

# MONTANA HIGHGROUND

Summer 2019



Teton River  
By Arin Peters

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Keep up-to-date on all things  
Highground by visiting  
[floodplain.mt.gov/news](https://floodplain.mt.gov/news)

## AFTER THE FLAMES

First Annual After the Flames Conference:  
Highlights, Topics and Discussions

See more on Page 2

## WHAT IS LIDAR?

Find out what LiDAR is and what  
areas are included!

See more on Page 3



# AFTER THE FLAMES

By Worby McNamee



Did you know?

The population of Denver is 704,621.

## THE INAUGURAL AFTER THE FLAMES CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP

Denver, Colorado played host to the first annual After the Flames Conference and Workshop. More than 30 different federal, state, local agencies along with non-profit and private sector representatives met and discussed various issues and topics associated with post-wildfire recovery. The conference kicked off with the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, Jim Hubbard, discussing the current state of the US Department of Agriculture and the future of the agency. During the keynote address, Under Secretary Hubbard discussed the future of firefighting by the USDA and future collaboration efforts by the agency.

In the afternoon of day one of the conference, a roundtable discussion format dominated. Attendees were encouraged to participate as roundtable members tackled topics such as navigating recovery at the national and state level. Speakers stepped through different recovery topics providing input from the National Weather Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Day two offered attendees a chance to attend breakout sessions in the morning. Topics included effective communication skills, tools and techniques for risk assessment, and community resilience. The breakout sessions continued in the afternoon with flood mitigation and erosion control, pre-fire planning, and invasive, threatened, and endangered species.

The final day of the conference saw another opportunity for attendees to listen and participate in roundtable discussions. Collaborative approaches to recovery was the dominating topic for the morning, followed by smaller, breakout conversations on lessons learned and next steps. The last agenda item was an optional tour of a reclamation site not too far from the downtown Denver conference location.

The 2020 After the Flames Conference will once again take place in Denver on April 6-8. For more information, please visit <https://co-co.org/after-the-flames-workshop-conference/>



The DNRC Mapping Program received FEMA grants in 2017 and 2018 to collect LiDAR in several areas of the state. Have you ever wondered what LiDAR is, how it can be used, and where the collects are taking place? Find out more!

## WHAT IS LIDAR?

Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) is surveying technology that measures distance by illuminating a target with laser light. These light pulses- combined with other data recorded by the airborne system- generates precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the earth surface and its characteristics.

## HOW IS LIDAR UTILIZED?

LiDAR data can be used for land management and planning efforts, hazard assessments, forestry, agriculture, and geographic mapping. DNRC and FEMA used the data for new flood studies and to update floodplain maps. LiDAR is the most detailed and accurate elevation information available. The data allows for modeling how water will move through the landscape and what areas may be flooded.

## LIDAR COLLECTION AREAS

Over the next couple of years, DNRC contractors will be concentrating their efforts to collect county-wide LiDAR in the following areas:

