



State of Montana
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
Southern Land Office

Yellowstone County



Montana State-County Cooperative Fire Control

2025

THIS PLAN SERVES AS THE REQUIRED APPENDIX TO MONTANA STATE/COUNTY COOPERATIVE FIRE PROTECTION AGREEMENT DATED 03/2025"



PURPOSE AND INTENT

Yellowstone County Joint Fire Agency Response and Operations Plan

This plan is intended to apply operational and financial procedure for the operation of the Montana State-County Cooperative Fire Control Program within Yellowstone County to all wildland fires occurring on private and state-owned lands, outside of incorporated municipalities and towns, wherein both Yellowstone County and DNRC have aligned fire management priorities but legally distinct and independent fire protection jurisdiction(s) and responsibilities upon both private and state lands.

The purpose of the county cooperative fire control program is the cooperative development and deployment of fire control capacity and capability locally within and throughout Yellowstone County to respond to and suppress wildland fires upon all private and state-owned lands in accordance with those legal requirements noted in 76-13-105(3) and 7-33-2202.

This plan is developed in satisfaction of the requirements of Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 76-13-104 and 105, and 7-33-2210, when accompanied by an executed "State/County Cooperative Fire Control Agreement 03/2025".

This plan will be developed by the DNRC, in conjunction with Yellowstone County, and will be reviewed annually. In the event of modification, the plan must then be accompanied by a newly signed "State/County Cooperative Fire Protection Agreement 03/2025".

1. AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Authorities

- **Montana Code Annotated Title 76, Chapter 13, Parts 1 and 2.**
- **Montana Code Annotated Title 7, Chapter 33, Parts 20-24, Parts 41 and 42, and Part 45.**
- **Montana Code Annotated Title 50, Chapter 63, Parts 1-4.**
- **Administrative Rules of Montana; Department 36, Chapter 10, Rules 101, Rules 119-135, and Subchapter 2, Rules 201-204.**



2. State-County Cooperative Fire Protection Obligations

The DNRC will:

- A. Assist the county, upon request, in organizing varying degrees of fire protection forces within the county for fire attack and suppression.
- B. Prepare fire management and other fire operating-action plans as may be required or requested.
- C. Provide fire equipment and/or supplies to the county as such are available and inspect each annually.
- D. Provide wildland fire training to the county no less than one time annually.
- E. Appoint Montana Fire Wardens and/or DNRC County Fire Coordinators/Advisors in the number locations determined necessary by the DNRC Southern Area Fire Management Officer to redeem the DNRC's fire control obligations to law together with the County.
- F. Respond to and assist Yellowstone County with suppression of fires by providing technical assistance to County Incident Commanders, unified command when required, personnel, equipment, and aviation resources as such are both available and appropriate to carry out the intent of the cooperative program.

Yellowstone County will:

- A. Provide for the organization of volunteer fire companies in un-incorporated places.
- B. Provide for the formation of county volunteer fire companies organized under a county rural fire department, or various wildland fire protection entities organized under a rural fire council or similar organization as such is appropriate and subordinate to the County.
- C. Implement and supervise the day-day operation of the cooperative program within the county.
- D. Appoint a Yellowstone County Rural Fire Chief and such district rural fire chiefs as is required.
- E. Appoint a Yellowstone County Fire Warden which is distinctly different than a County Rural Fire Chief, and a Montana Fire Warden appointed by the DNRC who will manage and superintend the cooperative program within the County.
- F. Respond to or otherwise ensure that all wildland-vegetation fires upon private and state lands (COOP Protection areas) outside of municipalities are fully suppressed and that such fires, when no assistance is required, is later reported to the DNRC Southern Land Office, reference Attachment "E".
- G. Request technical, operational, and/or financial assistance from the DNRC Southern Land Office in the performance of the requirements of this plan.

The County may, in its discretion:

- H. Establish fire seasons within the county on both forested and non-forested areas.
- I. Require and subsequently regulate the use of open burning by permit within both forested and non-forested areas upon private lands.
- J. Enact emergency resolutions for emergency spending related to wildland fire suppression emergencies.
- K. Establish Rural Fire Districts, and/or Fire Service Areas to supplement rural fire protection and of whom, for this program's purpose, work within the program through Yellowstone County.
- L. Establish and enforce fire restrictions applicable to private lands within the county boundaries.



3. Cooperative Fire Program Management and Coordination

Day-Day Management of the Program

The Yellowstone County Cooperative Fire Control Program is administered by the County Commission and the DNRC Southern Land Office Area Manager and is managed day-to-day within the county by the Yellowstone County Fire Warden, together with the DNRC Southern Area Fire Management Officer (FMO).

Fire Line Officer (Authority{s} Having Jurisdiction)

The County Commission's chairperson (or another delegate of their own) serves in the capacity, as needed, as the Yellowstone County Fire Line Officer together with the DNRC Southern Area Manager (or another delegate of their own) while fire incident leadership is incumbent upon the Yellowstone County Fire Warden together with the assisting personnel of the Montana DNRC. Certain line authorities are delegated to the County Fire Warden and the DNRC FMO.

Emergency Fire Coordination Contacts

DNRC will maintain a Fire Duty Officer function to coordinate the DNRC's response needs to Yellowstone County from the DNRC and its agents. This function will be available to the County 24/7/365 and can be reached at the following points of contact: **Cell: (406) 591-5489**, or via e-mail at slofiredutyofficer@mt.gov. This is a collateral-duty, operational coordination function that will rotate amongst available fire management staff but is not a point of contact for the public, media, executives, or otherwise.

Yellowstone County will maintain an on-call County Fire Warden to coordinate the County's response to wildland fires, and coordinate with DNRC regarding any needed/necessary assistant and will be the available point-of-contact similar in nature to DNRC's Fire Duty Officer. This contact will be the Yellowstone County Fire Warden and in his/her absence, a deputy or assistant. This function will be available to the DNRC 24/7/365 and can be reached at the following points of contact: **Cell: 406-208-0506** or **Dispatch: 406-657-3000** but is NOT a point of contact for the public, media, executives, or otherwise. Yellowstone County will provide DNRC with a schedule or otherwise make notification to the DNRC regarding the contact information of the coordinator who will be the DNRC's primary point-of-contact for fire emergencies within the county *after a request for assistance has been placed*. This avoids duplication of efforts and information as has been present in prior instances of requests for state assistance.

