



# LINCOLN COUNTY MONTANA

## Resolution 2022-19

### COUNTYWIDE EMERGENCY DECLARATION FOREST HEALTH AND WILDLAND FIRE THREAT

#### THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR LINCOLN COUNTY, MONTANA FINDS:

WHEREAS the nation-wide threat from catastrophic wildland fire has grown exponentially over the past two decades, and

WHEREAS the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has declared the health of our National Forests a national crisis, and

WHEREAS Governor Bullock, in April 2014, designated 1,459,997 acres (67%) of the Kootenai National Forest (KNF) as threatened under the 2014 US Farm Bill, Priority Forest Landscapes authority, and

WHEREAS the KNF produces a net annual growth rate of over 500 million board feet (MMBF) and harvests 50 MMBF annually leaving a net increase of 450MMBF per year, exacerbating the overstocking conditions, and compounding the forest health and wildfire risk exponentially, and

WHEREAS the 2020 Montana Forest Action Plan identifies Lincoln County and the KNF as having the most combined "at risk" forest acres in the state; 407,552 acres of wildland fire risk, 54,037 acres of forest health risk for a combined risk of 530,459 acres, and

WHEREAS 70,000 of those "at risk" acres lay within our Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) with direct exposure to homes and critical infrastructure, and

WHEREAS the September 2019 "A Profile of Development and the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) study places Lincoln County, out of 413 western counties, in the 97th percentile for existing risk and in the 98th percentile for potential risk, and

WHEREAS, the Headwaters Economics study, "A Profile of Wildfire Risk" reveals 100% of Lincoln County residences are exposed to wildland fire threat with 63% of homes directly exposed and 37% of homes indirectly exposed to wildland fire, and

WHEREAS Lincoln County includes the first and only Superfund Health Emergency declaration due to asbestos from historic mining processes and is home to thousands with compromised lungs, smoke from uncontrolled wildland fire is a life-threatening reality to our citizens with compromised lungs, and







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WHEREAS the KNF has not achieved established annual management targets for several of the past years due to excessive and targeted litigation under the Endangered Species Act significantly increasing the risks to the county from delayed forest management and fuels reduction treatments, and

WHEREAS Lincoln County faces a clear and present public safety, public health and economic threat from catastrophic wildland fire, and

### **THE BOARD RESOLVES:**

1. That a catastrophic risk exists within the borders of Lincoln County.
2. Recognizing major part of our responsibilities is protecting Lincoln County residents, their lives, properties, and way of life.
3. As we strive with our Federal and State partners to reduce wildfire dangers, efforts have continually been interrupted by groups with no consideration for the needs or balance of the human element in the environment.

### **THE BOARD FURTHER RESOLVES:**

1. Balance, order, and proper management of lands in Lincoln County are more appropriately achieved through cooperation of local agencies.
2. Creating abundant and sheltered habitat for the multitude of species of wildlife, while providing protection and a healthy environment for the human element as we coexist.

### **THE BOARD FURTHER RESOLVES:**

1. If a provision of this resolution conflicts with a provision of a previously adopted resolution, this resolution will prevail.
2. This resolution and its various sections, clauses and paragraphs are severable. If any part, sentence, clause, or phrase is adjudged to be unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of the resolution will not be affected.
3. This resolution will be effective immediately upon adoption, in accordance with § 7-5-123, MCA.







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4. This Board directs that this resolution be entered into the minutes and signed by the Chair of the Board in accordance with § 7-5-121, MCA.

## END OF RESOLUTION

Approved as to Form:

Marcia Boris, County Attorney

Date presented to the Board 7/20/22 Approved (☒) Disapproved ( ) Amended ( )  
Adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of July 2022.

LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

  
Jerry Bennett, Chair

ATTEST:

Robin Benson, Clerk of the Board