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Tri-Lakes Tribune

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Fire Chief's Report

I am not even going to try to forecast what the summer fire season is going to be like. Last year we put out in June it was going to be a "normal" fire season. I sure hope last year is NOT the new normal.

Living in a semi-arid climate, anytime we go more than 14 days without moisture, our fire danger starts climbing. Three or four weeks without moisture will place us in a High fire danger season – no matter how much snow we got last winter. They are predicting hot and dry followed by hotter and drier for July, August, and September, so only time will tell. We will be as ready as we can be no matter what happens!

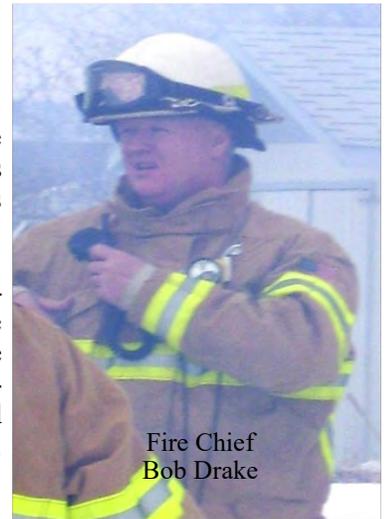
We also know that thinning the trees around your house, down your driveways, and along your escape routes coupled with Leaving Early are the only ways to ensure you and your loved ones will be safe if a wildfire does pay you a visit. Tri-County FireSafe Working Group has spent



over 30 years in the Helena area promoting, facilitating, and completing thousands of mitigation projects. We have witnessed the effectiveness of these measures during real fires. Mitigation is the only thing that works! It works 24/7/365, if you're home or not!

Virtually all these mitigation projects were completed through grants and other funding sources that provided at least 50% of the money to get them done. In this newsletter, there is a copy of Tri-County's Application for Assistance with Fuel Modification Project (see page 5). There is money available now to help you get your work done. Don't wait – Git-R-Done! If not you, who will protect your house, kids, horses, antique cars, boat, dirt bike, jewelry, mother-in-law, etc.?

Tri-Lakes has applied for a mitigation grant through the Ready, Set, Go Program (RSG) that would award 90/10 money to allow us to work some magic along some key escape routes in our district. In the past, we encountered challenges trying to convince homeowners to spend their money mitigating the fire danger along escape routes touching their property so both they and their neighbors would be safe during a wildfire. The 50/50 grant money just was not enough to help then get the work done. This RSG grant will allow us to try again to see if we can get some key escape routes mitigated in the North Hills. We keep trying – we hope you will help us when we



Fire Chief
Bob Drake





Motor home, camper, and recreational vehicle Safety

Motor homes, campers, and recreational vehicles are used for living and traveling. Each year, fires in them cause deaths, injuries, and millions of dollars in damages. Fires can start in the kitchen. They can start in the engine area. Sometimes the fires are electrical. With a few simple safety tips you can help prevent these fires from happening.

SAFETY TIPS

- Install smoke alarms. Make sure they work.
- Stay in the kitchen while you cook. Keep anything that can catch fire away from the stovetop.
- Only use one heat-producing appliance plugged into a receptacle outlet at a time. Major appliances should be plugged directly into a wall receptacle outlet.
- Refrigerators, furnaces, ovens and stovetops use propane. Check them for leaks. Keep an updated gas leak detector on board.
- Have your propane system inspected to make sure it still works properly.
- Know two ways out. Make sure windows open easily.
- Have everyone practice the home fire escape plan.
- Do not keep camping heaters and lanterns on while sleeping.
- Before setting up a campfire, make sure it is allowed.
- If campfires are allowed, they need to be at least 25 feet away from anything that can burn.
- Have your vehicle serviced by a qualified mechanic.
- Keep a portable fire extinguisher on board. Only adults who know how to operate it should use it. Only use it if the fire is small and can be contained. Make sure everyone else is leaving. Make sure someone is calling the fire department.



Carbon Monoxide Awareness

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a gas. You cannot see it. You cannot taste it. You cannot smell it. CO poisoning can result from leaks in the exhaust. It can happen because of improper use of appliances. Sometimes CO comes from another vehicle. Make sure you have a working CO alarm.