Fire Program Funding and Obligations

The Counties' obligations to this agreement (ref. page 3) will be funded by Yellowstone County.

DNRC's obligation to this agreement (ref. page 3) will be funded by DNRC.

Nothing herein restricts the County and DNRC from forming financial cooperation otherwise for specific projects, fire response costs, or reimbursements where both parties previously express written agreement. Documentation of decisions may be required.

Unless otherwise agreed, neither Yellowstone County nor the DNRC will be responsible for the costs of resources or actions acquired or taken outside the terms and intent of this plan.



4. Cooperative Fire Program Operations

Fire Season-Burn Permits

Yellowstone County, by resolution, has adopted a year-round fire season within the county, outside the municipalities of Billings, Broadview, and Laurel, during which time a burn permit is required for fires exceeding the statutory (ARM) definitions of “recreational fire”. Controlled burning or other open fires within the municipalities of Billings, Laurel, and Broadview, are subject to the jurisdiction of the municipal fire chief/fire marshal.

Where the county has exercised its authority by declaring a fire season, and instituting a fire permitting process, the DNRC will not issue burn permits upon those private lands within the county boundary which otherwise would require a permit during the Montana State legal fire season pursuant to MCA.

Accordingly, the County will not issue permits or otherwise allow open burning upon Montana State School Trust lands. Permits for such purposes may be issued by the DNRC and are available at the Southern Land Office.

Fire Restrictions-Burn Bans

Yellowstone County may exercise, by resolution, stage I, II, and III restrictions upon private lands. Additionally, the county may suspend open burning at any time. Resolutions of the county to enact tiered fire restrictions should be accompanied by a State Forester Proclamation.

DNRC may, by state forester proclamation, institute stage I, II, and III restrictions upon both privately owned forested lands and state land areas. Additionally, the DNRC may suspend permitted fire and/or other industrial activities upon those areas as such may be required.

The County and DNRC will coordinate the planning of restrictions and burn bans together as such may be necessary. Typically, it will be the intent of the DNRC to follow the lead of the county when consideration of fire restrictions and burn bans are under consideration.

The fire restrictions contact for Yellowstone County is: Yellowstone County Fire Warden

The fire restrictions contact for DNRC is: DNRC Southern Area Assistant Fire Management Officer

Plans and Agreements

DNRC will represent COOP protected areas (private and state lands outside of municipalities) to federal agencies and will coordinate multi-agency operations in both agreement and practice. This is done to ensure continuity of operation amongst numerous agencies, and to ensure the proper assignment of fire protection in accordance with law including those costs associated. Agreements present between federal agencies and the county/fire departments for which DNRC has not previously reviewed and approved, and which produce cost or consequence, will not be the burden of the DNRC.

The County is free to exercise mutual aid at its own discretion and prerogative and pursuant to existing statute. If the DNRC forms mutual aid or other reciprocal fire protection agreements, written or otherwise, and directly with fire departments, for which the county is not a signatory to or has otherwise approved of in writing, and which produce cost or consequence, the County will not be held liable for any such cost or consequence from either party and bears no responsibility in such instances.



Fire Training

DNRC will provide, upon request of the County, wildland fire training(s) within Yellowstone County, free of charge. The intent of this training is to establish practice and procedure of the actual operation of the cooperative program including fire suppression strategy and tactics, incident command, integration of outside and supplemental resources, program organization and operation, and other such relevant program operation topics.

DNRC may also provide the county with NWCG training as such may be requested by the county, however NWCG training and certification is not a requirement of the cooperative program.

The County will organize training requests and coordinate with the DNRC regarding such requests. Training requests will be accepted year-round and may be scheduled according to the proper staff's availability to facilitate the course.

Certificates of completion (NWCG and/or DNRC) will be provided to the County Fire Warden for distribution to personnel.

NWCG training sessions, conducted by state-certified county and fire department personnel, must be completed in accordance with the terms set by the DNRC and/or NWCG. Sessions not conducted in these regards will not be certified by the State and attending personnel will not be eligible recipients of NWCG certification.

The county fire chief has, amongst other duties of law, the duty to ensure that their personnel and departments are properly trained and prepared to carry out the intent of this plan in coordination with other parties to agreement. Actual performance of county personnel and their training is the responsibility of the county.

Fire Equipment and Supply

DNRC will continue to supply Yellowstone County with firefighting equipment and supplies as such are available and appropriate. A current list of equipment and supplies issued to Yellowstone County is identified in Attachment "D".

Standing requests for fire equipment and supplies will be coordinated by the County who will coordinate with the DNRC on fulfilling such requests. These requests may be planned or incidental.

The positioning and operation of state-owned equipment within the county will be a joint decision between the County, and the DNRC Southern Area Fire Management staff. This equipment is intended to be used by the county for the purpose of carrying out the intent of this plan within Yellowstone County.

Terms regarding this equipment including insurance, maintenance, and proper/intended operation of equipment are further defined within the Cooperative Fire Control Agreement. While this equipment may be distributed by the County to local fire department jurisdictions, such equipment remains under the operational control of the County and may be recalled for duty by both the County and/or the DNRC in its discretion and need and according to the terms of the Cooperative Fire Control Agreement.

Equipment and supplies issued directly to fire departments, without the County's acceptance of such equipment and supplies, will pose no cost, no consequence, no responsibility, or any other liabilities upon the County and will be considered outside of the terms of the cooperative fire control agreement.



5. Pre-Suppression Assistance

Elevating Levels of Fire Suppression Readiness at the County Levels (“Staffed Stations”)

If a local, previously approved plan, is in place of which the DNRC is party too, DNRC may assist Yellowstone County by providing additional pre-suppression funding assistance (“severity”) in order that the County be able to elevate levels of preparedness for fire suppression within the County in order to reduce the probability of a large/escaped fire scenario from developing. This response plan must be recognized as an attachment to this AOP, referenced as “Attachment G”.

