty.org">gcoleman@parkcounty.org</a>
<b>Whitney Casebolt (Co-Chair)</b> (FS South Central Zone Restrictions Coordinator)	USFS Custer Gallatin NF Forest Prevention		406/502-8886	<a href="mailto:Whitney.m.casebolt@usda.gov">Whitney.m.casebolt@usda.gov</a>
<b>Cody Philips</b>	BLM – Butte Field Office Prevention Officer		406/570-4992	<a href="mailto:cphilips@blm.gov">cphilips@blm.gov</a>
<b>Hannah Schultz</b>	DNRC Central Land Office Prevention and Media		406/836-7294	<a href="mailto:hannah.shultz2@mt.gov">hannah.shultz2@mt.gov</a>
<b>Charity Berry</b>	USFS Custer Gallatin NF Media		435/668-2057	<a href="mailto:charity.berry@usda.gov">charity.berry@usda.gov</a>
<b>Greg Coleman</b>	Park Co. DES	406/222-4190	406/823-0823	<a href="mailto:gcoleman@parkcounty.org">gcoleman@parkcounty.org</a>
<b>Patrick Lonergan</b>	Gallatin Co. DES	406/582-2395	406/599-7881	<a href="mailto:patrick@readygallatin.com">patrick@readygallatin.com</a>
<b>Kara Huyser</b>	DNRC Central Land Office – Bozeman Unit Manager		406/556-4507	<a href="mailto:khuyser@mt.gov">khuyser@mt.gov</a>
<b>Bob Culbreth</b>	DNRC Central Land Office - Bozeman	406/465-6753	406/465-6753	<a href="mailto:bob.culbreth@mt.gov">bob.culbreth@mt.gov</a>
<b>Scott Schuster</b>	USFS Custer Gallatin NF – Fire Staff		406/255-1414	<a href="mailto:scott.schuster@usda.gov">scott.schuster@usda.gov</a>
<b>Jeff Flick</b>	USFS Custer Gallatin NF – Deputy Fire Staff	406/446-4538	406/855-3788	<a href="mailto:jeffrey.flick@usda.gov">jeffrey.flick@usda.gov</a>
<b>Brad Bergman</b>	BLM Butte Field Office - FMO	406-896-2940 (Office)	715-617-2738	<a href="mailto:bbergman@blm.gov">bbergman@blm.gov</a>
<b>John Cataldo</b>	NPS – Yellowstone FMO	307/344-2182	406/581-1890	<a href="mailto:John_cataldo@nps.gov">John_cataldo@nps.gov</a>
<b>Jon Dentinger</b>	NPS-Yellowstone AFMO	307/344-2180		<a href="mailto:Jon_Dentinger@nps.gov">Jon_Dentinger@nps.gov</a>
<b>Zachary Krohn</b>	USFS Custer Gallatin NF – Yellowstone Ranger District FMO		406/223-0140	<a href="mailto:zachary.krohn@usda.gov">zachary.krohn@usda.gov</a>
<b>Tanner Eccles</b>	USFS Custer Gallatin NF – West Zone FMO		503/400-4641	<a href="mailto:tanner.eccles@usda.gov">tanner.eccles@usda.gov</a>

**APPENDIX B:**

**South Central Zone Restriction Area Agency Administrators**

<b><i>Agency</i></b>	<b><i>Contact Phone #</i></b>
USFS Custer Gallatin NF – Supervisory Office	(406) 587-6701
DNRC Central Land Office - Helena	(406) 458-3500
BLM, Butte Field Office	Cell (509) 994-3522 Office (406)-533-7630
NPS – Yellowstone	(307) 344-2002
Park County - Commissioners	(406) 222-4106
Gallatin County – Commissioners	(406) 582-3000



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**APPENDIX D:**

**Examples of**

**USDA Forest Service Stage 1,**

**USDA Forest Service Stage 2,**

**State Stage 1 Template,**

**State Stage 2 Template,**

**County Stage 1 Template,**

**County Stage 2 Template,**

**and**

**Forest Closure**

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**SPECIAL ORDER: No.  
STAGE 1 FIRE RESTRICTIONS**

Pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations 261.50 (a) and (b) the following acts are prohibited on all **National Forest System lands administered by the Custer Gallatin National Forest in Gallatin, Madison, Park, Sweet Grass, Carbon, Meagher and Stillwater Counties, Montana.** These restrictions are in addition to those enumerated in Subpart A, Part 261, Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations and become effective at 0001 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time on \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, 2007 and will remain in effect until rescinded or revoked.

1) Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire or campfire unless noted in the exemptions below. [36 CFR 261.52(a)]

For the purpose of this order under Stage 1 fire restrictions, stove fires, campfires and charcoal fires are allowed ONLY at developed designated recreation sites or campgrounds. Fires within rock fire rings are NOT authorized. Fires fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels may be used anywhere on National Forest System lands during Stage 1 fire restrictions.

2) Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials. [36 CFR 261.52(d)]

3) Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons are exempt from this order:

- a. Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
- b. Persons using a device solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.
- c. Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
- d. Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
- e. All land within a city boundary is exempted.
- f. Other exemptions unique to each agency/tribe.
- g. *If you are going to allow campfires, state the specific location of where they are allowed and with what mitigation measures, if applicable.*

An exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity.

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Forest Supervisor, Custer Gallatin National Forest

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Date



## SPECIAL ORDER : No. STAGE 2 FIRE RESTRICTIONS

Pursuant to 36 Code of Federal Regulations 261.50 (a) and (b), with the exception of clause 6, the following acts are prohibited on all **National Forest System lands administered by the Custer Gallatin National Forest in Gallatin, Madison, Park, Sweet Grass, Carbon, Meagher and Stillwater Counties, Montana**. These restrictions are in addition to those enumerated in Subpart A, Part 261, Title 36 Code of Federal Regulations and become effective at 0001 a.m. Mountain Daylight Time on \_\_\_\_\_, 20XX and will remain in effect until rescinded or revoked.

- 1) Building maintaining, attending, or using a fire or campfire [36 CFR 261.52(a)]. Only fires fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels may be used on National Forest System lands.
- 2) Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials [36 CFR 261.52(d)]. The above exceptions for smoking also include improved places of habitation and developed, designated recreation sites, campgrounds or improved sites as listed in **Exhibit A (attached)**.
- 3) The following acts are prohibited from 1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. :
  - a. Operating any internal combustion engine, with the exception of motorized vehicles listed under Exemption Item #5. [36 CFR 261.52(h)]
  - b. Welding, or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame.
  - c. Using an explosive.
  - d. A one-hour foot patrol in the work area is required following cessation of all activities as identified in #3 above.
- 4) Operating motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails (Forest Order 01-11-00-01). It is prohibited to possess or use a vehicle off national forest roads (36 CFR 261.56), except for motorized traffic on specific trails provided in the GNF Travel Management Plan. This order is in addition to other restrictions in effect. Under Stage 2 fire restrictions, a vehicle is defined as a motor vehicle to include but not limited to: cars, pickups, trucks, trail bikes, motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).
- 5) EXEMPTIONS: Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50(e), the following persons or actions are exempt from this order:
  - a. Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
  - b. Persons using a device fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.
  - c. Operating generators with an approved spark arresting device within an enclosed vehicle or building or in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the generator.
  - d. Operating motorized vehicles on designated roads and trails.
  - e. Emergency repair of public utilities and railroads as per attached conditions.

- f. Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
- g. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
- h. All land within a city boundary is exempted.

An exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity.

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Date

Forest Supervisor, Custer Gallatin National Forest

Violations of these prohibitions are punishable by a fine of not more than \$5000 for an individual or \$10,000 for an organization, or imprisonment of not more than 6 months, or both. (16 U.S.C. 551 and 18 U.S.C. 3571).

(OPTIONAL to be attached to Stage 2 order)

## **STATE (Non-CFR) STAGE I TEMPLATE**

The following acts are prohibited until further notice:

- Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire or campfire unless noted in the exemptions below.
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.

Note: for the smoking provision, each agency/tribe must cite their actual regulations/laws; therefore, the wording for the prohibition may be slightly different.

### **EXEMPTIONS**

- Persons with a written permit or special use authorization that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
- Persons using a device solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.
- Any Federal, State, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
- All land within a city boundary is exempted.
- Other exemptions unique to each agency/tribe.

If you are going to allow campfires, state the specific location of where they are allowed and with what mitigation measures, if applicable.

An exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity.

## **STATE (Non-CFR) STAGE II TEMPLATE**

The following acts are prohibited until further notice:

- Building maintaining, attending, or using a fire or campfire.
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.
- Operating motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails.

The following acts are prohibited from 1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m.

1. Operating any internal combustion engine.
2. Welding, or operating acetylene or other torch with open flame.
3. Using an explosive. A one-hour foot patrol in the work area is required following cessation of all activities as identified in #3 above.

