



# BIG SKY NIPF-ty NOTES



*Supporting non-industrial private forest owners (family forests)  
in their rightful and responsible use, management and  
enjoyment of their forested lands*

Montana Forest Owners Association  
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## MFOA Board Members and 2019 Officers

President	Mike Christianson, Bozeman	Director	Peter Kolb, Evaro
Secretary	Mark Boardman, Columbia Falls	Director	Pat Mandzak, Lewiston, ID
Treasurer	Jody Christianson, Bozeman	Director	Peter Pocius, Helena
Director	Allen Chrisman, Kalispell		

## Membership renewal

If you have not renewed your yearly membership to MFOA, we urge you to do so either online or by mailing a check for \$25 to the above address.

## 2019 Legislative session

The 2019 legislature is in session. We monitor the legislation on an almost-daily basis. Contact us if you wish any input or assistance from MFOA on events. Following are various bills which may be of interest.

### HB31 - Forestland fire preparedness assessments

In the Fall 2018 NIPF-ty Notes we provided you extensive information on proposed changes to landowner assessments for fire preparedness costs. At question are who pays, how much do they pay, and what items are assessed (parcel owners, forestland parcels, dwelling owners?). This issue is before the legislature as HB31. In a nutshell, the DNRC is proposing to delete all assessments resulting from “wildland fire protection parcels” and instead assess all parcel owners (statewide) outside of municipalities, federal, state, and tribal lands, approximately as follows:

- \$7.49 per parcel, plus
- \$7.49 per a parcel designated as class 10 forestland, plus
- \$7.49 per dwelling

Thus, a forested parcel with a dwelling would be assessed approximately \$22.47 on the next property tax bill for “fire preparedness.” The amount of \$7.49 could increase over the years to about \$9.30 each if the DNRCs fire preparedness budget increased.

A hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee is scheduled for March 20 at 3:00 p.m. in the Capitol Building room 172. Committee hearings are open the public and you may appear and testify if you wish.

### HB34 - Appropriation for Good Neighbor Authority agreement income

Rep Jim Keane (D-Butte) introduced HB34 to create a statutory appropriation for Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) agreement income. The plan is to jumpstart the GNA program in Montana with private contributions for three years, then to have a self-sustaining program starting year four. The GNA program utilizes state timber sale and procurement contracts to perform work on federal forest land. The purpose of HB34 is to set up a fund specifically for GNA income. There is money coming in, but there currently is no spending authority. The House Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on January 29, 2019. At that meeting DNRC Forestry

Division Administrator Sonya Germann said that the forest products industry had agreed to contribute \$150,000. Idaho Forest Group (which recently purchased Tricon Timber’s stud mill at St. Regis, Montana) agreed to contribute \$100,000 per year for three years. Further, conservation partners and businesses had contributed \$95,000. (Total was about \$545,000.) The bill passed out of the Natural Resources Committee on February 6 and the Appropriations Committee on February 11. At the Natural Resources Committee hearing DNRC Administrator Sonya Germann stated that there were commitments of \$150,000 per year for three years, plus \$170,000 from conservation groups and other businesses. (Total was about \$620,000.) (The MFOA board voted to contribute \$100 to Good Neighbor Authority.) The bill passed to the Senate Natural Resources committee on February 15 and is awaiting a hearing date.

HB441 – “Repeal of timber conservation license in lieu of sale”

77-5-208 MCA allows the DNRC to sell a timber conservation license in lieu of logging State Trust Lands. HB441 would repeal this option. We polled MFOA members by email. Nearly every responding member supported repealing the timber conservation license program. MFOA submitted a [February 20, 2019, letter supporting HB441](#) to the House Natural Resources Committee and testified in Helena. The bill passed the House and moved to the Senate.

HB627 – “Require that a timber conservation license in lieu of sale be offered for every project”

77-5-208 MCA allows the DNRC to sell a timber conservation license in lieu of logging State Trust Lands. HB627 would require that every State Trust Lands timber sale include an offer of a timber conservation license in lieu of logging. If passed, this bill will counter and supersede HB441. A hearing in the House Natural Resources Committee is scheduled for March 11 at 3:00 p.m. in the Capitol Building room 172.