Development of this plan is a responsibility of the County.

This plan may include staffing un-staffed fire stations, up-staffing regularly staffed fire stations, availability of heavy equipment and radio communication operators, and other such examples which support additional levels of fire readiness at the county-wide level. These plans serve as management actions intended to supplement the cooperative fire control programs effort both within and together with the County and are not intended for purposes like those identified in the Northern Rockies Coordinating Groups efforts to mobilize Local Government Fire Forces for interagency fire management purposes abroad.

The DNRC may, in its discretion, perform management actions upon personnel employed by DNRC for this purpose up to and including dismissal for failure to meet the requirements present for DNRC employment. The County may, in its discretion, suspend or terminate a unit, personnel, or organization, company or department from participation should the unit, personnel, or organization, company or department, fail to adhere to or otherwise comply with County requirements within this AOP, severity plans, and/or county cooperative requirement.

Requests for activation of this plan will be made by Yellowstone County to the DNRC Southern Area Fire Management Officer. Confirmation of additional funding will be coordinated by the DNRC and County together. The County will coordinate implementation directly with fire departments within the county.

Costs of additional readiness measures performed by the County, wherein DNRC is not a party to agreement or has not previously approved the expense, are not the cost responsibility of the DNRC. Accordingly, if the DNRC takes direct action together with a fire department and outside the terms of and/or separate from the terms and intent of this agreement, such will not be considered a severity benefit to the County, and other policy documents will apply.

Fire Patrols and Detection

By request, and as resources are available and appropriate, the county may request a fire detection flight from the DNRC. These requests should be made by the County to the DNRC Fire Duty Officer through the Billings Interagency Fire Dispatch Center and should be accompanied by relevant information including 1) area to be flown, and 2) a ground contact if there is one. Such flights, as available, may also assist the County in locating reported fires, assisting with travel directions, and locating access to a fire.

Additionally, DNRC may make target-area ground patrols available to the County upon request when available resources are within the area. These requests may be made by the County directly to the DNRC Fire Duty Officer.



6. Fire Suppression Operations

Fire Notifications-Dispatch

Yellowstone County will dispatch fire control forces via its own means and procedures.

DNRC resources, including its partner and contracted agents sent by DNRC to assist the County, will be dispatched via its own means and procedures and upon a request being placed by the County or the County's Incident Commander and upon approval by a DNRC Duty Officer.

The DNRC and Yellowstone County agree to share initial fire pages/notifications with each other at no cost.

One exception to this practice will be for DNRC County Fire Coordinators (County Fire Advisors) who may automatically respond according to pre-determined criteria or be requested by the County or a County Incident Commander on behalf of the County to support and advise the Incident Commanders. See Attachment F.

County Assistance Requests-Procedures

Request(s) for DNRC assistance on a wildland fire may be placed by the County, or an Incident Commander (IC) on their behalf, and for any wildland fire occurring on private/state lands. County IC's should place such requests directly to 1) their County Fire Warden, or 2) their local 911 center, or 3) directly to the DNRC Fire Duty Officer. All requests for DNRC Assistance made by County IC's should then be immediately coordinated with the County Fire Warden.

All requests for assistance made by the County should contain a brief initial action size up (Attachment "C") complete with the following information as such is reasonably and practically available:

- Entity Requesting Assistance
- Incident Commander Identification
- Fire Location (lat/long, or Legal Description, or Road Address)
- Fire Size
- Character of Fire (smoldering, running, spotting, etc.)
- Values at Risk (structures, powerlines, etc.)
- Additional Resources Requested
- Incident Communications Plan activation and reporting/travel instructions.

The granting of resources by DNRC, when multiple requests for assistance from within the same County are present, will prompt the DNRC and County Fire Warden to immediately prioritize such requests together and prior to response of the requested resources. The DNRC Fire Duty Officer and County Fire Warden will form those priorities together however as the County is ultimately responsible for each fire occurrence, the County will retain the final determination on prioritization of multiple fires requesting limited resources.

DNRC will fund the resources it provides in assistance to the County. Costs of resources acquired by a fire department and/or the county outside of this agreement are not the responsibility of the DNRC or the County unless the DNRC or County explicitly agrees to bear the cost or reimburse such costs before the cost is incurred. Documentation will be required.



DNRC Assistance to County -Procedures

The DNRC will, as resources are available and appropriate, provide state-funded assistance to Yellowstone County which will consist of whatever manpower and equipment, in excess of that of the local jurisdiction(s), that is required by the County's Incident Commander to control the fire in support of the Montana State Fire Policy MCA 76-13-115 and the County's performance of their own requirements of 76-13-105(3) and 7-33-2202, and the DNRC mandate(s) of MCA 76-13-104 as identified in the terms of the Cooperative Fire Control Agreement.

Assistance provided by the DNRC may, at the DNRC's discretion, be commensurate with the local incident commanders training and capacity to safely and effectively operate the resources, and general operation and coordination of the actual fire incident and the assigned resources to ensure safe and efficient use of its resources and funding and continuity with its partner agencies and their terms. DNRC County Fire Coordinators (County Fire Advisors) will be made available by the DNRC and may be requested by Yellowstone County, for the purpose of assisting local Incident Commanders with incident operations. It is understood however that the DNRC County Fire Advisors do not exercise jurisdiction or command and control and are not a supervisory authority over county personnel.

DNRC's focus areas in support of the County will be upon:

- 1)** Providing immediate technical assistance to County incident commanders, through the immediate response of a DNRC County Fire Coordinator (Attachment "F"). This includes the DNRC working with County fire personnel to monitor incidents and fire conditions, detecting elevated environmental threats, evaluating human-caused fire problems, implementing fire attack plans, checking local, regional, and national resource availability and locations, and other such general assistance. *In this regard, the County should notify the DNRC Southern Area Fire Duty Officer as soon as is possible if circumstances occurring within the County operating area pose potential for further supplemental support. Those circumstances are included in Attachment B and is normally accomplished via the direct notification of fire situations through the 911 Dispatching process and further later by means of continual coordination between the County Fire Duty Officer and the DNRC Fire Duty Officer.*
- 2)** Providing initial attack assistance with resources otherwise not available to the County pursuant to the intent of the F-200, Cooperative Fire Control Agreement. This may include aviation assistance, technical incident management staff to support County Incident Commanders, hand crews, and other resources, as such are available and appropriate, and that would otherwise not be available to the County. DNRC would expect that prior to, or occurring simultaneously, the County requesting from DNRC like kinds and types of resources as already possessed by that County, that the County has implemented the response of the totality of its resources as such is reasonable and practical, and including the dispatch of other DNRC resources already assigned or otherwise previously provided to the County and may reserve the right to see that all County Co-Op- DNRC resources become fully committed to fire attack duties prior to granting assistance with like kinds and types of resources which are already available to the County. This is proper resource utilization and is accomplished by common principals or relative resource management which is a County responsibility.



