



Joint Media Release
May 3, 2019

Missoula County, City Seek Public Input on Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment

More people suffering from lung and heart disease due to prolonged periods of wildfire smoke. More frequent fishing restrictions because of reduced summer streamflows and higher water temperatures. Increased costs to protect homes from larger, more frequent wildfires.

These are just a few of the dozens of local climate change vulnerabilities identified in the draft Vulnerability Assessment, which Missoula County, Climate Smart Missoula and the City of Missoula released today. It's available online at www.missoulaclimate.org/resiliency-planning.

Climate change projections suggest that Missoula County is likely to experience warmer, wetter springs; hotter, drier summers; reduced low-elevation snowpack; and earlier spring runoff. The draft Vulnerability Assessment explains what those projections are likely to mean for human health, ecosystems, the built environment, the local economy and other sectors of Missoula County.

"The projections are sobering," said Diana Maneta, Energy Conservation and Sustainability Coordinator for Missoula County. "What they're telling us is that the conditions that led to our 2017 fire season and 2018 flooding will be increasingly common in the coming decades."

The Vulnerability Assessment was developed as part of the Climate Ready Communities: Building Resiliency in Missoula County initiative, an 18-month climate resiliency planning process that started last summer. More than 100 stakeholders involved in public health, emergency services, agriculture, forestry, recreation, business, underrepresented communities, and local water, energy and transportation systems participated in an all-day workshop that led to the development of the draft Vulnerability Assessment. Future phases of the initiative will focus on developing strategies and solutions to address the risks identified in the Vulnerability Assessment.

The county, city and Climate Smart Missoula encourage the public to provide input on the draft. The agencies will host two open houses to share information and gather feedback:

- 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, May 8
- 12 to 1:30 p.m. Thursday, May 16

Both events will take place in the Sophie Moiese Room of the Missoula County Courthouse Annex, 200 W. Broadway. People can also provide input online at www.missoulaclimate.org/resiliency-planning.

"We urge people to take a look at the draft Vulnerability Assessment and let us know what they think," said Amy Cilimburg, Executive Director of Climate Smart Missoula. "It's critical that we get this right, because it will guide the resilience strategies we'll need to develop as a community."

###

Contacts:

Diana Maneta, Energy Conservation and Sustainability Coordinator, Missoula County, 406-258-3424,
dmaneta@missoulacounty.us

Amy Cilimburg, Executive Director, Climate Smart Missoula, 406-465-1141,
amy@climatesmartmissoula.org