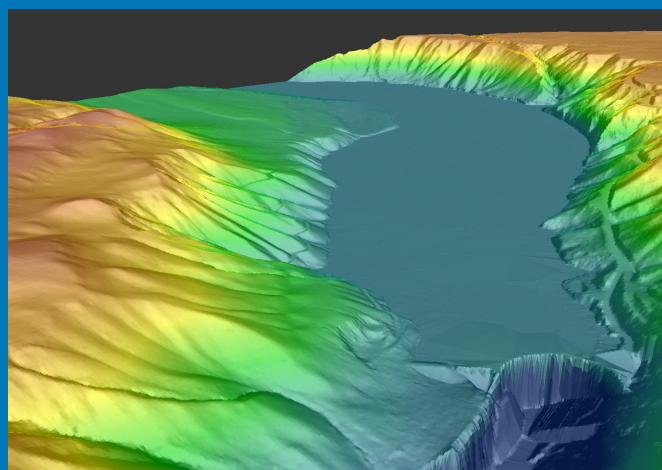
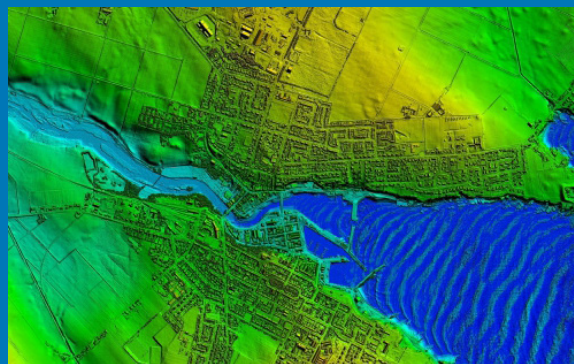
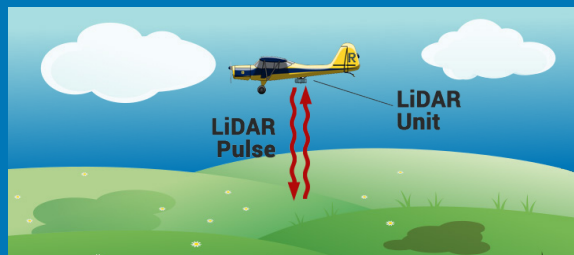
Dawson County, Deer Lodge County, Fallon County, Powell County, Rosebud County, and Treasure County.

In addition to those areas listed above, DNRC contractors will be also collecting LiDAR in parts of the following counties:

Big Horn, Carbon, Custer, Granite, Missoula, and Stillwater.

A big thank you goes out to everyone in the listed counties for their efforts to get partial or county-wide LiDAR and the community support.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON  
THE DNRC LIDAR PROJECT VISIT  
[WWW.FLOODPLAIN.MT.GOV/LIDAR](http://WWW.FLOODPLAIN.MT.GOV/LIDAR)





# CONGRESS SENDS DISASTER AID LEGISLATION TO WHITE HOUSE

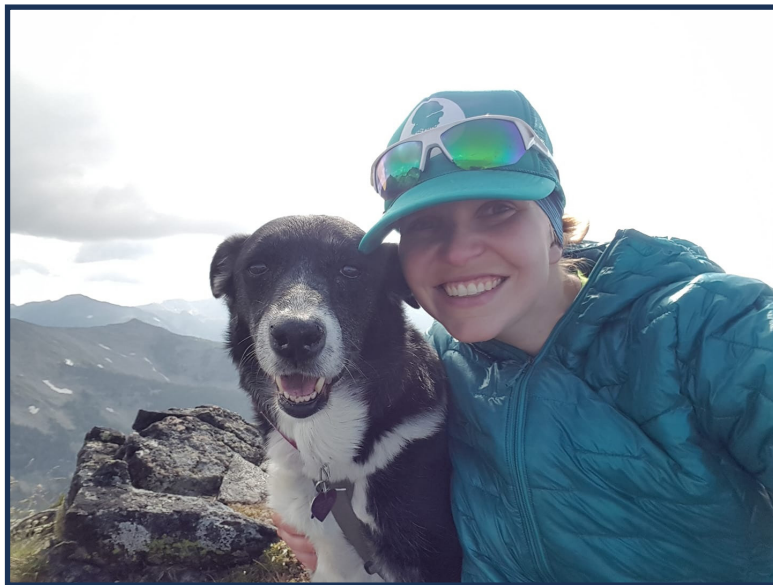
On Tuesday June 4, 2019, the \$19.1 billion disaster aid legislation was passed by the House of Representatives. The House was last to vote on the bill which now gets sent to the White House for the President to sign. The bill will provide emergency dollars to more than 40 states and territories that have been hit by a variety of natural disasters over the last couple of years. HR 2157 was passed two weeks prior by the Senate after almost six months of negotiations.

In HR 2157 there is funding to the Agriculture Department to cover crop losses, money for the Department of Defense to put towards military base repair in Florida and the Carolinas, and a provision extending the National Flood Insurance Program through the end of the Federal fiscal year (September 30).



## NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE MEET AND GREET

Get to know National Weather Service (NWS) team members from around the state. This edition highlights Megan Syner from the NWS Great Falls office. If you live in the Great Falls area and have a weather question for her, email her at [megan.syner@noaa.gov](mailto:megan.syner@noaa.gov).



Follow NWS Great Falls on  
Twitter! @NWSGreatFalls

**Title:** Warning Coordination Meteorologist

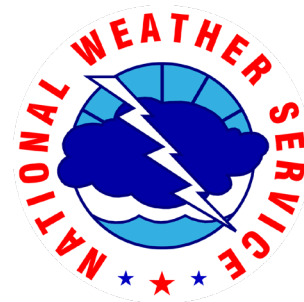
**Favorite Part of the Job:** Working with incredible people dedicated to protecting lives and property.

**Favorite weather term:** Graupel.

**Favorite dessert:** Ice cream.

**Coffee or Tea:** Montana Coffee Traders!

**Biking or Hiking:** Too close to call, both!



In the next Highground edition the NWS-Missoula office will be highlighted!



# FLOOD INSURANCE SPOTLIGHT BIPARTISAN CALL FOR NFIP REFORM

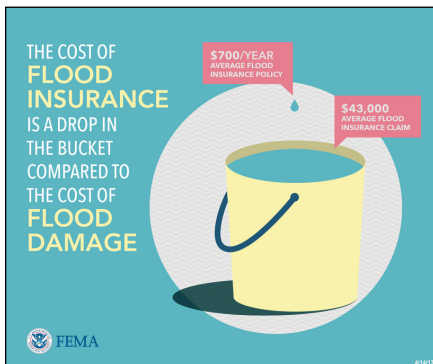
The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) made headlines as recent government funding reauthorized the program until the end of the federal fiscal year, September 30, 2019. A bipartisan initiative is underway to look at possible reforms to the NFIP. US Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Bill Cassidy (R-La) called for a long-term, comprehensive reforms that will enhance the affordability, efficiency, fairness, accountability, and sustainability of the program.

First on the list of reforms is affordability of flood insurance premiums, specifically focusing on how low- to middle-income policyholders can pay the insurance premiums. Additionally, taking a closer look at funding mitigation, improving flood risk assessment, and reforming the claims process, were also mentioned as areas to reform.

Sen. Menendez authored the comprehensive, bipartisan legislation known as the Sustainable, Affordable, Fair, and Efficient National Flood Insurance Program (SAFE NFIP). The bill, which was cosponsored in the last Congress by Sen. Booker, Rep. Pascrell, Jr. (NJ-09) would remedy the problems of the current flood insurance programs that had a devastating effect on Hurricane Sandy survivors.

A large component of the purposed reforms examined the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Risk Rating 2.0. The Risk Rating 2.0 will allow for identification of properties' unique flood risk while not compromising affordability and access to the NFIP.

As the fiscal year closes, expect the NFIP reforms and purposed changes to make more and more headlines!



For more information on the NFIP, reforms, flood insurance, and anything in the above article, visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)



## FEMA

# BEST OF LUCK!

## Nicole Decker FLOODPLAIN ENGINEER, MONTANA DNRC

We are sad to announce that Nicole Decker has left Montana DNRC. She will trade in the full-time engineering position for focusing on her two boys and transitioning to stay-at-home mom duties. Everyone here at the Floodplain Program wishes her the best and she will be missed around the office.

## Ada Montague LEGAL COUNCIL FOR WATER OPERATIONS

We are pleased to announce Ada Montague will be moving to Missoula. She will continue her legal work with the Water Operations Department in Missoula. Her husband accepted a position at the University of Montana. While we are sad to see her leave Helena, we know she will be back on regular basis.



# Welcome!

## Andrew Boughan FLOODPLAIN ADMINISTRATOR CITY OF MISSOULA

Andrew Boughan takes over the Floodplain Administrator duties for the City of Missoula. If you have a question for Andrew, feel free to call him at 406-552-6052. You can email him at [aboughan@ci.missoula.mt.us](mailto:aboughan@ci.missoula.mt.us)



# NOW HIRING!

## CIVIL ENGINEERING SPECIALIST

THE FLOODPLAIN MAPPING PROGRAM IS LOOKING  
TO HIRE A CIVIL ENGINEERING SPECIALIST TO JOIN  
THE MAPPING TEAM!