FACT

When the vehicle is used as a structure, the most common area for these fires to start is the kitchen or cooking area. This is followed by the engine area, running gear, or wheel area. Check for safety inside and outside of the vehicle.



NATIONAL FIRE PROTECTION ASSOCIATION
The leading information and knowledge resource on fire, electrical and related hazards

Tri-Lakes Fire Department
(406) 475-3552

WATER SAFETY TIPS FOR RIVERS, LAKES AND DAMS

SUMMER BY THE WATER IS FUN BUT WE MUST BE AWARE OF THE DANGERS

WARNING SIGNS CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE!

BEWARE OF BOATS. DO NOT SWIM NEAR BOAT RAMPS OR IN BOATING AREAS.

ALWAYS WEAR A PFD WHEN YOU'RE IN A BOAT.

STAY AWAY FROM SLOPING EDGES. OVER HANGING BANKS CAN EASILY BREAK OFF.

IF STUCK IN QUICKSAND OR MUD LAY FLAT, MOVE YOUR ARMS AND LEGS SLOWLY.

IF YOU GET INTO TROUBLE DON'T PANIC!

REACH OR THROW AN AID TO RESCUE SOMEONE IN TROUBLE - FLOAT FEET FIRST IF YOU ARE CAUGHT IN A STRONG CURRENT.

ALWAYS FISH WITH AN ADULT.

WATCH OUT FOR SHARP OBJECTS AND SUDDEN DROP OFFS.

WHEN WALKING AROUND DAMS, RIVERS OR LAKES BE CAREFUL OF SLIPPERY OR STEEP BANKS.

DON'T SWIM IN TANKS, THEY ARE DEEP AND YOU CAN'T GET OUT.

AND THERE ARE OTHER DANGERS IN THE PADDOCKS.

DON'T PANIC IF YOUR FOOT IS CAUGHT IN THE REEDS, THEY WON'T HURT YOU.

CAREFUL....

ENTER COLD WATER SLOWLY. THE DEEPER THE WATER THE COLDER IT CAN BE, IT CAN SURPRISE YOU.

DRAINS ARE DANGEROUS. BE CAREFUL OF WHAT COMES OUT OF THEM.

THE BETTER YOU CAN SWIM, THE MORE FUN YOU WILL HAVE - SO START TAKING LESSONS TODAY.

REMEMBER THIS IS THEIR HOME.



PLEASE BIN YOUR RUBBISH, OR TAKE IT HOME.

LESSONS LEARNED

Since the last newsletter, we have responded to many situations that we think could be used to help others avoid a similar emergency. Here are a few:



We responded to a structure fire, this winter, in a rather large home. Unfortunately, we were not able to save the home but we did keep the fire from spreading to any other structures or to the wildland areas around it. There are several building characteristics and other factors that contributed to the uncontrollable nature of this fire. The biggest factor is how the home was built. It was a beautiful open floor plan log home with real logs and other areas with simulated log siding and wall coverings. The interior and exterior of log structures are usually all wood and painted with varnish, stain, and other wood preservatives, in other words...accelerants. There is usually very little sheetrock or other fire barriers used inside to help compartmentalize the

structure. If a fire starts in this form of construction, the only hope is the fire is extinguished quickly. If the fire gets a head start, we simply do not have the resources (water, personnel, or equipment) to get the fire under control. If you live in such a structure and certainly if you planning on building one, fire sprinklers inside the home are the only real tool known to mitigate the risk of all the wood, open floor plan, and accelerants used in the wood preservatives. These homes are absolutely beautiful but you need to mitigate the risk with the right tools prior to the fire. See the Fire Sprinkler information on page 10.

This winter we have responded to numerous medical calls for people having trouble breathing. Triggers for these calls vary from the smell of a lotion triggering an asthma attack to pneumonia brought on from the prolonged cold and flu season. The initial treatment of these conditions for us EMTs is the same, they need more oxygen. If they are on oxygen when you call, make sure their concentrator or oxygen regulator is turned up to a setting higher than normal. If they are normally on 2 liters, turn it up to 5. If you don't have oxygen available, CALM them down and try to slow their breathing. Many times they feel like they are short of breath but they are just hyperventilating. Please don't run from us! All our EMTs carry oxygen with them so we can help as soon as we get to you. If you jump in the car and run toward the hospital, we can't usually catch you and they will be deprived of oxygen treatment longer.



