

RED, WHITE AND BOOM

Fourth to be full of fireworks, fun

Fireworks return to the skies over Northwest Montana for this year's Fourth of July celebrations.

Last year, all fireworks (including large community shows) were banned due to an escalating fire season.

This year they are allowed again, although fire danger has increased to moderate due to higher temperatures, drier conditions, and increased fire activity.

For fireworks fans, there are community shows planned in Lakeside,

Whitefish, Polson and Troy. Parades and other patriotic events are planned at other communities.

Here's a summary of Independence Day activities on Monday:

KALISPELL

Kalispell's Fourth of July parade takes on the theme, "Rock the Fourth — Music of America," so dress up as your favorite American musician and bring a lawn chair, park your stroller and pick a spot on the sidewalk to view the floats, color

guard, trucks and trolleys, bicycles and ponies and family fun.

Parade participants will hand out candy and toys to those on the sidewalks.

The Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce's annual parade will start at 10 a.m. from Eighth Street West, traveling north up Main Street before turning left onto West Center Street.

A free ice cream social follows at Conrad Mansion Museum lawn; donations



FIREWORKS light up the sky over Whitefish Lake. (Inter Lake file photo)

See **FOURTH, A8**

‘You can’t wait for the government to bail you out if you are under fire’



A FIRE on Ravalli Hill near the National Bison Range burned 500 acres since it started Thursday. (Devlin Lafrombois photo/Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Division of Fire)

Ranch near U.S. 93 spared from fire

By **MEGAN STRICKLAND**
Daily Inter Lake

A children's ranch was evacuated Thursday night as a fire on Ravalli Hill east of the National Bison Range grew to 500 acres.

The fire was called in at about 4 p.m. Thursday about 50 yards below a rest-area turnout on U.S. 93.

"I think it started by a trailer with a flat tire throwing sparks," said Devlin Lafrombois, a fire information officer for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Division of Fire.

Lafrombois said rural fire departments from Charlo, St. Ignatius and Ronan initially responded. The Division of Fire sent a crew of 20 firefighters to Ravalli Hill on Friday.

"It started out, it grew to 18 acres and they thought they had a handle on it and the wind picked up," Lafrombois said.



A fire burns Thursday night on Ravalli Hill east of the National Bison Range. (Roxana Colman-Herak photo)

By Friday afternoon, about 50 personnel were working on the fire, which is burning in an area that is 80 percent grass and 20 percent timber. It is located just east of the Bison Range and south of St. Ignatius.

The Pinehaven Christian Children's Ranch was evacuated

during the night.

Bob Larsson, associate director and Founder of Pinehaven, said that the women and children of the ranch evacuated to the Christian Church in St. Ignatius about an hour after the Division of Fire gave a warning that fire

was approaching at 6 p.m. Thursday.

The men of the 1,020-acre ranch, which is home to about 60 residents and staff, operated the ranch's firefighting gear that includes two bulldozers, a fire truck and tanker truck.

"You can't wait for the government to bail you out if you are under fire," Larsson said. "They have too many other things to worry about."

The ranch staff bulldozed a fire break along the western side of the property. Calls were also made to ask people to pray to protect the ranch from the fire, Larsson said.

"You work and you pray and the fire stopped right when it got to the boundary," Larsson said. "We had other people praying across the country."

The evacuation order was lifted around 7 a.m. and things returned to normal, though

See **RANCH, A8**

No sign of bear in forest hunt

By **SAM WILSON**
Daily Inter Lake

The bear that attacked and killed a mountain biker Wednesday continued to evade state wildlife managers Friday after a third day scouring the area south of West Glacier.

Flathead National Forest law-enforcement officer Brad Treat, 38, was attacked while mountain-biking with a friend on the Green Gates trail system on national forest land outside Glacier National Park.

A coroner's report is likely weeks from completion, but Flathead County Sheriff Chuck Curry said Friday the cause of death would be trauma associ-



BRAD TREAT

See **BEAR, A8**

‘CSI’ tactics employed in response to bear attacks

By **SHEILA BURKE**
Associated Press

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (AP) — In what amounts to an innocence project for bears, National Park Service rangers are turning to modern forensic technology, including DNA evidence, to make sure they don't kill the wrong bear when a human is attacked in the mountains.

