

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Resolution No. 25-42

Resolution Establishing County-wide Wildland Fire Policy and Program Management

WHEREAS, the Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners has the proper authorities, jurisdiction, and expectation, to undertake and perform the duties associated with wildland fire suppression for the protection and conservation of range, farm, and forest resources upon all private and publicly owned land within the boundary of Yellowstone County, and outside of the City limits of Billings, and Laurel; pursuant to MCA 76-13-105(3) and 7-33-2202, and,

WHEREAS, the safety of the public and first responders is paramount in all wildland fire suppression activities occurring within the County's area(s) of operations and legal jurisdiction as defined in 76-13-105(3) and 7-33-2202, and that all private property owners and federal and state land management agencies have an inherent responsibility to manage resources, mitigate fire hazards, and otherwise prevent such fires from occurring on their properties to the extent reasonable and practical and;

WHEREAS, when such fires do occur, it shall be a priority to minimize the threat caused by such fires to the first responders, and to the public and their properties to the extent both reasonable and practical and;

WHEREAS, it has been this county's experience that such is generally best accomplished by virtue of a well-prepared, fully integrated, and systematically coordinated approach that produces a rapid and aggressive initial fire attack response as such fires are detected and reported to the County and as required by MCA 76-13-105(3), 7-33-2202, and 76-13-115;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,

- 1.** It shall be this County's policy that all such wildland fires within the County's area of operations and legal jurisdiction, or other incidents which pose threat upon and thereof, receive a well prepared, fully integrated, and systematically coordinated response that produces a rapid and aggressive initial attack effort and by all those who hold a duty, responsibility, jurisdiction, or are otherwise involved.
- 2.** Inter/multi-agency cooperation and collaboration among all personnel, departments and agencies of the various cities, county, state, and federal agencies is fully intended and expected to occur without exception.
- 3.** Pursuant to Montana Code Annotated Section 7-33-2202(3), the Yellowstone County Board of County Commissioners appoints the Board Chairman as the Yellowstone County Rural Fire Chief.
- 4.** The Board of County Commissioners hereby appoints and delegates, without abdication, those customary and ongoing responsibilities of wildland fire protection within county initial attack areas and jurisdictions to the Fire Chiefs, or presiding officers as nominated by each

agency, of the City of Billings Fire Department, Broadview Rural Fire District #3, Blue Creek Volunteer Fire Company, Custer Volunteer Fire Company, Fuego Volunteer Fire Company, Haley Bench Volunteer Fire Company, City of Laurel Fire Department, Lockwood Rural Fire District #8, Molt Volunteer Fire Company, Shepherd Volunteer Fire Company, and the Worden Volunteer Fire Company.

5. The Board of County Commissioners hereby appoints the County's Director of Emergency Services as the Yellowstone County Fire Warden pursuant to and with the duties included within 7-33-2215 to include acting as liaison between local, state, and federal agencies to coordinate training and wildland and grassland fire prevention, detection, suppression, investigation and mitigation and establishes that the County Fire Warden of Yellowstone County is responsible for implementation of this policy's intent and shall superintend the county wildland fire management program.
6. The County may, in its sole discretion, engage at any time and in all places within and the extent of its jurisdictional and lawful authorities, and to the level and manner it determines necessary, to further its own policy and may engage, upon request or as otherwise planned and previously agreed, in assisting the various local, state, and federal agencies with any means of assistance available and reasonably necessary to implement the intent of this policy. This includes, but is not limited to, typical assistance such as those activities associated with administration and supervision and coordination of the Montana State-County Cooperative Fire Control operations within the geographical areas of the applied geographic and functional authority and jurisdiction, and the consistent and direct performance of all manners of coordination between all local, state, and federal agencies as such relate to providing for such inter/multi-agency wildland fire planning and organization, training, prevention, detection, response, suppression, investigation, and mitigation as may be required to effect this policies intent.

Passed and Adopted on the 25th day of March, 2025.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
YELLOWSTONE COUNTY, MONTANA**

Mark Morse, Chairman
Yellowstone County Commissioner

Michael J. Waters, Member
Yellowstone County Commissioner

John Ostlund, Member
Yellowstone County Commissioner

Attest:

Jeff Martin
Yellowstone County Clerk and Recorder