This winter we ran two calls with a diagnosis of sepsis. According to the Mayo Clinic, *Sepsis is a potentially life-threatening complication of an infection.* They

also report the number of sepsis cases is increasing in the U.S. If you leave an infection, like pneumonia, kidney infection, abdominal infection, or blood infection untreated for too long, sepsis can occur. If you are not feeling well, have a high fever (>101), have been diagnosed with an infection, and you don't respond to your initial treatment, go back to the doctor sooner rather than later. Septic shock, the most severe form of sepsis, has a 50% mortality rate. Even mild sepsis can cause you to be more prone to infections in the future. Don't put off going to the doctor when everyone around you is telling you to go!

S	E	P	S	I	S
Shivering, fever, or very cold	Extreme pain or general discomfort ("worst ever")	Pale or discolored skin	Sleepy, difficult to wake up, confused	"I feel like I might die"	Short of breath

Tri-County FireSafe Working Group
Application for Assistance with Fuel Modification Project
Creation of Fuel Resistant Landscape

I understand the maximum amount available per project is based on the following formula:
Projects costs are matched on a 50% landowner 50% grant funds basis. Match amount and allowance will be based on the requirements of the specific grant award that is funding the project.

The grant amount awarded will be based on a 50%/50% match of the total project cost.

Example: Project amount= \$3,000 = \$1,500 grant money + \$1,500 grantee match.

Second entry or expansion of projects, if approved, will be on a 50%/50% maximum match.

Landowner match may be made by either cash or in-kind contribution, or a combination of both. Landowner labor value will be calculated at the rate of \$15 per hour.

All landowner planned labor or cost contribution must be approved by Tri-County FSWG in advance, and indicated as a part of the project plan as agreed to by the parties.

Work on this Project must be completed within 6 months of Project approval.

Landowner Responsibility:

1. Complete this application form and submit it to:
Tri-County FireSafe Working Group
P.O. Box 934
Helena, MT 59624
2. Meet with the Tri-County approved contractor or inspector to complete the Home Evaluation/Ignition Zone Assessment Form and develop the project plan.
3. Maintain project work timesheet for contributions toward match amount.
4. Ensure the completion of project work as described
5. Ensure debris/slash clean up is accomplished by the agreed method in the plan which include:
A. Burn B. Chip C. Masticate D. Removal from property E. Saved for firewood
6. Notify Tri-County Fire Working Group upon Project completion.
7. Agree to maintain this fuel modification/vegetation work for a minimum of 10 years or until I no longer own this property.
8. It is understood that maintenance is my responsibility.
9. Pay the contractor the amount due as agreed to in the plan, upon satisfactory completion of the work in accordance with the project plan.
10. Hold back any necessary final payment from the match amount due, until any portion of the plan of the project remains incomplete ie. pile burning held up due to environmental conditions, etc. This will be detailed in the plan. Tri-County may do the holdout rather than the landowner. Reimbursement of the contractor will be made by Tri-County FireSafe Working Group upon project completion, inspection, and approval.

Application information:

Name: _____ Telephone number(s): _____

Address: _____ Physical address of Property if different than mailing: _____

Subdivision: Name and Lot #: _____

E-mail address: _____

City: _____ County: _____

Date submitted: _____ Review Date: _____

Signature of Applicant _____ Signature of Reviewer _____

NEW EQUIPMENT



Tri-Lakes received two 25kw generators from the military surplus. Both generators are modern, diesel fired, and electronically controlled single or three phase switchable. One generator was placed in our power trailer so it is mobile and can be taken to any location to run a large electrical load. Three of our stations are wired with generator connections so there is backup power in the event of a long-term power outage. The second 25kw generator will be permanently wired into one of the stations for stationary backup power. These additions make us more resilient in the case of a widespread emergency. We only had to pay \$1,300 to have the generators shipped to us otherwise military surplus is free to the department.

As reported in a previous newsletter, we received a Bobcat skid steer through the military surplus. This winter we purchased a grapple for the Bobcat to make it usable for mitigation work along the wildfire lines and around houses. The grapple will also come in handy if we get a storage unit fire to make it easier to get the contents of burning storage units outside so we can put the fire out. This tool will make it less labor intensive for volunteers and make overhaul much faster to get the volunteers back to their families and jobs. The cost of the grapple was \$3,040.