**Dates to calendar**

- March 23, 2019 - the Forestry Mini-College at the University of Montana in Missoula. This is a one-day educational event for family forest landowners, professionals, and everyone interested in forestry. Classes begin at 9:30 a.m. and continue through 5:00 p.m. with a 1 ½ hour lunch program and break. The fee is \$30 per person and it covers a catered lunch, refreshments between classes and handout materials. Each attendee may register for a maximum of four classes (out of 11 offered) at 90 minutes each. While you are there, stop and say hello at the MFOA booth and get raffle tickets for a Stihl chain saw, chaps and helmet system. To register for classes, go to [https://montana.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_4PaTtnD2gB0qZ7L](https://montana.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4PaTtnD2gB0qZ7L).
- April 12, 2019 - the Montana Forest Landowner Conference at the Copper King Hotel and Convention Center in BUTTE. While you are there, stop and say hello at the MFOA table and get some chain saw raffle tickets. This will be MFOA’s fourth year to raffle a Stihl MS271 chain saw. Register at <http://www.foreststewardshipfoundation.org/forest-landowner-conference>.
- Forest Stewardship Workshops (bring your friend or neighbor). These workshops have become well-known as a “must do” for private forest owners who seek important forestry knowledge from experts. The workshops are well worth your time (according to over 90% of past attendees). The 2019 workshop locations and dates are listed below. The workshops fill fairly quickly so register sooner rather than later! For more information go to <http://forestry.msuextension.org/mfsp.html>.

<u>Location</u>	<u>2019 Workshop dates</u>	<u>Register by</u>
Libby	April 25, 26 and May 3	April 12
Trout Creek	May 16, 17 and 24	May 3
Corvallis	June 6, 7 and 14	May 24
Kalispell	July 11, 12 and 19	June 28
Lewistown	August 8, 9 and 16	July 26

## **Burning season**

Montana's open burning season for "minor burning" of debris generated by forestry practices generally runs from March 1 through November 30 each year. A "major open burner" may require special permits if more than 4,500 tons of wood material is to be burned in a single year. Each county governing body may in its discretion establish its own unique dates and parameters for controlled burning seasons through cooperation between local air quality boards and fire chiefs. If you plan on using fire to burn woody debris on your property you must obtain a county burn permit. Yearly permits for the following counties may be obtained at <https://app.mt.gov/burnpermit/>.

Broadwater, Butte-Silver Bow, Carbon, Cascade, Chouteau, Flathead, Gallatin, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Madison, Missoula, Park, Powell, Ravalli, Stillwater, Teton and Yellowstone.

If your county is not on the above list, contact your county directly to determine the requirement to obtain a burn permit and to activate such permit.

After obtaining a county burn permit you must "activate" it for each day you plan on burning. Certain counties, particularly Missoula, Cascade, Yellowstone, Lewis and Clark, Lincoln and Flathead, have county exceptions (to manage smoke impacts on stagnant air days and fire escape risks) and require you to contact the county on the day you plan to ignite any burn. Be sure to contact your county to determine special restrictions.

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) implements the Administrative Rules of Montana. The DEQ offers a good summary of the requirements to burn during different months of the year at <http://deq.mt.gov/Portals/112/Air/AirQuality/Documents/OpenBurn/MontanaOpenBurningPeriods.pdf>.

The requirements to burn during winter months are different for the "Western Montana Zone" and the "Eastern Montana Zone." People desiring to burn in December, January or February should follow the rules set forth by the DEQ on the above link. Such winter burning requires submitting a "[Winter Time Open Burning Request Form](#)" and obtaining a Burn Identification Number. Additionally, one must telephone the DEQ at (406) 444-3490 on the morning of the planned burn to obtain final approval. Note that several counties across Western Montana directly control these permits and will restrict such "winter" burns based on the counties-specific air quality standards. Other counties defer such permitting to the DEQ. Make certain you know which authority enforces the rules in your county and make sure your permit is through the appropriate authority.