Fire Incident Command and Control

Unless otherwise agreed between the County and the DNRC Fire Duty Officer, the County will have in place and on-scene, always, a County incident commander capable of adequate command and control of the incident and its resources. At times, DNRC may form unified command with a County incident commander. However, DNRC would prefer that the County assign a trained incident commander from its ranks who can then be assisted by a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor (Attachment "F") in carrying out both the County and DNRC's fire suppression obligations according to this agreement.

The County maintains responsibility for performing their statutory obligations within this agreement and as provided in applicable law, on all such fires upon private and state lands, even after the request for state assistance has been made and granted. Some exceptions may occur to this expectation; however, those must first be arranged with the DNRC Fire Duty Officer and the County together.

If the County requests the DNRC perform the incident commander role on its behalf, the local fire chief, county fire warden, and the DNRC Fire Duty Officer must **first** arrange together those details of transition including who is going to do it, when, how the transition will work, how the DNRC IC will request County resources, and other such details. When agreement is reached, the county/fire department must first seek the approval of the Commissioners and the DNRC must first seek the approval of the DNRC Southern Area Fire Management Office **PRIOR TO** the transition occurring. This is not DNRC's preferred course of action however DNRC acknowledges the challenges of sustained volunteer labor commitment and when requested, will attempt to make personnel available to fulfill this role. If unavailable for this purpose, the DNRC would expect the previous paragraph apply as it regards the County's obligations to statute.

The Incident Command System (ICS), including the attached incident communications plan (Attachment "A") will be used by the County and the DNRC and all incident agencies and personnel to provide incident command and control at incidents where DNRC resources, including its agents, have been requested to assist the County. Emergency Management functions remain a county responsibility.

Under no circumstances, are free-lancing and independent actions by any personnel permitted to occur during DNRC assisted incidents and it is the responsibility of the County incident commander(s) to ensure that supervision is applied to the incident and its resources. County incident commanders may be assisted by DNRC County Fire Coordinators/Advisors. However, neither state employees nor their agents (other private, local, state, and federal resources under DNRC operational control) will be expected to engage in situations wherein there exists an inordinate hazard typically associated with a lack of command and control (ICS), poor communications, and/or the conduct of free-lancing and independent actions.

DNRC forces, including their agents and those representing such sent in addition to whatever DNRC resources are already placed in the county, will be withdrawn from an incident as the first priority when agreement has been reached between the local jurisdiction and the DNRC that the incident has been stabilized or otherwise has deescalated to be within the capacity of the local jurisdiction to handle the remainder of the fire suppression activities adequately without further assistance, and pursuant to the requirements of MCA 76-13-104(B) and the local Cooperative Fire Control Agreement.

Without prior approval of the DNRC Fire Duty Officer, state forces and including their agents will not be left by the County to assume fire control activities. Such requests, when made, will be balanced with other fire assistance requests based on prioritization and where DNRC's resources are required elsewhere for higher priority, they will be released by the local jurisdiction for such response.



7. Post-Fire Incident Activities

Fire Investigation-Cost Recovery

All wildland fires occurring upon COOP Protection Areas (private, state lands) inside a county, but outside of a municipality or rural fire district should be investigated.

Wildland Fires occurring upon COOP Protection Areas inside of a Rural Fire District or Fire Service Area should be investigated by the District's Rural Fire Chief. Fires occurring within a municipality are the responsibility of the Municipal Fire Chief. All other fires are a responsibility of the Sheriff of the County.

DNRC may assist either the District Fire Chief or the County Sheriff with personnel and/or equipment necessary to determine cause and origin, and further to determine if a violation of law or rule is present. County/fire department cause/origin and arson fire investigation reports and materials should be made available to the DNRC upon request of the DNRC Southern Area Fire Management Officer.

DNRC may, in its discretion, perform fire cause and origin investigations, and if/when infractions of law or rule have occurred, may make a complaint/case before the County Attorney. Additionally, DNRC may pursue cost-recovery from negligent parties at its discretion together with the county, fire departments, other federal agencies, or independently.

Reimbursement Packages

In the instance where a county and/or fire department has incurred expenses that the DNRC has agreed to reimburse, the package should be assembled by the county and submitted to the DNRC Southern Land Office within 30 days of the conclusion of the incident. Consistent communications and documentation between Yellowstone County and DNRC throughout an assisted incident regarding the assignment of costs of suppression resources will be important in order that reimbursement packages contain only those items that each agree should be reimbursed.

Fire Suppression Damage Repair

Both the county/fire department and DNRC are free to perform fire suppression damage repair according to each agency's policy. However, nothing herein requires either party to perform damage repairs incurred during fire suppression.

Post-Fire Reviews (AAR)

After an assisted fire event, either party may call for an after-action review. The entity petitioning for the review will take the lead in organizing the review.



