**Past Wildfires in the Grant Creek Area**
The following is a Grant Creek area wildfire summary from local newspaper reports using a digital search engine (Newspapers.com) and focused primarily on the period between 1970-2021.  The summary focused on fires of 10 acres or larger and shows that there were few, if any, large wildfires that made the news in the canyon over the past 50+ years. As a result, forest vegetation has continued to become denser and expand into areas that were once open meadows. Grant Creek is one of the few locations around Missoula that has not seen a major wildfire in the past 50 years.

Prior to 1970, a cursory digital newspaper review of wildfires in Grant Creek produced little information. The largest wildfire that made the news in Grant or Butler Creeks was 6 acres, plus random grass fires with no acreage listed on generic emergency and fire calls in Grant and Butler Creeks.  This is consistent with the smaller size and complexity of wildfires nationwide prior to 1970 before climate change started to influence weather and associated fire behavior.

The listed fires in the summary are in Grant Creek except one in Butler Creek in 1994 and one at Snowbowl in 2003. If the specific cause of an individual fire is not listed, it was most likely caused by lightning. This record backs up what the Wildfire Risk Task Force has observed on-the-ground in various parts of the canyon in 2021, i.e., lack of fire scars on older trees and little to no evidence of large wildfires in the drainage over many years.

Of note is where firefighters came from on the larger fires. By the time wildfire season arrives in the Northern Rockies, fire resources and personnel are often limited in availability due to other regions of the country where fire season starts earlier but is still active. As a result, fire crews needed for large fires here often come from the eastern and southern United States, which takes a longer time for them to arrive.

For those residents that have lived in Grant Creek for a number of years, this summary will be a trip back in time to memories of past fire experiences, evacuations and firefighters working and/or camped at various locations throughout the canyon. It is also a good reminder of work you may have performed around your homes over the years to improve your home ignition zone to make your residences more survivable in the event of any future wildfires.

 **Grant Creek/Snowbowl 10 Acre+ Fire History – 1970-2021***Any exact dates are not the fire start date, but the date of the newspaper reporting. Acreages are unofficial.* **Aug , 1979. Size: 250 ac.** Location: 2.5 miles above homes in upper Grant Creek in Stuart Peak area. 500 personnel. **Fire Camp at Grant Creek Ranch.** Fire crews from Kentucky, Tennessee, Oregon, Virginia, West Virginia, Montana. Residents warned to be ready to evacuate. **Rough location map available**. **Source:** Missoulian, August 11, 1979, page 1 and August 12, 1979, pages 1 and 2 (with map), August 13, 1979, pg 1 and August 14, 1979, pg 13.
 **Aug , 1988. Size: 50 ac.** Location: Snowbowl Road near first switchback. Residents notified to be ready to evacuate if necessary. Grant Creek Road closed to all traffic except residents. Cause: Arson. **Rough location map available**. **Source:** Missoulian, August 26, page 1 (with map), August 27, 1988, page 7 and September 6, 1988, page 1.

**July, 1994. Size: 91 ac.** Location: Snowbowl Road near first switchback. Residents notified to be ready to evacuate if necessary. Roads blockaded and only open to residents. 100 fire personnel including four 20-person crews from Alabama and Mississippi. Priority for the last aerial fire team in the region. Cause: Powerline. (No mention in news but probably the fire where the location of the fire camp has been referenced as the meadow bounded by Grant Creek Road/Mellott Ln/Springfield Close). Same general location as August, 1988 fire. **Source:** Missoulian, July 28, 1994, page 1 and July 29, 1994, Section B, page 1.

**Aug , 1994. Size: 50 ac. Location: BUTLER CREEK. Source:** Missoulian, August 1, 1994, page 1. **Aug , 1999.** **Size: 10 ac.** Location: East side of Grant Creek Road above the Grant Creek Best Western Inn and Republic Landfill. Seven engines including structure protection at Glen Eagle. Grass Fire. **Source:** Missoulian, August 19, 1999, page 14.

**May, 2001. Size: 15 ac.** Location: Colorado Gulch. Cause: legal burn escape, wind driven.
**Source:** Missoulian, May 7, 2001, page 1. **Aug , 2003. Size: 15 ac.** Location: **SNOWBOWL** in the West Bowl and West Ridge, ½ mile above Snowbowl base lodge. 250 wedding guests plus mountain bikers on site. Mountain bikers were evacuated. Used the snowmaking reservoirs as dip sites for helicopters. Firefighters camped at the base lodge area; some wedding guests stayed overnight in the lodge. **Source:** Missoulian, August 10, 2003, page A1 and August 11, 2003 page 9.

**Aug , 2016. Size: 16 ac.** Location: Colorado Gulch. Some residents evacuated, some property lost. Cause: powerline. **Source:** Missoula Independent, August 25, 2016, page A6.