For more information on burning, you may contact your local county fire protection authority, or the DEQ Air Quality Bureau at:

- John Proulx, DEQ Air Quality Specialist (406) 444-5391
- Kristen Martin, DEQ Air Quality Meteorologist (406) 444-0283

## **Statement from Forest Service Chief on executive order promoting active management (Dec 21, 2018)**

Chief of the USDA Forest Service Vicki Christiansen issued the following statement regarding the Executive Order "[Promoting Active Management of America's Forests, Rangelands, and other Federal Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk](#)": "The USDA Forest Service applauds today's executive order and the President's commitment to focusing more robust efforts toward active management of American forests and grasslands. This executive order, along with support and authorities under the 2018 Omnibus bill, will have a positive impact on our ability to improve conditions on the land. The natural resource challenges before us require collective action by everyone involved, and we look forward to working with federal partners, states, tribes, key stakeholders and members of the public. We will do the right work in the right place at the right scale using advanced science and mapping tools. We will use all the tools available to us, including mechanical treatments, prescribed fire, and unplanned fire to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire."

## **Montana Natural Resources Youth Camp (MNRYC\*)**

July 14-19, 2019

Cost: \$300

(or 'Why do kids have all the fun?')

The best youth camp you may never have heard of

Do you know any 14-18 year olds interested in finding out what a forester does? A wildlife biologist? A geologist? This unique 6-day resident camp allows youths to experience a variety of inter-connected natural resource disciplines taught by working professionals. The campers stay in cabins in the Lubrecht Experimental Forest east of Missoula, from Sunday night through Friday afternoon. Returning campers (yes, some campers return for more!) participate in extra field trips and have the option of an additional overnight backpacking trip, leaving Friday afternoon and returning Saturday. These Conservation Leadership School (CLS) campers have opportunities to guide team projects.

The camp is open to all post-8th grade 14-18 year olds. Acceptance is based on a short essay describing why the camper wishes to attend and recommendations from two people. Campers come from many western states, but the majority is from Montana. The week includes exposure to the disciplines of wildlife biology and rangelands, soils, stream ecology, forestry, and geology. Campers attend 3-hour, hands-on, outdoor sessions in each discipline: coring trees, evaluating forest health, analyzing soils, using bugs to critique water health, and recognizing indicators in rocks that might show proximity to various economic deposits.

MNRYC also includes outdoor activities such as black powder muzzle shooting, fly-casting, teepee building, and woodsman sports and crafts. These one-hour electives are twice a day, intermixed with the longer sessions spent on natural resource evaluation techniques. Other fun diversions include a white-water raft trip down Alberton Gorge on the Clark Fork River and lake swimming. The camp also sneaks in professionally taught raft and water safety and a ropes course in the midst of the fun.

The experience culminates in 'The Land Use Game,' at the end of the week. Campers use information gained during the week to make practical operating decisions on an actual 3,800 acre tract of land, located near the camp. They must balance the need to make enough money to own and maintain the land and provide a living with maintaining a healthy natural resource balance. The winning team finds a balance between earning an income from the natural resources on the land without degradation, perhaps even enhancing the land's resiliency. Campers quickly learn that conservation is a fluid concept, with small and large scale adjustments necessary over time to reach goals. "I never knew land management was so difficult" is a common refrain.

The MNRYC also serves as a warm-up for the NCF-Envirothon annual academic competition, where high school teams from different states and provinces compete in natural resource hands-on and written knowledge and project problem-solving. Over half a million students compete in this National Conservation Foundation event.

This valuable camp is a true made-in-Montana asset, providing the next generation of natural resource professionals an early taste of real world jobs and of the decisions those professionals make to keep a balance in wisely managing natural resource assets.

If you know of prospective campers aged 14-18 interested in any of the natural resource disciplines, help spread the word. More information can be found at <http://mnryc.org> or contact [christina.oppegard@mso.umt.org](mailto:christina.oppegard@mso.umt.org) or at (406) 243-2773.

And, very important (perhaps most important to some), the food is great!

\*MNRYC is a not-for-profit camp that keeps costs low for the campers through grants and donations. It is building its endowment fund with the ultimate goal of becoming self-sustaining.

See [www.mnryc.org/endowment-fund](http://www.mnryc.org/endowment-fund).