ATTACHMENT “A”-Fire Incident Communications Plan

Channel	RX/PL	TX/PL	Incident Use
RED	154.0700/NA	154.0700/156.7	Fire Common/First Call (Not COMMAND)
MAROON	154.2800/NA	154.2800/156.7	Fire Incident Command and Control
CORAL	154.2650/NA	154.2650/156.7	Fire Ground Tactical 1
SCARLET	154.2950/NA	154.2950/156.7	Fire Ground Tactical 2
COPPER	154.2725/NA	154.2725/156.7	Fire Ground Tactical 3
BURGUNDY	154.2875/NA	154.2875/156.7	Fire Ground Tactical 4
CRIMSON	154.3025/NA	154.3025/156.7	Fire Ground Tactical 5
GOLD	153.9050/NA	153.9050/156.7	Montana Common (Law, Fire, EMS, DOT)
NEON	157.4250/NA	157.4250/156.7	General Mutual Aid Coordination
RUBY REPEATER	153.8300/NA	159.3450/CSQ	Command Repeater
ORANGE	151.4000/NA	151.4000/NA	DNRC Air-Ground 2
YELLOW	151.2200/NA	151.2200/NA	DNRC Air-Ground 1

** All incoming DNRC resources, including their agents, requested by the County, will have only these channels available to them. Once DNRC assistance is requested and granted, the Incident Commander must activate this communications plan to ensure adequate incident command and control. The exception to this practice will be DNRC County Fire Coordinators/Advisors (Attachment F) who will maintain County radio frequencies for the purposes of implementing this plan’s intent.

- ✓ Radio frequencies owned by the State of Montana, including the “color” channels, are to be used for the State’s intended purposes as such are outlined both above and within the Department of Administration’s Mutual Aid Frequency manual.



ATTACHMENT “B”-County Notification to DNRC of Fire Circumstances

Pursuant to the intent of this plan, Yellowstone County will notify the DNRC Fire Duty Officer when any of the following circumstances are present within Yellowstone County, outside of the municipalities of Billings, and Laurel. DNRC will, upon receiving notification, begin pre-planned supplemental functions in support of the county’s efforts.

This is normally considered accomplished by virtue of distributing computer aided dispatches of county resources to the DNRC Fire Duty Officer.

FIRST; IDENTIFY THAT YOU ARE MAKING A NOTIFICATION CALL to the DNRC FIRE DUTY OFFICER

Then, provide information related to anyone of the following situations.

1. Any wildland fire within the county, suppressed or active, that is suspected to be 100 acres or larger.
 - ✓ DNRC may then dispatch, as units are available and appropriate, a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor to map the incident and then process the required ICS-209 on behalf of the County. If the fire is active, the units will directly assist the local county IC with mobilization and coordination of additional resources if required.
2. Any wildland fire that is receiving a multi-agency response including local and federal resources.
 - ✓ DNRC may then dispatch, as units are available and appropriate, a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor to coordinate the response of federal agencies resources if necessary.
3. Any wildland fire occurring on border regions where more than 2-counties are responding/involved.
 - ✓ DNRC may then dispatch, as units are available and appropriate, a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor to assist a local county IC with coordination of additional mobilizations required, provide technical assistance in the use and organization of resources, and coordinate with both counties regarding jurisdiction and future actions and assist with coordination between the counties involved.
4. Anytime a “County All Call” is placed which is drawing-down county response levels.
 - ✓ DNRC may then dispatch, as units are available and appropriate, a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor to assist a local county IC with coordination of additional mobilizations required, provide technical assistance in the use and organization of resources, and coordinate with the county any backfill resources as such may be required to ensure coverage in the remaining parts of the county areas with DNRC assistance.
5. Anytime a wildland fire is suspected to have been intentionally set.
 - ✓ DNRC may then dispatch, as units are available and appropriate, a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor to either assist the local jurisdiction with fire investigation and/or to record the incident information for processing according to DNRC policy.

When such circumstances are present; the DNRC Fire Duty Officer should be notified directly by the County.

Notification of this criteria may prompt a response from a DNRC County Fire Coordinator (See Attachment “F”).



ATTACHMENT "C"-County Request for DNRC Firefighting Assistance

In the event a County Incident Commander determines the need for additional resources/personnel, the following information must be relayed to the DNRC Fire Duty Officer at the earliest opportunity by the local 911-Dispatch Center OR the County or the County's incident commander:

▪ **FIRST: IDENTIFY THAT YOU ARE CALLING WITH AN EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE**

Then report the following:

- **Entity Requesting Assistance** (i.e. county/fire department)
- **Fire Name** (if no name, DNRC must assign a name. Names must correspond with geographical references and not with landowner/firefighter's names, nicknames, etc.)
- **Incident Commander:** (name of IC, or call-sign of IC)
- **Physical Location of Incident** (latitude/longitude if requesting aircraft, or legal description, or road address)
- **Agency Land Ownership** (if available; private-State {DNRC}, BLM, USFS, BIA, USFWS, BOR, etc.)
- **Estimated Size** (one football field is 1 acre)
- **Rate of Spread** (low, moderate, or high)
- **Values at Risk** (primary structures, powerlines, cattle, subdivisions, etc.)
- **Type of Fuels** (light, medium, heavy; then grass, sage, timber)
- **Specific Resource Request** (what resources are being requested)
- **Incident Operating Frequencies** (confirm that IC has activated the mutual aid communications plan {ATTACHMENT "A"})
- **Specific Travel Instructions, If Applicable** (want them to approach from a certain side or direction, where is staging area, etc.)
- **IF TRANSMITTED BY DISPATCH CENTERS, REQUEST THAT THE BILLINGS INTERAGENCY FIRE DISPATCH RE-CONFIRM WITH THE 911 CENTER REGARDING RESORUCES SENT AND ETA AND RELAY THIS INFORMATION TO THE REQUESTING INCIDENT COMMANDER**

REPORT THIS INFORMATION DIRECTLY TO THE BILLINGS INTERAGENCY FIRE DISPATCH CENTER

(406) 591-5489

If, you are unable to reach the DNRC Fire Duty Officer, please contact the Billings Interagency Dispatch Center at

(406) 896-2900.