Twice in the last two years the Park Service executed bears in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park only to find out through DNA evidence afterward it had the wrong suspects. The public was outraged.

Officials at the 800-square mile park straddling Tennessee and North Carolina say they are doing their best with new technology and techniques to prevent it from happening again.

"We never want to kill a bear if we don't have to," National Park Service spokeswoman Dana Soehn said. "It's the very symbol of the park."

Rangers are now using a new DNA lab at Western Carolina University to analyze bear DNA left at attack sites. The lab offers faster results than in the past, when rangers had to wait weeks. Most labs are too busy processing human DNA from crimes, Soehn said.

Park officials can't wait

See **CSI, A8**

C.F. police chief fired after inmate escapes

By **CHRIS PETERSON**
Hungry Horse News

Longtime Columbia Falls Police Chief Dave Perry has been fired.

Contacted by phone Friday afternoon, Perry, 55, confirmed he had been terminated effective July 1.

He said his firing was related to an inmate who escaped from the Columbia Falls Police Department in May. Perry said on advice of his attorney, he could not comment further, but he planned to appeal the decision.

Perry has been with the police department for 25 years with the last 20 as chief.

"A thorough investigation was conducted," Columbia Falls City Manager Susan Nicosia said Friday. "And a decision was made by the city to terminate Dave's employment."

Nicosia said it was a personnel matter and she couldn't comment further.

The escape brought plenty of criticism from community members.

On May 12, Christopher



DAVE PERRY

Calf Looking, 36, of East Glacier managed to escape from the Columbia Falls Police Department after he was arrested for allegedly assaulting his girlfriend.

Calf Looking was arrested at about noon at a Wildcat Drive residence. Around 2:40 p.m., he managed to walk out of the department, without shoes or socks, and a manhunt ensued. How Calf Looking escaped wasn't clear.

The Two Bear Air Rescue helicopter along with Columbia Falls Police, Flathead County Sheriff's Office, U.S. Border Patrol and Montana Highway Patrol

chased the man for more than an hour before he was apprehended near the Flathead River.

At the time, Perry said it wasn't necessary to notify schools or residents of the escape, but several people on social media disagreed.

Perry claimed the crew on the Two Bear Air helicopter could see Calf Looking near the river, but officers on the ground couldn't. Perry said schools didn't need to be told because police knew where Calf Looking was.

Perry said he had considered retirement at the end of last year, but decided to remain with the city.

GHOST RIDER

Artist sells acrylic piece to actor Nicolas Cage

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NATION

Attorney general wishes she hadn't met with Bill Clinton

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BEAR

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ated with a bear attack.

The national story has prompted questions over whether Treat's death was possibly due to a lack of precautions — such as carrying bear spray — but Curry said that wasn't the case.

"It wouldn't have mattered. When you're riding on a trail and you physically run into a bear, it doesn't matter what's on your belt or in your hand," Curry said.

He added that Treat's friend had been biking far enough behind that he didn't see the attack occur.

"He wisely decided his best course of action was to get out of there and get help," Curry said. "It was wrong place, wrong time. We haven't found any indication they did anything that was at all inappropriate."

John Fraley, the regional spokesman for Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, said several traps set in the area had failed to ensnare any bears by Friday evening.

"There was no action at the cameras or traps last night," Fraley said Friday. "We're going to wait and see if we get any activity."

A specialized team of state game wardens and biologists set up remote wildlife cameras and culvert traps where Treat was attacked, while DNA samples from the scene are being analyzed to



THE AMERICAN flag is at half-staff outside the Flathead National Forest offices in Kalispell. Forest Service law enforcement officer Brad Treat died from a bear attack on Wednesday. (Brenda Ahearn/Daily Inter Lake)

confirm the identity of any bears the team is able to capture.

South and east of U.S. 2, Flathead Forest officials have closed to public access a roughly 10-square-mile area surrounding the location that Treat was attacked.