We are reaching the end of life on our radios. It is hard to believe we have had our “new” digital radio system and radios for 14 years. One model of our radios cannot be fixed any more. We purchased 4 new BK Technologies KNG2-P150 digital encrypted radios to replace the 4 obsolete Motorola XTS-5000Rs at a total cost of \$13,139. We will have to replace the other 30 radios in the next few years but not until we can no longer get support for them.

Meet Our New Volunteers!!!



Fowler



Henry



Lloyd



Soliday

Tri-Lakes welcomes our new volunteer Firefighters and EMTs:

- ◆ Chris Fowler
- ◆ Mary Henry
- ◆ Jordan Lloyd
- ◆ Jennifer Soliday

Thank you for “Signing up”

If you are interested in volunteering to be part of the Tri-Lakes VFD, please contact Bob at 431-3600.



As First Responders, we often end up playing the role of “detective” per say when residents of our district call with a medical emergency.

We look for multiple “clues” as to the cause of the medical emergency including: potential injuries; recent sickness; abnormal symptoms; vital signs; and many more potential “clues”. All these “clues” help in trying to determine how to properly take care of a patient. Two really big “clues” we look for are the patient’s current medications and medical history.



Medications

Recent studies by the Mayo clinic states approximately 70% of Americans are taking at least 1 prescribed medication.

For First Responders, this is a key “clue” in solving the puzzle. Medication considerations include:

- Is the current issue due to a change in medications?
- Perhaps the patient is not taking prescribed medications as directed?
- Have you been sick and can’t keep your medications down?
- Maybe a combination of multiple medications is interacting with each other?
- Is the patient taking blood thinners that could become life threatening in a traumatic injury?

The more First Responders know about our patient’s medications, the more it can help in discovering potential issues and guiding treatment.



Medical History

Medical history goes hand in hand with the last “clue”. Knowing previous or current medical issues can help discover what could potentially be going on and guide treatment. Providing the First Responder with your relevant medical conditions, even if they are under control, is an important “clue” in solving your medical crisis. Chronic conditions such as diabetes, history of heart problems, strokes, infections, COPD, etc. can often cause more acute issues needing immediate medical assistance.

The takeaway from all of this....you can help First Responders help you when you call 911.

- Know your medications and why you take them.
- Make an accessible medication list in case of an emergency that can be used as a reference.
- Put your medical history and medical conditions on the medication list.
- Keep the list on the refrigerator and/or in a wallet, just somewhere that is can be easily referenced.
- Keep the list current – we know – easier said than done!
- If you have a relative with a POLST document-have this accessible as well.

No one wants to think about an emergency medical problem happening to them or a relative, but better to be prepared than to be scrambling when or if the time comes.

It’s your health. You can greatly help First Responders in helping you by doing these few simple things so that we can better understand how to render appropriate care based on your medical history and medications.

Written by Gabby Walker, Tri-Lakes EMT

BURN PERMITS REQUIRED

The Burn Permit System continues to work as designed. We continue to strive to keep burning open and make those that burn take responsibility for their own actions. Just because the system says you CAN burn, doesn't mean you SHOULD burn. Be responsible – because you are! Anything that happens is your fault. You light it – you own it.



Burn permit system basics are as follows:

1. To obtain a burn permit for the first time or renew a permit you received last year, you can go on-line to www.burnpermits.mt.gov or visit the County Treasurer's Office in the City/County Building at 316 N. Park Avenue. Permits cost \$8.00 for a new permit or \$5.00 to renew your permit from last year. The 2018 burn permits are valid until December 31, 2018.
2. The burn season continues all year but there are there seasonal periods each having different requirements. Seasonal periods and requirements are as follows:
 - A. **March 1st to August 31st** – only a L&C County Burn Permit is required to be activated each day you burn.
 - B. **September 1st to November 30th** – in addition to a L&C County Burn Permit (which needs to be activated each day you burn), you must ALSO call the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) Ventilation Hotline at 800-225-6779 prior to burning. You may only burn if both systems allow burning that day.
 - C. **December 1 to March 1st** – burning is restricted to only those burns considered ESSENTIAL. You need a L&C County Burn Permit, a MDEQ air quality permit (called a Montana Wintertime Open Burning Request), and you must activate your permit each day AFTER getting permission from MDEQ's meteorologist for burning on that specific day.
3. There are four Burn Zones for Lewis & Clark County to allow opening and closing of burning in the four areas independently. Burn Zones are 1) Lincoln Zone, 2) Augusta Zone, 3) Wolf Creek/Deerborn Zone, and 4) Helena Valley Zone. Tri-Lakes is part of the Helena Valley Zone and will be opened and closed with the rest of the valley. When activating your burn permit, the system will automatically check your permit's location and let you know if your zone is open for burning that day.
4. Regardless of the time of year, you MUST activate your L&C County Burn Permit each day you are burning. Activate you permit on-line at www.burnpermits.mt.gov or call 1-877-453-BURN (2876).
5. Anyone can view current burn activity each day by going to www.burnpermits.mt.gov, selecting the County to view and then select the "View current burn activity" radio button.