ATTACHMENT “D”-DNRC Fire Equipment in Yellowstone County

DNRC-OWNED/COUNTY OPERATED EQUIPMENT (See F-202)

- Billings Fire Department: Brush 1 (hybrid)
- Blue Creek Volunteer Fire Company: DNRC Engine-1898, DNRC Tender 2358
- Custer Volunteer Fire Company: DNRC Engine-2149 and DNRC Engine-1804 (Keller Ranch)
- Haley Bench Volunteer Fire Company: DNRC Engine-2182, (2) 750-gallon slip units
- Laurel Fire Department: DNRC Engine-2071, Brush 5 (hybrid), and DNRC Engine 2292
- Lockwood Rural Fire District: DNRC Engine-2448
- Shepherd Volunteer Fire Company: DNRC Engine-2171, and DNRC Engine-2449
- Worden Volunteer Fire Company: DNRC Engine-2243
- Broadview Rural Fire District: DNRC Engine-2148
- Fuego Volunteer Fire Company: DNRC Engine 2313 and DNRC Tender 2390

Yellowstone County has received greater than 25 pieces of firefighting equipment (structure engines, ladder trucks, rescue trucks, brush trucks, water tanks, gear, supplies, and other equipment) through the DNRC’s DOD-FFP program. This equipment is tracked by DNRC but title is maintained by the local fire jurisdiction. While a separate program, the products complements the Yellowstone County Cooperative Fire Control program.

The equipment listed is in addition to that equipment which is owned and operated by Yellowstone County and Fire Departments in Yellowstone County which at last count, numbered near 78 pieces of equipment. This list is available through the Yellowstone County Fire Warden’s Office.



ATTACHMENT “E”-Final Fire Information Reporting Criteria

Pursuant to the intent of this plan, the following identifies reportable post-fire information **required** to be reported by Yellowstone County for all vegetation fires within the County. DNRC will report this information on the county’s behalf upon receipt.

REPORTING CRITERIA

1. Fire Department NFIRS Number
2. Fire Department Incident Number (NFIRS)
3. Fire Occurrence Date
4. Fire Alert Time
5. Fire Response Time
6. Fire On-Scene Time
7. Fire Containment Time
8. Final Size of Fire
9. Latitude and Longitude of Fire (Datum: NAD83)
10. Specific Cause of Fire

This information may be entered via the DNRC Fire Reporting app (Survey 123), e-mailed, within 24 hours of occurrence March 1st-October 1st or once per week after those dates, to the DNRC Southern Area Fire Duty Officer at slofiredutyofficer@mt.gov. Information may be presented using standard forms, NFIRS forms, fire department forms, or whatever method of delivery is most convenient to the County.

If a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor is on-scene, they will collect the relevant information and process on behalf of the County however if local procedure is present, then such process should be followed.

Fire information is reported daily throughout the fire season (March 1st-October 1st) or once a week interim. During the fire season, this information is used in consideration of placement of resources, pre-suppression funding, and likewise. End-of-year report information is required to be submitted to the Montana Legislatures Environmental Quality Council (EQC) once per quarter in consideration of program operations and funding.

DNRC will produce a year-end report demonstrating notable fire occurrence and reporting statistics to Yellowstone County for program planning and funding purposes.



ATTACHMENT "F"-DNRC County Fire Coordinator Activation

Pursuant to the intent of this plan, DNRC will make available to the County personnel capable of fulfilling the DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Fire Advisor role. This will be done at the DNRC's expense using any combination of local, state, and federal personnel who meet the qualifications required by the DNRC. DNRC County Fire Coordinators/Advisors may or may not be appointed Montana Fire Wardens.

These personnel will be responsible for responding to and working in-service to the County or the County's Incident Commander to perform coordination of incident response and suppression operations, mobilization of additional resources required by the IC, and to provide technical assistance to the IC in the use and organization of supplemental resources.

In the absence of such units being present on-scene, the county's incident commander will be required to perform these functions pursuant to the intent of the Cooperative Fire Control Agreement, when being assisted by the DNRC upon request of the County or the County's IC.

DNRC County Fire Coordinators/Advisors will respond to incidents, or otherwise contact a County Incident Commander, when **1)** requested by a 911 center on behalf of the County's Incident Commander, or **2)** when the County has notified the DNRC of those circumstances present as outlined in Attachment "B".

In the absence of the presence of those pre-determined "auto-launch" criteria, the County's incident commander may request a DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor to respond to their incident. This is accomplished by the IC contacting their respective 911 center who will contact the DNRC Fire Duty Officer to have a unit dispatched to the fire. DNRC would encourage this practice to be adopted by the County to support the proactive response model developed by this cooperative fire control plan.

If the response is prompted by a 911-center request on-behalf of a County IC, the responding unit will confirm with the requesting 911 center of their response via radio or through Billings Interagency Fire Dispatch Center and will make contact with the County's Incident Commander via radio or phone.

If the response is prompted by the criteria present in Attachment "B", the DNRC County Fire Coordinator/Advisor will contact the County incident commander directly to confirm a response, the need to continue a response, and/or the need to increase the speed of the response at the IC's request. All of these activities will be coordinated with the County.



ATTACHMENT "G"-Staffed Station Response Plan 2025 (from Item 5)



STAFFED STATION Operations

WILDLAND FIRE

AUTOMATIC RESPONSE PLAN

2025

This appendix satisfies the requirements of a County plan as noted on page 7, Item 5, paragraph 1.



INTENT

- ✓ The intent of this plan is to identify and initiate **automatic aide** RESPONSE procedures to wildland fires or the threat thereof that are both within Yellowstone County **and** during those times when the DNRC has activated “Station Staffing” operations within the county and at the County’s request.
- ✓ This plan does **NOT** apply to those times when Station Staffing has not been activated.
- ✓ This plan does **NOT** replace nor supersede the requirement of the County to respond to wildland fire incidents as such are organized by and within the County. Rather, this plan **DOES** complement that otherwise required effort, and focus’ additional proactive steps agreed to and intended to be taken by the County collectively, as organized within the County, when the use of the DNRC’s Station Staffing operations are active within Yellowstone County.
- ✓ It is generally assumed and required that Yellowstone County continue to respond to and suppress wildland fires within its own response area while enjoying the additional rapid and aggressive response operations this plan affords. At no time, unless agreed to by the County, and the DNRC Fire Duty Officer, should the County abdicate their fire suppression responsibilities while receiving assistance from the state or federal government resources.
- ✓ At all times, the County receiving assistance under the terms of this plan is to respond, establish or accept Incident Command, and remain in command while retaining control of the incident and responding resources and together with any other jurisdiction having authority.
- ✓ The DNRC may, in its discretion, perform management actions upon personnel employed by DNRC for these purposes up to and including dismissal for failure to meet requirements present for employment. The County may, in its discretion, terminate a unit, personnel, or organization from participation should the unit, personnel, or organization fail to adhere to or otherwise comply with County requirements. If the DNRC wishes to employ them further, this will be considered a Chapter 50 mobilization.



