

Keep Montana Green

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WELCOME

We all know this fire season has been one for the record books. Our hearts go out to those in California, Oregon, and Washington as they grapple with historic wildfires, mass evacuations, and harmful smoke. We Montanans count ourselves lucky for having so far avoided any catastrophic wildfires. However, wildfire is a global threat requiring solutions from everyone. Climate change and forest management are two major causes of the rise of wildfire severity and frequency, but there is a third cause – us.

In Montana, two out of every three wildfires are caused by people – by debris burns, campfires, and equipment sparks getting out of control. As more people move into the wildland urban interface and recreate on public lands, human-caused wildfires are becoming more and more common. However, we can take solace in that such wildfires are easily preventable. Plan ahead for your debris burn by checking for fire restrictions and obtaining a permit. Keep your campfires small and drown them until cold to the touch. Keep your lawn, farm, and ranch equipment clean and well maintained. Do not park or drive on tall dry grass. Inflate your tires and cross hitch chains to prevent anything from dragging while towing. It only takes one spark to start a wildfire!

The most important impact we can have on our communities is educating our children on wildfire prevention. Keep Montana Green treasures our annual Wildfire Prevention Art Contest, which engages almost 3,000 youth every year, and fosters a culture of public land stewardship in the next generation. But to maintain and expand our programs, we need your help. Follow us on social media, tell your friends and family about our programs, visit our website to learn about wildfire prevention, and most of all, donate today to become a member.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to all our supporters, art contest participants, educators, and firefighters across Montana. Wildfire prevention starts with you.

MISSION

To promote public awareness of the danger of human caused wildfires on Montana's ecosystems, communities, and natural resources; and to enlist the active support of the public in fire prevention and protection efforts.



FOLLOW US!



FREE GIVEAWAY



To recruit more followers, we are conducting a free giveaway of Keep Montana Green merchandise! You could win a 75th anniversary hat, a KMG Nalgene water bottle, a 2021 Art Contest Calendar,

and two KMG stickers! All you have to do is follow us on our Instagram page @KeepMTGreenAssociation (if you don't already) and tag a friend in the comments of any of our posts. When we reach 100 followers, we will draw a winner at random and contact them via direct message. Tip: each friend tagged is another "raffle ticket," and there is no limit to how many friends you can tag!

ANNOUNCING THE 60th ANNUAL WILDFIRE PREVENTION ART CONTEST!

It is that time of year again! We are pleased to announce the 60th Annual Wildfire Prevention Art Contest. We invite all Montana students, K-12, to participate by creating works of art that promote public awareness of wildfire. To celebrate Keep Montana Green's 75th Anniversary, we have doubled the prize money for statewide contest winners, created a NEW Coloring Book Division, and established overall 2nd and 3rd place positions for the statewide contest. Please visit our website for rules, updates, and guidance. The deadline for the 60th Annual Art Contest is February 26, 2021. This year's theme is simple: Keeping Montana Green.

Coloring Book Division rules:

- The Coloring Book Division is open to all grades, K-12, and will be open for 2021 only.
- The winners' artwork will be featured in a special coloring book to commemorate Keep Montana Green's 75th anniversary.
- All submissions must be in black and white, and should be easy for someone else to color.
- You may submit a color version of your artwork to your regular division, but you will only be eligible to win a prize in one division.
- Coloring Book Division entries will only be judged at the state competition. Please mail your submissions to: Keep Montana Green, 2705 Spurgin Road, Missoula, MT 59804



Everyone plays a part
In preventing a wildfire start

VISIT OUR STORE

Shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, tote bags, hats, and more! You can find all kinds of KMG merchandise at our new store. Visit keepmontanagreen.logosoftwear.com to see what is currently available for purchase. And the best part? A portion of your purchases directly funds Keep Montana Green! Get yourself and your family some KMG swag today and wear it proudly!