The system has really evolved from the original version and continues to make using burn permits easier for permit users, dispatchers, volunteer fire departments, and the public in general. If you have questions, please call Bob Drake at 406-431-3600 and he can help you with the system.

Fire Chief's Report—Continued From Page 1



come asking, if we get the grant!!

It has been a great year in recruiting. We have 11 new volunteers and they are doing awesome in our trainings and responding to calls. The enthusiasm they bring is contagious for everyone and our call participation and training attendance are both up dramatically. They love helping you!

We continue to have challenges with our volunteers becoming home healthcare for our aging population. We love to help people but it hard to keep your energy level up on the 5th or 6th visit to help someone you know who is not living in a safe environment. We work hard to get the right services involved to get the help they need but it is heartbreaking to leave them when you know you will be back to an even worse call the next time. Everyone should and does have the right to choose how they live but it is really hard to watch your friends, neighbors, and even strangers just struggling to exist by themselves in their own homes. There has to be a better way, but we haven't come up with it yet – but we will continue trying!!



We continue to work on our trucks. We certainly don't have the prettiest fleet but I truly believe we have one of the most functional set of trucks given the risks we face. Our choice, many years ago, to standardize on one brand of truck, on one model of radio, and on one model of breather, pays huge dividends when we are training new people and keeping our existing volunteers proficient. Our three CAFS engines stretch our water 12 times, drastically reducing the amount of water we have to haul. Our 11 all-wheel-drive trucks increases the places we can get to all year round while making it safe for our firefighters and the traveling public. The 29 water supplies improve our ability to meet many challenges we face from the increased number of houses. If someone could just figure out either a way to kill the zebra mussel or convince the mussel police that they really don't exist in Canyon Ferry Lake, we'd have it made!

We really do have a great group of volunteers taking care of you right now. They throw their whole heart into the work they do! Please thank them when you see them for the awesome work they do because they want to, not because they have to!

Bob

HOW TO PROPERLY REMOVE A BEE STING

STEP 1

SCRAPE STINGER OFF IMMEDIATELY

Scrape stinger off with flat surface to prevent more venom from entering your body.

STEP 2

THOROUGHLY CLEAN AFFECTED AREA

Gently wash around the sting areas with soap & warm water to prevent possible infection.

STEP 3

APPLY ICE PACK TO STING AREA

Place an ice pack or cold compress for 20 minutes to reduce swelling & redness.

STEP 4

MONITOR REACTION TO THE BEE VENOM

Allergic reactions include difficulty breathing, swelling, hives & nausea. Do not scratch.

ALLERGIC TO BEE VENOM?

Carry an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) with you at all times.

Epinephrine injection can prevent anaphylactic shock in sting victims.

HELPFUL SUPPLIES TO SOOTHE STINGS

- Honey
- Aloe Vera
- Toothpaste
- Baking Soda
- Sanitary Wipes

Home Fire Sprinklers

Over 80% of fire deaths occur in the home. Home fire sprinklers can save lives and property from fire. They respond quickly and effectively to fire, often extinguishing the fire before the fire department arrives. Only the sprinkler closest to the fire will activate, spraying water on the fire.