HOW THIS WORKS

During Station Staffing operations, Yellowstone County will be divided into 5 distinct Automatic Aide Wildland Fire Response “Zones”. These “zones” will generally follow the major highway systems and the Yellowstone River.

Every wildland fire call received within Yellowstone County by either the City/County 911 Center or the Laurel 911 Center will follow its normal fire dispatch activation procedure(s) during which time the fire department whose county initial attack area the fire report is occurring within will still be the first alerted to form a response to the wildland fire and will take the lead role.

This plan constructs an additional automatic (on page-out) response of those other fire units which may be staffed that day and generally would be the next closest and/or quickest available units for response. This is done to supplement the County’s response to any wildland fire call with an automatic level of initial response to support the County’s response to wildland fires.

Simply put, this IS MUTUAL AID occurring AUTOMATICALLY.

These responses will be initiated at time of notification or by the Engine Captain (Engine Boss), the County Fire Warden or County Fire Duty Officer, if Different, or DNRC Fire Duty Officer level in accordance with this plan. There will NOT be a separate tone automatically sent from either of the Fire Dispatch centers in Billings or Laurel.

ALL STAFFED STATION UNITS will need to monitor the following channels during their staffing operations:

- ✓ DES WEST
- ✓ DES EAST
- ✓ LAUREL FIRE REPEATER
- ✓ Their Department Tactical Channel (if applicable)



When a callout for a wildland fire is received, the following is expected by ALL Staffed Stations Units

Responder Units:

1. The hosting department should respond as is standard protocol.

There will not be **NO TOLERANCE** by member departments, or the DNRC, of other member departments who abdicate their duty to respond in full force because of the supplemental response by their neighbors. Their response is supplemental in support of your operations. It is not primary and other departments' resources should not be used to replace your own department's efforts. This is automatic mutual aid.

2. ALL STAFFED STATION units Engine Captains (ENGB's) should then determine the location of the reported fire against the "run cards" within this plan.

3. Upon doing so, the Captains should then turn the page and identify which staffed station units should respond automatically to that same fire call.

4. IF your department IS IDENTIFIED as an automatic responder to that Zons:

a. Initiate the response of your staffed station units within your department immediately

b. Radio call to dispatch and identify your unit and that you are responding to the fire call

c. MONITOR THE RADIO and continue your response until either cancelled by an on-scene unit or provided with travel/check-in procedures instructions.

d. Upon arriving, check-in with the hosting departments IC on THEIR TACTICAL (non-color) CHANNEL. Proceed as directed.



5. IF your department is **NOT IDENTIFIED as an automatic responder to the Zone:**

- a. Do not respond. Remain in your own area or on local assignment.*
- b. MONITOR THE RADIO and be prepared for additional resources requests (mutual aid) and/or move-ups and prepositions.*
- c. You may be requested to respond outside of your pre-assigned automatic response zones by the DNRC Duty Officer or, via mutual aid requests from partner fire departments.*

IF you are the hosting fire department **receiving the automatic aide:**

- 1. Upon receiving a fire call, RESPOND as you normally would. Be aware of the additional automatic response and monitor the dispatch channel for which other resources are also responding to your call.*
- 2. Upon Arrival at the fire, radio call a size up (see below) to fire dispatch and be aware that the automatic response units will be monitoring and awaiting your instructions. Remember: Better to have it and not need it then to later need it and not have it.*
 - a. Size-ups should include at the minimum:*
 - ✓ Name your command “Clapper Flat Command”
 - ✓ Fire Size
 - ✓ Rate of Spread
 - ✓ Values at Risk (structures, powerlines, etc.)
 - ✓ Additional resource instructions (*cancel or continue. IF CONTINUE, identify a radio channel to check-in on and a place to report to-travel instructions.*)
 - ✓ Additional resource needs: This would be for resources in excess of that already responding from both your department and those under the automatic plan.
 - ✓ Be expecting to hear from incoming resources on YOUR TACTICAL channel UNLESS you designate another color channel to be used for the incident.



b. Have a plan to put those incoming resources to straight to work!

3. If you have additional mutual aid needs BEYOND THOSE ALREADY ENROUTE, declare it to FIRE DISPATCH by indicating the departments and type of units and how many you want. If you need additional staffed station resources, aviation or other resources, contact the DNRC Duty Officer.

IF you are the **FIRST ARRIVING** resource to a fire not in your own response area:

1. Initiate command in the same way it is outlined on page 5, 2A.

2. Take tactical action to suppress the fire while waiting for the jurisdiction to arrive.

a. When the jurisdictional agency arrives, transfer command to them.

- ✓ Be sure to communicate this to fire dispatch.
- ✓ Be sure to brief the incoming IC with what has been done up to this point
 - Including whether additional responding units were continued on cancelled and if so which ones
 - Remain on scene and engage the fire according to the incoming IC's wishes



IF you are a Staffed Station Unit **ALREADY ON A CALL and receive another call for automatic aide:**

- 1. If you are in command, your unit does NOT respond.*
- 2. If you are tactically engaged in an uncontrolled fire scene (active spread occurring-your unit does NOT respond.*
- 3. If you are a resource on a contained fire in mop-up stages and there are other resources on the scene OR the fire is secure (be CERTAIN it is!) then contact the IC, inform them of the pending response, and receive acknowledgement that you are clearing their scene and responding to another call.*



Zone 1 Staffed Station Responders

In No Particular Order-ALL STAFFED STATION UNITS GO

STAFFED STATION RESPONDERS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTMENT BEING PAGED

- Broadview
- Fuego
- Laurel
- Molt
- Billings

Communications Plan

HOST DEPARTMENT	1ST CONTACT CHANNEL	BACKUP CHANNEL
	<i>(THEN DIRECTED TO A COLOR)</i>	<i>(IF NO CONTACT ON 1ST)</i>

BROADVIEW	Broadview Tactical	DES WEST
FUEGO	Fuego Tactical	DES WEST-DES EAST
MOLT	Molt Direct	Molt Repeater-DES WEST
LAUREL	Laurel Repeater	DES WEST-DES GREENO