The candidate will lead and carry out a variety of  
floodplain mapping tasks and technical reviews.



Visit <http://statecareers.mt.gov/> for more details and to apply.

## TRAININGS AND MEETINGS



### 2019 MONTANA DNRC RESOURCE SEMINAR

September 9-13, 2019 | Fort Peck, MT

The 2019 Montana DNRC Floodplain Resource Seminar will be held at the Fort Peck Interpretive Center and Museum. For more details, agenda and registration please visit [www.floodplain.mt.gov](http://www.floodplain.mt.gov)



### 2019 MACO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

September 22-26, 2019 | Great Falls, MT

Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls. For more information visit the Montana Association of Counties website [www.mtcounties.org](http://www.mtcounties.org)



### 2019 MONTANA ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS CONFERENCE

September 24-26, 2019 | Chico Hot Springs, MT

Chico Hot Springs Resort, Pray, MT. For more information visit the Montana Association of Planners conference website [www.mtplannercon.com](http://www.mtplannercon.com)

## UPCOMING CFM EXAM DATES



### NEXT CFM EXAM

SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 FROM 1:00PM TO 4:00PM

Montana DNRC Resource Seminar | Glasgow, MT (likely)

Please email Worby McNamee at [worby.mcnamee@mt.gov](mailto:worby.mcnamee@mt.gov) for details



## ABOUT THE MONTANA HIGHGROUND

We are always accepting articles and ideas for this newsletter! Please email your contributions at anytime to [worby.mcnamee@mt.gov](mailto:worby.mcnamee@mt.gov).

The Highground Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Montana DNRC Floodplain Program. This newsletter & other DNRC Floodplain Program activities are funded, in part, through grants from FEMA.

Persons with disabilities who need an alternative accessible format of this document should contact the DNRC Public Information Officer at 406-444-0465.

Sun River  
Photo by: Arin Peters

ALWAYS REMEMBER  
TURN AROUND, DON'T DROWN!

### MONTANA DNRC FLOODPLAIN STAFF

1424 9th Ave, PO Box 201601, Helena, MT 59620-1601

Steve Story  
Water Resources Bureau Chief  
406.444.6816 [sestory@mt.gov](mailto:sestory@mt.gov)

Worby McNamee  
Floodplain Specialist  
406.444.1343 [worby.mcnamee@mt.gov](mailto:worby.mcnamee@mt.gov)

Katie Shank  
Flood Hazard GIS Specialist  
406.444.6664 [katherine.shank@mt.gov](mailto:katherine.shank@mt.gov)

Doug Brugger  
Engineering Specialist  
406.444.1300 [douglas.brugger@mt.gov](mailto:douglas.brugger@mt.gov)

Traci Sears  
CAP/NFIP Coordinator  
406.444.6654 [tsears@mt.gov](mailto:tsears@mt.gov)

Nadene Wadsworth  
Floodplain Specialist  
406.444.1300 [nadene.wadsworth@mt.gov](mailto:nadene.wadsworth@mt.gov)

Tiffany Lyden  
Outreach Specialist  
406.444.0599 [tlyden@mt.gov](mailto:tlyden@mt.gov)

### MONTANA DNRC REGIONAL ENGINEERS

Sam Johnson  
Billings Regional Office  
406.247.4423 [sam.johnson@mt.gov](mailto:sam.johnson@mt.gov)

Position Vacant  
Havre Regional Office  
Contact Marc Pitman

Larry Schock  
Missoula Regional Office  
406.721.4284 [lschock@mt.gov](mailto:lschock@mt.gov)

Marc Pitman  
Kalispell Regional Office  
406.752.2713 [mpitman@mt.gov](mailto:mpitman@mt.gov)

Sterling Sundheim  
Lewistown Regional Office  
406.538.7459 [ssundheim@mt.gov](mailto:ssundheim@mt.gov)



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