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EDUCATOR HIGHLIGHT: BECKY SULLIVAN



For Becky Sullivan, wildfire prevention is personal. Once a resident of Barstow, CA, Becky experienced the impact of large wildfires firsthand. "The schools closed because of too much smoke,"

she said. This got her wondering why large fires had to happen, and more importantly what we can all do about it. Becky is celebrating her 35th year as an educator and has taught everything between kindergarten and 8th grade. Originally from Minnesota, she grew up enjoying her family's cabin on the lake. She earned her Bachelor of Arts from Concordia College and her master's from the University of Phoenix. Now she lives with her husband, a fire management officer, in Laurel, MT. She began at Fred W. Graff elementary in 2013 as an aid, but secured the position of art teacher once that opened. She now teaches art to 800 students between kindergarten and 4th grade. Becky is proud to tell you she has had at least one winner in the Wildfire Prevention Art Contest every single year since she began. This year she had three winners at the statewide competition! "I just love when we get art from Laurel," she has been told when she submits her students' artwork to the DNRC Southern Land Office. Becky inspires her students to participate in the contest, not only by presenting the opportunity to her classes, but by teaching fire prevention lessons. She shows Smokey Bear educational videos, videos on cleaning up debris from around the house, and highlights the artwork from previous art contest winners. Not only that, but she celebrates her school's winners with gifts of art supplies to encourage them to keep up with their passion for art. "The kids get really excited about the art contest," Becky said. "They get inspired by their own camping trips and the videos on wildfire."

EDUCATOR HIGHLIGHT: KATE DANIELS

Kate Daniels is another teacher who taught three winning students from the 59th Annual Art Contest Statewide Competition. In fact, we had five teachers have three or more statewide winners in their classes! Here is her Keep Montana Green story in her own words:

Green is one of my favorite colors. Growing up in the verdant state of Vermont gave me a love for the outdoors. I grew up hiking and trail riding in the rolling hills of the east and moved west over twenty years ago to explore the more rugged mountains of Montana. Now,



my husband Matt and I are enjoying new adventures hiking, biking, skiing and playing hockey with our two children, Tilly (12) and Alex (9). I also try to bring that love of the outdoors to my classroom at Columbia Falls High School where I have been teaching art for ten years. The Keep Montana Green Poster Contest is one way I make a cross-curricular connection with students each year. The contest reinforces the power of art to convey a message while giving the class an opportunity to discuss the causes of wildfires. Anyone that has lived through an active fire season in Montana can relate to how fire impacts the environment, wildlife, and our everyday lives. Wildfires resonate with us all and bring up different mixed emotions of a missed football season, a favorite hunting location lost, or of the smell of smoke-filled days. Students with successful entries combine those feelings with prevention messages to create a persuasive visual piece of art. The contest also gives the community an opportunity to see student artwork displayed online at the Keep Montana Green website and in the annual KMG calendar. I encourage all grade levels to participate in the contest and showcase their individual skills. The best way to engage students in this contest is to go to the

Keep Montana Green website and review the work of past contest winners. There, students can find a gallery of successful entries. From the website, students get ideas and realize that they, too can make a cool poster. This leads to brainstorming and discussing the reasons why 60% of wildfires are human-caused. My criteria for the assignment are three straightforward things: 1. identify the message you want to create visually; 2. state the yearly slogan; and 3. use artistic choice and skill to create a well-crafted poster. Columbia Falls students never cease to amaze me with their talent, hard work, and dedication to things that they believe in. This is why my students place in the contest each year. The poster contest gives them the opportunity to share their artistic vision to Keep Montana Green with their community and the state.

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Ian Harris - Program Director, MT DNRC

CONTACT

Questions or ideas? Contact Executive Director, Kristin Sleeper at Kristin.Sleeper@mt.gov, or Program Director, Ian Harris at Ian.Harris@mt.gov.

SUPPORT KMG AND BECOME A BOARD MEMBER!

Keep Montana Green is a member driven organization that relies on the active participation of its supporters to educate Montanans on wildfire prevention. To become a member, simply donate at KeepMontanaGreen.com/donate. Even \$5 can help protect Montana from wildfire, fund our annual art contest, and distribute educational materials across the state. There are three tiers of membership, but all members receive voting privileges at our annual meetings, event invitations, and different forms of merchandise. Visit our website to learn more about how your membership can make an impact and the different ways you can donate.

We also have vacancies in our Board of Directors! Whether you are a long-standing supporter of KMG, or a first-time donor, we want your voice in our leadership. We are looking for passionate individuals who are dedicated to wildfire prevention and public education, particularly those who can add a diverse perspective to our organization. Now more than ever, we need your support to help Keep Montana Green grow and make a greater impact in our communities and wild places.

