

## **67 FOREST AND ROAD CLOSURES AND RESTRICTIONS**

Forest closure of Flathead Indian Reservation lands is a fairly common occurrence over the last several years. In- General, reservation-wide closures or restrictions have occurred during the 1994, 2000, 2002, and 2003 fire seasons. Forest and Road closures will only be implemented as a part of a general area shutdown, in cooperation with adjoining jurisdictions. i.e., State, County, and Tribal or as a result of a combination of occurrences such as extended periods of drought and abnormal man caused fire, continuing arson problems, threats to public safety, or for areas affected by multiple fires and/or large fires.

Refer to the Southwest Montana Zone Forest Closure and Restriction Plan for the notification contact list and established procedures for coordination of interagency forest closure/restriction activities.

### **Forest and Road Closures/Restrictions Objectives**

Following are Fathead Agency, and County Forest and Road Closure/Restriction objectives.

1. Build and maintain a support organization that is safe for all involved employees.
2. Provide a program that will provide for protection of values at risk.
3. Build and maintain a support organization that is cost-effective.
4. Utilize qualified Tribal, and County Employees that can drive Tribal and County vehicles.
5. Maintain adequate communications at all appropriate levels, to include: Tribal Council and County Commissioners, Tribal and Local Law Enforcement, Tribal and State Forestry, and appropriate State/Federal Agency's.

### **Forest and Road Closures/Restrictions Procedures**

The joint EOC of Tribal DES and County OEM will coordinate forest and road closure actions in cooperation with tribal departments, and county employees. With input from Tribal Council and County Commissioners. At such time the forest and road closure action is declared and activated, the actions will affect ALL Tribal and County qualified employees.

Forest and Road Closure/Restriction will be initiated upon formal issuance of a Tribal Council and County Commissioners Forest Closure Order. Refer to Appendix 60-7 for a sample of Tribal and County Forest Closure Order. Initial start-up, coordination, and management of the Forest and Road Closure/Restrictions organization will be conducted by the Tribal DES and County OEM. The support group manager will form a team that will establish management of the Forest and Road Closure/Restrictions Group. Careful establishment of team members and possible Road Guard Mangers must consider organizational safety of the qualified Tribal and County Employees. The organization must also provide qualifying training opportunities for the Tribal and County Employees that are

approved by their Department Heads. Refer to the CSKT and County's "Road Closure Protocol-Plan of Action", Appendix 60-8, attached.

A Tribal/County Forest and Road Closure Plan is included in this operating plan. Once the program is running smoothly and safely, EOC qualified employees will be given full management of the operation to whatever extent possible (concurrence decision of the Tribal Council, County Commissioners, Tribal DES, County OEM, and Tribal Division of Fire FMO).

The Ronan Division of Fire Dispatch, through the EOC will keep all personnel informed of the current precaution levels in effect by two-way radio, signs, public information releases, and direct communications with Tribal Council and County Commissioners.

During periods of extreme fire danger, the public will be made aware of the forest and road closure/restrictions situation through news release and through the posting and distribution of notices. Closures/Restrictions are never desired, however, there are times when the fire danger warrants restricting the general public and members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.