Note: for the smoking provision (#2), each agency/tribe must cite their actual regulations/laws; therefore, the wording for the prohibition may be slightly different.

## **EXEMPTIONS**

- Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
- Persons using a device fueled solely by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.
- Operating generators with an approved spark arresting device within an enclosed vehicle or building or in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the generator.
- Operating motorized vehicles on designated roads and trails.
- Emergency repair of public utilities and railroads as per attached conditions. Non-emergency maintenance may also be permitted.
- Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
- Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
- All land within a city boundary is exempted.
- Other exemptions unique to each agency/tribe. An exemption does not absolve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity.

## COUNTY STAGE I TEMPLATE

RESOLUTION NO. #

STAGE II RESTRICTIONS WITHIN YOUR COUNTY

WHEREAS, I

T IS HEREBY RESOLVED:

That, per 7-33-2205, MCA, the Board of County Commissioners set the 20XX fire season from the effective date of this resolution until this resolution is rescinded, and

That, during the fire season, a person may not ignite or set a fire, including a slash-burning fire, landclearing fire, debris-burning fire, or open fire within the county protection area on any residential or commercial property, forest, range, or croplands subject to the provisions of this part without having obtained an official written permit or permission to ignite or set a fire from the recognized protection agency for that protection area with the exception of agricultural burning per 3.d.ii below, and

That, Stage I Fire Restrictions are ordered for all areas of Your County and the following acts are prohibited until further notice:

- Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire unless noted in the exemptions below.
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while stopped in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable materials.
- Exemptions to the above prohibitions are allowed only for:
  - Persons using a fire solely fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG that can be turned on and off. Such devices can only be used in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three (3) feet of the device.
  - Any federal, state, or local officer or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
  - All land within a city or town boundary is exempted.
  - Other exemptions unique to Your County including:
    - Recreational fires or commercial type of fixed or portable outdoor fireplaces measuring less than 48 inches in diameter that are surrounded by a nonflammable structure and for which a suitable source of extinguishing the fire is available.
    - Farmers and ranchers or companies with a valid burn permit and a written permit from the County Fire Warden and/or Local Fire Chief that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
- That, the County Fire Warden cease and desist from issuing new open burning permits during this period and suspend existing permits, with the exception of 3.d.ii above, and
- That a person who purposely ignites a fire in violation of this section

- Shall reimburse the county governing body or recognized protection agency for costs incurred for any fire suppression activities resulting from the illegal fire, as provided in 50-63-103 MCA.
- Could be fined up to \$5,000 individually or \$10,000 for an organization and imprisoned for up to 6 months for up to 6 months for violating restrictions and closures. Your County Sheriff's Office will enforce this resolution and issue citations to violators where necessary per 7-33-2206, MCA.

Your County Sheriff's Office will enforce this resolution and issue citations to violators where necessary per 7-33-2206, MCA.

## COUNTY STAGE II TEMPLATE

RESOLUTION NO. #

STAGE II RESTRICTIONS WITHIN YOUR COUNTY

WHEREAS,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the following acts are prohibited at any time until further notice:

- Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire
- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site or while in an area at least three feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of all flammable material
- The use of fireworks
- Operating motorized vehicles off designated roads and trails

The following acts are prohibited from 1:00 pm to 1:00 am:

1. Operating a chainsaw or other equipment powered by an internal combustion engine for felling, bucking, skidding, or firewood gathering
2. Outdoor welding or operating acetylene or other type torch with open flame
3. Using any explosive.

A one-hour foot patrol in the work area is required following the cessation of all activities as identified in #1-#3 above.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the aforementioned restrictions are subject to the following exemptions, which do not relieve an individual or organization from liability or responsibility for any fire started by the exempted activity:

- Persons with written authorization from the Your County Commissioners that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act
- Persons using a cooking device fueled by liquid petroleum or LPG fuels that can be turned on and off, or, within the confines of residential use, a commercial barbeque that utilizes charcoal briquettes.
- Operating generators with an approved spark arresting device within an enclosed vehicle or building or in an area that is barren or cleared of all overhead and surrounding flammable materials within three feet of the generator
- Operating motorized vehicles on designated roads and trails
- Repair, maintenance and construction of infrastructure, public utilities and railroads
- Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written public notice

- Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force, in the performance of an official duty
- All land within a city boundary is exempted
- Agricultural activity (other than open burning) unrelated to forest harvest if fire extinguisher or fire suppression equipment is immediately available
- Residential and commercial lawn and grounds maintenance
- Construction site activities on private lands, including construction of roads, utilities, and residential or commercial structures, if fire extinguisher or fire suppression equipment is immediately available
- Operations of private businesses to the extent that this resolution compels the private business to deny a customer of the private business to the premises or access to goods or services, or denies a customer of a private business the ability to access goods or services provided by the private business, pursuant to 7-5-121 (2) MCA

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution becomes effective immediately, Day, Date, and Time, and shall remain in effect until such time as it may be amended or rescinded by Board of County Commissioners action.

