



CLIMATE SMART  
GLACIER COUNTRY



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## The 2026 Wildfire and Smoke Outlook

### *June 9 Forum to Assess the Wildfire and Smoke Outlook for Western Montana*

The public is invited to a free community forum, simulcast live from Kalispell and Missoula on Tuesday, June 9 at 6:00 pm, during Montana Wildfire Smoke Ready Week to learn what to expect for the upcoming wildfire season in western Montana.

Following our abnormally warm winter and below average snowpack, many in the region are asking what this summer may bring. While last year offered some relief from the pattern of increasing wildfire and regional smoke impacts, the question remains: Will we see another mild season or a return to more severe conditions? The forum will feature panelists who will sort through up-to-date weather and climate projections and share tips for how best to prepare for wildfires and accompanying smoke.

Panelists include:

- **Alex Lukinbeal** – Meteorologist, National Weather Service (Missoula)
- **Kyle Bocinsky** – Montana Climate Office at the University of Montana
- **Mike West** – U.S. Forest Service and FireSafe Flathead
- **Amy Cilimburg** – Climate Smart Missoula

Moderator: **Adam de Yong** Climate Smart Glacier

The 2026 Wildfire and Smoke forum topics will address fire prediction forecasts, seasonal weather outlooks, drought and fuel conditions, long-term climate trends, wildfire preparedness in the wildland-urban interface, and practical strategies for reducing smoke exposure and improving indoor air quality. Panelists will also discuss potential impacts this summer of a warming Pacific Ocean off the coast of North America as well as in the tropical Pacific, which impacts global weather through the El Niño Southern Oscillation cycle.

Adam de Yong, a community resilience specialist with Climate Smart Glacier, notes that wildfire risk in western Montana may only partially determine whether wildfire smoke reaches unhealthy levels. “Even if we don’t have much fire activity in western Montana, smoke from fires in the Pacific Northwest and western Canada can travel into our intermountain valleys.” For that reason, de Yong says, the wildfire outlook will address fire potential in the broader region.

The event will be held on June 9th at 6:00 pm and simulcast in two locations with live panelists at each location:

- Kalispell - Flathead Valley Community College, Arts and Technology Room 139
- Missoula - Missoula Public Library Cooper Rooms A & B

The forum will also be available via Zoom for those wishing to attend remotely. Register for the Zoom event at this link: [bit.ly/MTwildfireoutlook](https://bit.ly/MTwildfireoutlook)

Montana Wildfire Smoke Ready Week, June 7-13, is designated by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and community partners to provide resources regarding health concerns and how best to prepare for smoky conditions. Clean Air Resource Centers have been established in communities across western Montana to provide public spaces where residents can find relief during periods of hazardous wildfire smoke. Smoke mitigation programs are available in some communities to help vulnerable households and child care facilities improve indoor clean air.

Forum sponsors include Climate Smart Glacier, Climate Smart Missoula, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, FireSafe Flathead, Montana Climate Office, and Missoula Public Health.

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Note: Contact Adam de Yong or Amy Cilimburg to arrange interviews, including with the panelists.