

Community Events Focus on Fire

By Megan Birzell

Reminders of fire abound in Seeley Lake this summer. Fortunately, they're not of the hot variety. While we've been fortunate so far to enjoy a relatively cool, wet summer, just a few years ago the Jocko Fire showed first-hand the risks we face as a result of living in a forested community.

In June, CRC partnered with the Double Arrow Landowners' Association, the Seeley Lake Ranger District, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC), and the Seeley Lake Fuels Mitigation Task Force to host a Fire Preparedness meeting. The meeting provided an update on the fire suppression activities of the Seeley District and DNRC and the fuels mitigation activities of the Task Force.

The feature talk was delivered by Jack Cohen with the Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory. His presentation focused on key actions landowners can take within 100 feet of their homes in order to reduce the likelihood of home ignition in a wildfire event. Among his tips were to construct the home, particularly the roof, of fire resistant materials and remove all burnable vegetation within five feet of the home. To learn more about Dr. Cohen's recommendations for protecting your house, please visit http://www.firewise.org/resources/wui_hir.htm.

Later in the month, the USFS dedicated a new interpretive display at the Girard Larch Grove on Boy Scout Road. The display is the result of a partnership between CRC and the Seeley District with funding from DNRC. The signs that make up the display provide educational information about the fire ecology of the valley, particularly the western larch. The display serves as a good reminder that fire is a natural ecological process that has been leaving its mark in the Clearwater Valley for centuries. It also highlights the importance of improving the fire resistance of our homes in the face of the fact that fire will continue to burn in this landscape.

For more information about fire preparedness in the valley, please contact either Allison Kolbe at 677-2233 or Megan Birzell at 677-0069.

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