## EXHIBIT A: EXEMPTIONS

For other Exemption examples, please reference the [NRCG Restrictions and Closures Guidelines](#).

TO CUSTER GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST VISITORS:

In accordance with Stage 2 Fire Restrictions, Item #2 Exemption(s), under Special Forest Order No. \_\_\_\_\_, all persons shall be authorized to build and use a campfire within the confines of a metal or concrete fire ring or grill provided by the Forest Service for that purpose within the developed sites listed below. Fires within rock fire rings are not authorized. This exemption may be rescinded at any time due to severe weather conditions or major fire activity.

(PROVIDE LIST OF CAMPGROUNDS THAT APPLY)

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Forest Supervisor  
Custer Gallatin National Forest

## **SMALL & LARGE SCALE AREA CLOSURE GUIDELINES**

The Geographic Agency Administrators within the Northern Rockies Geographic Area should review these evaluation guidelines and determine threshold levels that substantiate the need for large scale closures. A large scale closure is may involve multiple management units and/or multiple jurisdictions.

Examples include:

- Potential loss of life due to extreme fire conditions.
- Potential for extreme fire behavior.
- Stage II restrictions are not effective in reducing the number of human-caused fires.
- Resources across the geographic area are at a critical shortage level.

The following standard exemptions will be allowed during closure and will be noted on all closure documents.

Exemptions:

1. Persons with a written permit that specifically authorizes the otherwise prohibited act.
2. Emergency repair of public utilities and railroads as per attached conditions.
3. Persons conducting activities in those designated areas where the activity is specifically authorized by written posted notice.
4. Any Federal, State, or local officer, or member of an organized rescue or firefighting force in the performance of an official duty.
5. All land within a city boundary is exempted.
6. Other exemptions unique to each agency/tribe.

## APPENDIX E:

### GUIDELINES FOR COORDINATING AND IMPLEMENTING FIRE RESTRICTIONS

When weather factors or fire suppression impacts become a concern, the following questions should be asked to help determine if a restriction is justified. Before the fire season, each area should review these evaluation guidelines to help determine threshold levels that substantiate the need for each restriction.

#### Primary Criteria:

- Fire restriction threshold criteria are derived from the Restriction Coordination Areas Interagency NFDRS Operating Plans as they become available.
- The additional criteria listed below are listed on the SC Montana Area Fire Restriction and Closure Decision Checklist which is used to document decisions by cooperators in the Restriction Coordination Areas when implementing or rescinding fire restrictions.

#### SC Montana Area Fire Restrictions and Closure Decision Checklist

The following are questions to be considered when contemplating a fire restriction and/or closure. The factors that form the basis for the decision should be documented.

**1. What is the predicted fire potential for the next several weeks?**

- Is the South Central Montana Area 7 Day Significant Fire Potential Outlook showing consistently “Very Dry” fuels (brown color) or more than one “High Risk” day (orange or red color) per week?  
 YES       NO
- Is the South Central Montana Area Monthly Outlook showing “Above Normal” Significant Fire Potential (red color) over or near the unit(s) under consideration?  
 YES       NO

<http://gacc.nifc.gov/nrcc/predictive/outlooks/outlooks.htm>

**2. Is there an increase in number of fire starts? (Human vs. Natural) ...even after increased prevention activities have been implemented?**  Yes    No

- # of Human Starts: \_\_\_\_\_ Major Cause Category: \_\_\_\_\_
- # of Natural Starts: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is the daily fire occurrence situation?**

- Are there multiple starts?       YES       NO
- Are fire occurrences and associated control problems increasing or decreasing?  
 INCREASING       DECREASING

**4. Are adequate fire resources available by Agency/Zone?**

- YES       NO

**5. Are severity resources or funds requested/approved for local/zone agencies?**

- YES       NO

6. Is an extraordinary increase/decrease in human activities expected? i.e., holidays and large special events

YES       NO

7. Have social, political or economic impacts been considered ?  YES       NO

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Have you contacted the following individuals concerning conditions that warrant area fire restrictions?