Adjacent Responder Options through the DNRC FDO or by Mutual Aid Request

- ✓ Dean Creek (North)
- ✓ Park City (Central-West)
- ✓ Bull Mountain (North)
 - ✓ BLM
- ✓ Shepherd (North-East)

Zone 2 Staffed Station Responders

In No Particular Order-ALL STAFFED STATION UNITS GO

STAFFED STATION RESPONDERS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTMENT BEING PAGED

- Laurel
- Blue Creek
- Billings
- Lockwood

Communications Plan

HOST DEPARTMENT	1ST CONTACT CHANNEL (THEN DIRECTED TO A COLOR)	BACKUP CHANNEL (IF NO CONTACT ON 1 ST)
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LAUREL	Laurel Repeater	DES WEST-DES GREENO
BLUE CREEK	Blue Creek Tactical	DES WEST-DES GREENO



Adjacent Responder Options through the DNRC FDO or by Mutual Aid Request

- ✓ Joliet (West)
- ✓ Edgar (South and West)
- ✓ BIA (South and West)
- ✓ Park City (West)
 - ✓ BLM
 - ✓ USFS

Zone 3 Staffed Station Responders

In No Particular Order-ALL STAFFED STATION UNITS GO

STAFFED STATION RESPONDERS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTMENT BEING PAGED

- Blue Creek
- Lockwood
- Haley Bench



- Billings

Communications Plan

HOST DEPARTMENT	1ST CONTACT CHANNEL	BACKUP CHANNEL
	(THEN DIRECTED TO A COLOR)	(IF NO CONTACT ON 1ST)

BLUE CREEK	Blue Creek Tactical	DES WEST-DES East
LOCKWOOD	Lockwood 1	DES West-DES East
HALEY BENCH	Haley Bench Tactical	DES East-DES West

Adjacent Responder Options through the DNRC FDO or by Mutual Aid Request

- ✓ Worden (North-East)
- ✓ Laurel (West-South)
 - ✓ BIA
 - ✓ BLM

Zone 4 Staffed Station Responders

In No Particular Order-ALL STAFFED STATION UNITS GO



STAFFED STATION RESPONDERS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTMENT BEING PAGED

- Worden
- Shepherd
- Lockwood
- Haley Bench
- Billings
- Custer

Communications Plan

HOST DEPARTMENT	1ST CONTACT CHANNEL	BACKUP CHANNEL
	(THEN DIRECTED TO A COLOR)	(IF NO CONTACT ON 1 ST)

WORDEN	Worden Tactical	DES East
CUSTER	Custer Tactical	DES East-DES Custer
HALEY BENCH	Haley Bench Tactical	DES East
LOCKWOOD	Lockwood 1	DES West-DES East

Adjacent Responder Options through the DNRC FDO or by Mutual Aid Request



- ✓ Bighorn County (South Side of the Hills)
 - ✓ BLM
 - ✓ BIA
- ✓ Laurel (West Side)

Zone 5 Staffed Station Responders

In No Particular Order-ALL STAFFED STATION UNITS GO

STAFFED STATION RESPONDERS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE DEPARTMENT BEING PAGED

- Shepherd
- Worden
- Custer
- Billings

Communications Plan

HOST DEPARTMENT	1 ST CONTACT CHANNEL (THEN DIRECTED TO A COLOR)	BACKUP CHANNEL (IF NO CONTACT ON 1 ST)
SHEPHERD	Shepherd Tactical	DES East-DES West
WORDEN	Worden Tactical	DES EAST-DES WEST
CUSTER	Custer Tactical	DES East-DES Custer



Adjacent Responder Options through the FDO or by Mutual Aid Request

- ✓ Fuego (West Side)
 - ✓ Lockwood
 - ✓ Blue Creek
- ✓ Bull Mountain (North and West End)
 - ✓ Hawk Creek (Central-East End)
 - ✓ Melstone (North and East End)
 - ✓ BLM
- ✓ Treasure County (Far East)

Payments and Reimbursements

This program is operated by the Montana DNRC who directly interfaces with individual Fire Departments. All payments and reimbursements for time, fuel, department equipment payments, operating expenses, and all other realized costs as a result are organized by the Montana DNRC directly with the various Fire Departments participating. To obtain further information, contact Montana DNRC Southern Land Office regarding pre-season meetings and what training and qualifications are required, payments or reimbursements are available, what documentation is required, when, and other such details.

Activation/Coordination of Staffed Station

Station staffing is activated by the Montana DNRC. Individual Fire Departments wishing to staff may contact the DNRC Southern Land Office directly with requests for staffing.



Coordination of staffing, response to fires, etc. of staffed station resources is at the discretion of the DNRC Fire Duty Officer. Arrangements for use of staffed station resources for mop-up, relief of existing forces, nightshift staffing, patrol of old fires, lightning patrols, etc. should be coordinated with the DNRC Fire Duty Officer.

Additional Resource Requests Procedure

Mutual Aid: Contact Fire Dispatch (or Laurel Dispatch) to place the request. Specify the departments to be requested and what resources and how many you are asking. Provide the command channel you are using.

County-Wide Mutual Aid: This may be requested by members party to the county-wide mutual aid agreement. This is available by contacting Fire Dispatch and specifying the types of equipment you wish to receive and indicating what channel you are working on.

Staffed Station Resources: Contact the DNRC Fire Duty Officer to request additional staffed station resources for such things as backfill, extra slots, etc. Fire Dispatch, nor the Yellowstone County Fire Warden or County Fire Chief, coordinates staffed station resource allocations.

Resources Not Otherwise Available: Including aviation, hand crews, logistical needs, additional engines, incident management etc.-Contact the DNRC Fire Duty Officer.

Staffed Station Staffing Allocations and Backfill: Contact the DNRC Fire Duty Officer.

-END-