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Missoula County

Media Release

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Missoula All Hazard Incident Management Team to Test Skills in Wildfire Simulation

The Type III Southwest Incident Management Team, which is comprised of members from government agencies in and around Missoula County, will be participating in a spring exercise with the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) on Wednesday, April 12 and Thursday, April 13. Using a scenario of a wildfire threatening area homes, the incident management team will go through the process of creating a command structure and utilizing specialized equipment to manage the incident.

Missoulians are no strangers to national incident management teams that are tasked with management of large wildfires occurring in western Montana, but few realize that for the last three years, the Missoula Office of Emergency Management has worked with local agencies to develop this capability locally. These national teams operate at a type I and type II level and historically specialize in wildfire management. The Missoula team, by comparison is a type III team, which is smaller, and has a focus on all-hazard incident management. Most team members are from local public safety agencies including fire and law enforcement.

One of the team's first assignments after its creation in 2014 was helping the County develop a flood response plan ahead of what officials thought was going to be an active flooding year. It was during this event that the name Southwest Incident Management (SWIM) Team stuck.

Since then, the SWIM Team has been ordered to work with Montana DNRC in the management of local fires on several occasions. The planned exercise and simulation this week is an opportunity to build on previous lessons learned while working to continue the development of this team. The SWIM team will work through a scenario, based on a wildland fire in the urban interface area. Later this spring the SWIM Team will participate in another exercise based on the management and planning for a Law Enforcement type incident.

Media is welcome to attend the Simulation on April 13th from 8 AM to 3 PM and should contact Adriane Beck for more information abeck@missoulacounty.us or by phone 406-830-0974

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