Fire Prevention Officers: \_\_\_\_\_

Public Affairs/Public Information Officers: \_\_\_\_\_

Law Enforcement/Special Agents: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Administrators: \_\_\_\_\_

Adjoining Restriction Area Coordinators: \_\_\_\_\_

**The following decision is based on the above criteria and Interagency discussions:**

SC MT Area partners discussed restrictions as a group.

Additional notes: \_\_\_\_\_

SC MT Area partners including (list units) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ will go into  
(the appropriate Restrictions or Partial/Full Closures)

\_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Each agency will forward a copy of their restriction document to [gregorycolman@gmail.com](mailto:gregorycolman@gmail.com) and [whitney.m.casebolt@usda.gov](mailto:whitney.m.casebolt@usda.gov)**

Additional notes:

Restrictions Coordinator Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## DEFINITIONS

The following definitions should be used as part of, or referenced to, in the restrictions/closure documents that initiate and authorize a Stage I or Stage II Restriction:

**Area Agency Administrator/Tribal Chairperson:** Field unit agency officials who have jurisdictional responsibilities for Agency lands. Agency officials within a designated restrictions and closure area such as, but not limited to: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Area Manager; Bureau of Land Management, Field Manager; USDA Forest Service, Forest Supervisor; National Park Service, Park Superintendent; US Fish and Wildlife Service, Refuge Manager.

**Campfire:** A fire, not within any building, mobile home, or living accommodation mounted on a vehicle, which is used for cooking, branding, personal warmth, lighting, ceremonial, or aesthetic purposes. Campfires are open fires, usually built on the ground, from native fuels or charcoal, including charcoal grills.

**Closure:** The closing of an area to entry or use.

- Large Scale –large areas that may involve multiple management units and/or multiple jurisdictions when fire danger/behavior threatens firefighter and public safety.
- Small Scale – closure of a small area when there is an on-going incident, extreme fire conditions, and/or when safety of the public and/or firefighters is a concern.

**Designated Roads and Trails:** Those roads and trails that are identified to the public by land management agencies.

**Exemption:** Authorization allowing an otherwise prohibited act or omission.

**Emergency Repair:** Those actions taken outside the routine to restore critical resources and prevent the start of a fire.

**Explosive:** Any substance or article, including a device, which is designed to function by explosion (i.e., an extremely rapid release of gas and heat) or which, by chemical reaction within itself, is able to function in a similar manner even if not designed to function by explosion. For the purposes of these restrictions, firearms are not considered an explosive.

**Geographic Agency Administrator/Tribal Chairperson:** Agency officials at the statewide or regional level who have jurisdictional responsibilities for agency lands, such as: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, State Forester; Bureau of Land Management, State Director; USDA Forest Service, Regional Forester; Bureau of Indian Affairs, Regional Director; National Park Service, Regional Director; US Fish & Wildlife Service, Regional Director.

**Internal Combustion Engine:** An engine in which combustion of the fuel takes place in a confined space, producing expanding gases that are used directly to provide mechanical power.

**Mitigation Measures:** Actions taken to minimize or prevent the possibility of an unwanted ignition.

**Patrol:** One or more people who will walk through a work area checking for and reporting fires discovered in the vicinity.

**Permanent Restriction:** Those activities that are always restricted as determined by a management unit's year round orders or an agency's/tribal laws and regulations.

**Permit:** A written document issued by an authorized agency representative to specifically authorize an otherwise prohibited act.

**Public Utilities:** A government-regulated company that provides an essential public service such as water, gas, electricity, or telecommunications.

**Restriction:** A limitation on an activity or use.

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**APPENDIX F:**

**Signature Page**

**We agree to the South Central Montana Area Fire Restrictions and Closure Plan for 2025-2030.**

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**Patrick Lonergan, Chief of Emergency  
Management and Fire - Gallatin County**

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**Greg Coleman, Office of Emergency  
Management - Park County**

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**Scott Schuster, FMO  
United States Department of Agriculture  
Custer Gallatin National Forest**

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**Brad Bergman, FMO  
United States Department of Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**John Cataldo, FMO  
National Park Service - Yellowstone**

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**Kara Huyser, Unit Area Manager  
Montana Department of Natural Resources  
and Conservation, Bozeman Unit Manager**

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