

## Big Mountain Fire District Fire Wise and Fire Safe

May 2024

Living in Northwest Montana brings both serenity and responsibility. Communities, like ours, located in a wildfire-prone area need to take extra measures to live safely. Each Spring our goal is to educate and prepare the community for a wildfire event on Big Mountain. Last month our focus was on “**Hardening our Homes.**” This month you’re encouraged to create and/or maintain the **defensible/survivable space** around your home, and to take advantage of the **Annual Brush Collection Day on June 15<sup>th</sup>**. (See next page for details.) In addition to protecting our homes and property, we can act now and “**Get Ready**” to protect our families and ourselves.

Having a plan is a step towards protecting your family in a wildland fire situation. Involve the entire household in creating a personal **Wildland Fire Action Plan and be prepared to evacuate quickly**. Consider a location for your family to meet. Designate a meeting location outside of the fire hazard area. How will you communicate with extended family? Register for email and text notifications on the Big Mountain Community website. Educate all family members on the use of fire extinguishers, and the location and operation of gas, electric, and water main shut off valves. Have important documents, photographs, medications and computer backup files ready to grab and go. Have a battery powered radio (don’t forget the batteries), and a backup battery or way to charge your cell phone. Consider each family member as you assemble a “**Go Bag**”. Pack a separate “**Go Bag**” for your pets. Create an **Evacuation Checklist**. Remember to **rehearse your plan regularly**.

These are just a few things for you to consider when creating your action plan. The internet has multiple sites with lists of suggested and essential items to include in a “Go Bag” for you and your pet. There are also many examples of wildfire evacuation checklist to help you get started with your own personal plan. A more comprehensive guide for creating a Wildland Fire Action Plan can be viewed at

[https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/pdf/rsg-eag.pdf?sfvrsn=d1316f0c\\_20](https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/pdf/rsg-eag.pdf?sfvrsn=d1316f0c_20)

Being prepared is key when faced with the reality of evacuating your home in the event of a wildfire.

Be ready, aware, and act early!

### Your BMFD Firewise Board:

Ben Devall, Fire Chief  
Marylou Patterson, Community Rep Sub 2  
Paul Silverman, BMFD Board Rep  
Josh Witt, WMR Rep  
Woody Hust, Community Rep, Sub 1

Sue Oemichen, Resident Leader, Sunrise Ridge  
Julie Brinkman, Community Rep, Northern Lights  
Diana Tague, Community Rep, Northern Lights  
Suzanne Burrow, Community Rep, Wood Run

## **BMFD FIREWISE ANNUAL BRUSH COLLECTION DAY**

On **Saturday, June 15, 2024**, Big Mountain Fire District and HOA's will have their annual brush collection day from 9am to 4pm. Residents should place their debris curbside for collection no later than Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>.

Only natural woody material will be collected. **Please, no grass clippings.** Branches, tree limbs, and small logs should be cut to a maximum of 6 feet long and should be no larger than 6 inches in diameter.

**Volunteers are needed** to assist in the brush collection and disposal effort. Pickup trucks and flatbed trailers are needed as well. If you are available to assist on June 15<sup>th</sup>, please contact coordinator **Paul Silverman at 406-249-8969**. **Whitefish Mountain Resort (WMR) has kindly agreed to give us access to one of the resort's burn piles for disposal of our material. This access will be available only on June 15<sup>th</sup> and only to brush project volunteers.**

Should you wish to dispose of brush on your own, you can take it to the County Landfill located at 4098 Hwy 93N between Whitefish and Kalispell. Their hours are 8am to 5pm seven days a week, except for holidays. The telephone number is 406-758-5910. Further information can be obtained at [www.flathead.mt.gov/department-directory/waste](http://www.flathead.mt.gov/department-directory/waste)

Please note, if a contractor is cleaning up your property, they are responsible for disposing of the debris. The Landfill may charge a fee to contractors.

**Brush project volunteers should meet at the Big Mountain firehouse at 9am on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>.**

### **PRIVATE TREE SERVICE INFORMATION**

Your Firewise Board strongly recommends that District residents take steps to protect against a wildfire damaging their property and the surrounding community. One way to accomplish this goal is to contract privately with a tree service to remove dead and hazardous trees from individual lots. One knowledgeable contractor having done considerable past work in the area is Big Mountain Tree Service, tel: 406-261-2042, Mitch Crider, Proprietor. Feel free to contact Mitch to schedule a free estimate and subsequent mitigation, if so desired. Or contact any other tree service of your choosing. The cost of any such thinning/cleanup would be at the property owner's expense.

**Thank you for your effort in improving our community's survivable space!**