

For Immediate Release  
Contact Craig Flentie  
406-538-1943, 5/21/2010

## **Wildfire Education Day a Big Hit**

Lewistown, MT----Nearly 600 school kids (kindergarten through eighth grade) from throughout central Montana enjoyed great weather and a wide variety of lessons and demonstrations about wildfires and fire safety during the recent Central Montana Wildfire Education Day.

Throughout the morning, students learned about fire ecology, fire suppression, prescribed fire, structural firefighting, Firewise practices, bark beetles, fire prevention and fire preparedness. Smokey Bear was also in attendance and always seemed to draw quite a crowd.

This year's Wildfire Education Day was held near the pavilion area at the Central Montana Fairgrounds and the open space provided a great venue for the City of Lewistown's ladder truck, pumper engines from various county rural fire departments and state and federal agencies, a light duty helicopter brought in by the State of Montana, a 25-foot Smokey Bear cold-air balloon, and numerous demonstration/information stations.

It took a few minutes to get the first couple groups of excited school kids to arrive divided among different presentations and then getting everyone to rotate to another station at 20-minute intervals. But before long all the kids were rotating among stations and firefighting equipment displays and asking a huge variety of questions.

"Those questions and excitement are exactly what all of us involved with Wildfire Education Day wanted. If these kids can learn a little about fire safety around the home or in the woods the day has been a huge success," offered Karly Krausz, a fire mitigation and information specialist with the BLM in Lewistown.

The Wildfire Education Day is a cooperative effort among the City of Lewistown, Fergus County Rural Fire Departments, Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

“This effort is truly a cooperative effort among everyone in the central Montana fire fighting community and it’s great that so many folks from the county rural fire departments and the state and federal agencies will take a morning out of their busy schedule to talk to youngsters about fire safety and fire fighting,” Krausz added.

#



Cathy Barta, Resa Stivers and Paul Stelmack (BLM fire crew members) use match sticks to demonstrate how a wildlife would run through a dense forest.



Members of the Lewistown City Fire Department discussed fire safety around the home. Their ladder truck and repelling demonstrations were big points of interest throughout the day.