SAFETY TIPS

- »» Home fire sprinklers save lives and property. In many situations, a family who has survived a fire will also have their "home" to live in and enough of the items and space in their home to continue living their lives as they did before.
- »» The cost of a home fire sprinkler system in a new home averages \$1.35 per sprinklered square foot totaling an amount similar to what is spent for carpet upgrades, paving stone driveway or a whirlpool bath.
Source: Fire Protection Research Foundation Study 2013.
- »» A home fire sprinkler system can reduce the homeowner's insurance premium.
- »» Fire departments typically use roughly 10 times as much water as a fire sprinkler would use to contain a fire.
Source: Fire Protection Research Foundation Study 2010.
- »» Fire sprinklers are environmentally friendly. They can reduce the amount of water run-off and pollution, fire damage by up to 71%, and water usage to fight a home fire by as much as 91%.
Source: FM Global and Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition Study 2010.
- »» Cigar smoke or burnt toast will not activate a fire sprinkler. Only the high temperature of a fire will activate the sprinkler.
- »» A home fire sprinkler system is easy to maintain. Just inspect your home to make sure the sprinklers are not blocked by something that would prevent the water from coming out such as paint and be sure the main control valve is never turned off.
- »» Home fire sprinklers are effective in cold and warm climates. Guidelines have been created for the proper installation of systems to avoid pipes freezing. A home fire sprinkler system should be winterized the same as you winterize a domestic water supply.

And Don't Forget...

- ➔ If **MOVING** into an apartment or condominium building, make sure common areas and individual apartments are sprinklered.
- ➔ If **BUILDING** a new home or remodeling an existing home, consider installing a home fire sprinkler system.

FACTS

- ! More than **2,500** people die in home fires each year.
- ! If a home fire occurs, the risk of dying decreases by about **80%** when the home is equipped with a fire sprinkler system.



Your Source for SAFETY Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

Tri-Lakes Fire Department
(406) 475-3552



J	K	L	O	W	P	R	W	L	P	C	N	R	A	E	C	R	A	W	L	S	L	C	R	Z	I	V
K	L	W	U	Y	R	C	N	H	I	W	X	C	N	Q	K	L	E	C	L	B	E	B	Q	X	T	O
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R	K	L	E	C	I	E	Y	Q	C	J	O	C	W	O	Y	E	M	C	W	X	M	O	P	C	I	T
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F	A	M	I	L	Y	U	E	A	C	N	E	P	E	N	G	I	N	E	O	D	C	N	L	I	P	V
T	Y	D	A	R	K	O	E	C	A	U	M	E	A	C	N	F	J	W	C	B	O	L	W	C	K	E
K	L	N	Y	E	C	A	N	E	L	E	L	D	N	A	C	Q	X	R	Z	P	E	N	L	E	P	R

Words to Find:

- Crawl -plan -practice -Fire -Burn -Outside -Engine -Lighter
- Dark -Escape -Exits -Candle -Detector -Door -Low -Stove -Adult
- Smoke -Family -Safety -Matches -Hose -Firefighter -Heater

3200 Spokane Creek Road
Helena MT 59602



The Tri-Lakes Board of Trustees meets the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 pm at Station #3, 3200 Spokane Creek Road. The public is encouraged to attend.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Underwriters Laboratory (UL) research shows the simple act of closing a door compartmentalizes your house and slows the spread of fire. Research shows the cheapest interior door would hold the fire for a minimum of five minutes. Those valuable minutes can give you and your family the time to get out of the house or, if the fire is between you and your planned exit, you can figure out an alternative escape route.

Our latest installment in the “Close the Door” campaign is “Stop the Spread – Close the Door.” Please “Close the Door” on every room in your house. You never know when a fire might start. Give the rest of the house a fighting chance by closing all the doors.



Stop the Spread!



CLOSE THE DOOR

Potential Flooding

The National Weather Service is warning there is more than 15” of MOISTURE (i.e. not snow but actual water stored in the snow) in the Elkhorns and other mountains around Helena. How fast that water comes off is based on temperature and rain fall. We had high water several weeks ago along several creeks in our area. Don't let your guard down just yet. We may have more to come. Lewis & Clark County declared a state of emergency for flooding. This helps the County get financial help with “public infrastructure” but does not necessarily help individual homeowners. The County is going to stop providing sandbags and sand in the future for individual homeowners. Reimbursement for homeowner assistance is not covered and the County is telling us they don't have the funding. So be prepared on your own if you live in a flood prone area.