Fraley declined to comment further on the search and said more detailed information on the agency's efforts would

be released today.

FLATHEAD National Forest spokeswoman Janette Turk said a separate specialized team is handling the incident for the federal agency.

The team of forest law enforcement officials is providing support to Treat's family, friends and coworkers as they mourn the loss amid an international media

frenzy that started when news of the attack first came out Wednesday evening.

"It's been hard for them, with a lot of interruptions. You have to answer your phone, because you're waiting for someone else, but it's maybe a media inquiry," Turk said. "They've been through this; this team is specialized, unfortunately, in dealing with fatalities, helping the families and walking everybody through this."

The incident team will coordinate with Treat's family on funeral and memorial services. Turk said those details have yet to be finalized.

Part of the support for grieving coworkers has included briefings at forest offices each morning, providing updated information on the evolving situation and a venue for people to share their thoughts and feelings. Turk said she believes the meetings have been helpful and noted that a Facebook post from the forest had reached more than 200,000 Facebook users and gathered generally positive comments.

"I think every employee that was here this morning showed up for it," Turk said Friday. "Some people have chosen to take annual leave. That's how they can process this. He was a friend to many."

Reporter Sam Wilson can be reached at 758-4407 or by email at swilson@dailyinterlake.com.

CSI

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weeks because they are unable to humanely hold a suspect bear for more than 48 hours, she said. The animals harm themselves if caged for long and can't be safely tranquilized for more than a few hours.

The Park Service also has a new agreement with the Knoxville Zoo to hold a bear in some instances until it's proven innocent — or guilty.

It is also using GPS-enabled collars for bears instead of less accurate ones that operated via radio.

Some of the same techniques are being used elsewhere, too.

In Northwest Montana, wildlife officials testing DNA samples to identify a bear that killed a mountain biker on Wednesday outside Glacier National Park say they will have the results less than a week after the attack. They have set traps and will hold any bear they catch until they determine whether it is the one that fatally attacked U.S. Forest Service employee Brad Treat.

After a grizzly bear killed a Michigan man and mauled two others in a campground near Yellowstone National Park in 2011, authorities sent hair samples to the Wyoming Game and Fish forensic laboratory. Within three days, they received the DNA results, found them to be a match and killed the bear.

But as with human perpetrators, identifying the right suspect isn't always easy.

Bears are known to return to the scene of the crime, so to speak. So, after an attack, rangers would wait for the first black bear to show up and then kill it if they believed it had attacked a human unprovoked.

That's why rangers killed a bear last year that lumbered into an area where a 16-year-old Ohio boy had been snatched from a hammock and seriously injured. Rangers also shot another bear that came to the area. The injured animal fled. But DNA from the attack didn't match the dead bear, and there wasn't enough genetic material from a nearby bullet with bear hair on it to show if the wounded bear was the culprit. Afterward, the Park Service vowed to examine new procedures to avoid another mistake.

Most bears are wary of people, though in May or June, when berries haven't ripened and there isn't enough food, they might come into conflict.

While there's about one attack a year in Great Smoky Park, a thriving population of about 1,600 black bears

in America's most visited national park — with 10.7 million tourists last year — means more human-bear encounters, Soehn said.

"One of the reasons why people come to the Smokies is for the opportunity to see a black bear in the wild," Soehn said. "So we know it's a really special thing for them to see, and we want people to have that chance to see wild bears. But at the same time, we want them to be safe."

Park officials remind visitors to stay at least 50 yards from bears and store their food safely, hanging it high on cables at campsites. Campers and hikers are also warned not to travel alone or sleep where they cook.

Park officials say 49-year-old Bradley Veeder from Las Vegas did everything right as he hiked the Appalachian Trail in May. But after he fell asleep in his tent in the backcountry, a bear attacked.

"I woke up," Veeder said. "I felt this sharp pain and then this squeezing sensation, like my leg was in a press or something. The first thing I thought was 'bear.'" The bear tried to get into the tent and Veeder punched it and screamed at it.

"My head was fuzzy. I had just woken up, and I reached down to touch my leg, thinking it was OK, and that's when one of my fingers sank into the hole in my leg."

