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News Release **Enjoy your Public Lands this Memorial Day**

A beautiful, Big Sky Memorial Day weekend is on tap and state and federal land managers are encouraging people to get out and enjoy their public lands safely.

"After the recent rains, the rivers are quite inviting," said Marilyn Krause, information officer with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). "But waters are high and debris-filled from storm runoff." Krause urged extreme caution for boaters, swimmers and fishers across the state.

Since Memorial Day is the normal kick-off for summer fun, Gail Kimbell, Forest Service Northern Region Regional Forester, encouraged Montanans and visitors, "Get out and enjoy your Forests! And, I also encourage folks to stop by their local ranger station or view information on the Internet to make their visit as special as it can be." Forest Service web sites contain information about available campsites, trails, rules and history.

"Weather will be warming and drying," said Bob Harrington, Montana State Forester. "I encourage you to be thinking about fire safety as you go into the woods. Take the time to teach your children about fire, fire safety and especially fire prevention." Harrington reminds forest users that although we have received excellent spring moisture, snow pack is marginal as we move into the seventh year of drought conditions for most of the state.

For more information about camping for fire conditions, contact your local Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service, or Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) office.

Additional information is available at:

Bureau of Land Management – (406) 896-5004

Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC) – www.dnrc.mt.gov

National Forest information – www.fs.fed.us/r1