Veeder was treated for puncture wounds on his right calf.

But even the new procedures didn't help in that instance. The first and only bear to come to the site was an enormous 400 pounds. It was too big to collar and couldn't be transported to a holding cell or the zoo because it was in such a remote place, Soehn said.

Rangers decided to shoot it after it was tranquilized. Bear DNA taken from a book in Veeder's tent later cleared the bear, said Maureen Hickman, a forensic research scientist at Western Carolina University.

It was unfortunate, Soehn said, but the methods are still evolving and the Park Service is continuing to search for ways to avoid euthanizing the wrong bears.

Veeder, recovering in Montana with family, says the bear that bit him had to be put down because it had started to view humans as prey.

"It's really unfortunate that another bear was euthanized," said Veeder. "But I do feel for the Park Service — they're doing the best they can with what they have."

Associated Press writer Matt Volz in Helena contributed to this story.



A PLANE flies over a smoky portion of the Ravalli Hill fire Friday afternoon. (Michelle Lovato/Lake County Leader)

RANCH

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Larsson could see planes dropping what appeared to be fire retardant Friday morning.

Around 50 volunteers from around the country who were away camping Thursday night returned the next morning to work on projects at the ranch including building a bowling alley.

Larsson said that the ranch has been operating for 40 years and that this is the second time it has had to be evacuated because of a wildfire. That was in July 2013 because of the Firestone Flats Fire.

Charlo resident Roxana Colman-Herak was driving through the area at around 10:30 p.m. and watched the fire spread.

"It was just a puff of smoke," Colman-Herak

said. "It didn't look like much but it crawled down that mountain like a ribbon. By the time we got there, it was roaring."

She said the fire crews seemed to get it under control quickly.

"They were amazing," she said. "When I looked at it, it looked like they had it contained."

In addition to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and rural fire departments, the Montana Highway Patrol was called in to direct traffic immediately after the fire started.

The rural departments were released from the fire late Thursday night. Bulldozers were sent in to help contain the fire.

By Friday afternoon, tribal fire prevention specialist C.T. Camel said he estimated the fire was about 30 percent contained and not likely to spread further.

"There was an AT&T

tower threatened, so they do have some heavies and a couple [single-engine air tankers] dropping" suppressant, Camel said.

The two heavy tankers left the fire by late Friday afternoon while the single-engine planes continued to work.

The steep, rocky terrain along the ridge where the cellphone tower is located prevented bulldozers from accessing the site. Camel said a hand crew worked to dig fire lines throughout Friday, with a second crew on the way.

No significant wind was in the immediate forecast, and the hot, dry weather is expected to continue through the weekend. He added that the hottest portions were burning in timber, in the middle of the fire, easing concerns that it could spot beyond the burn area's perimeter.

"They're just trying to

corral that little piece up there that's getting close to the tower," he said. "It's on a south-facing slope so there's not a lot of fuel, which helps on the ground. It's just torching trees here and there."

Lafrombois reminded holiday travelers to make sure that their chains aren't dragging and tires are not causing sparks.

"It's just going to continue to get drier," Lafrombois said.

ELSEWHERE

in Montana, a lightning-caused fire 10 miles southwest of Hamilton had grown to 1.6 square miles by Friday, the Associated Press reported. Crews were improving fire lines along the southern edge of the fire while Hotshot crews began building line on the east side.

Reporter Sam Wilson contributed to this story.

FOURTH

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are appreciated. There also will be free face painting, live music and a barbecue concession.

Self-guided tours of the mansion will also be available for \$5 per person. Call 755-2166 for more details.

LAKESIDE

Celebrate the Fourth of July at Flathead Lake.

Lakeside's annual Fourth of July Boat Parade will stage at 3:45 p.m. at Lakeside Bay directly out from the Lakeside Boat Launch. Look for a white 26-foot StanCraft with a Statue of Liberty on her bow, fall in behind her, and depart at 4 p.m. The parade route heads south to Angel Point. Dress your boat and dress yourself in red, white and blue.

The Lakeside Fireworks Show will begin at 11 p.m. Tune in to Pirate Radio 107.3 FM at 10:30 p.m. to listen to the station's simul-

cast.

Should you wish to make a donation for the fireworks, call Rudy at 250-7212.

For information call Ron Hopkins, 250-1522; Holly Larson, 270-2317; Tip Clark, 249-2240; or Bob Lincoln, 253-5014.

WHITEFISH

Whitefish Parks and Recreation is planning its annual Fourth of July celebration at Whitefish City Beach with fireworks, food vendors and live music.

Beach-goers are asked to carpool or walk to the fireworks, since parking is at a premium in the City Beach area and the beach parking lot will be closed. To ease traffic congestion, Eagle Transit is providing a free shuttle from the O'Shaughnessy Center (1 Central Ave.) to City Beach from 7 p.m. until 11 p.m.

The boat launch will also be closed in the early morning to launch the fireworks barge. Both the boat launch and inspection station will have extended hours into the evening. Lifeguards will be

on duty from noon to 7 p.m. and there will be staff on beach patrol throughout the evening.

In addition to a variety of food vendors, David Walburn will playing music from 7 to 10 p.m.

Fireworks over Whitefish Lake presented by the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce will start around 10:30 p.m. and will last approximately 30 minutes.

BIGFORK

Bigfork's old-fashioned parade begins at noon Monday in downtown Bigfork. Horses, clowns, fire trucks and floats of all designs will follow Grand and Electric Avenues cheered on by huge crowds of spectators.

There is no parking in downtown Bigfork after 9 a.m. and the roads into town will be closed at 11 a.m. General parking is available in the high school parking lot.

There will also be public parking and a free shuttle available at Crossroads Christian Fellowship and

St. John Paul II Catholic Church. You may also park in the Bethany Lutheran Church on the south end of Bigfork and walk downtown.

POLEBRIDGE

For a far-flung and funky Fourth of July, head up the North Fork Road to Polebridge. Everyone is invited to join the somewhat spontaneous and always quirky parade starting at noon ... or thereabouts. This year's theme is "North Fork Time Machine."

Following the parade, a magician will entertain and there will be live music. No fireworks, public or private, are permitted in Polebridge.

For further information, call the Northern Lights Saloon at 406-888-9963.

POLSON

Kick off your Independence Weekend on Sunday at Sacajawea Park in Polson. Live music starts at 6 p.m. with Nashville recording artist Jared Blake and special guests Mabels Rage and Highway 93.

There will be fireworks following the music. For more information, call 406-883-5255 or visit www.anderson-broadcasting.com

On Monday, Polson celebrates the "Miracle of America" for its annual Fourth of July Parade.

The parade begins at noon at Cherry Valley Elementary School, heading down Main Street, turning at Third Avenue and ending on the following block.

For more information, call the Polson Chamber at 406-883-5969. KwaTaqNuk Resort's Fireworks Cruise on Flathead Lake aboard the Shadow departs at 9 p.m. on the Fourth. For the full cruise schedule and tickets, go to www.kwataqnuk.com or call 883-3636.

Polson's fireworks show begins at dark.

TROY

Troy's Old Fashioned Independence Day celebration draws huge crowds every year. The hometown parade begins at 11 a.m. followed by an arts and crafts festival at Roosevelt

Park. The holiday also features a Cruisers Classic car show, craft show, children's activities, live entertainment, food concessions and a beer garden.

The fireworks show starts at dusk.

For more details, contact Jody Peterson at 406-334-7034 or Darren Coldwell at 406-295-4415.

EUREKA

Eureka's sixth annual Red, White and Boom community celebration takes place July 4 at Indian Springs Ranch, 3082 U.S. 93 N.

The event features a show and shine car show from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and a Kids' Zone from 2 to 8 p.m. The food court is open from 5 to 9 p.m. and the beer garden from 5 to 10:30 p.m. Enjoy live music starting at 5 p.m. featuring Jones & Fischer.

There will be a lip sync battle from 6 to 8 p.m. The evening culminates with a fireworks show from 10 to 11 p.m.

Admission is \$1.