

# Wildfire policy

Legislative Environmental Policy Office

June 2024



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- River Road East Fire (2023)



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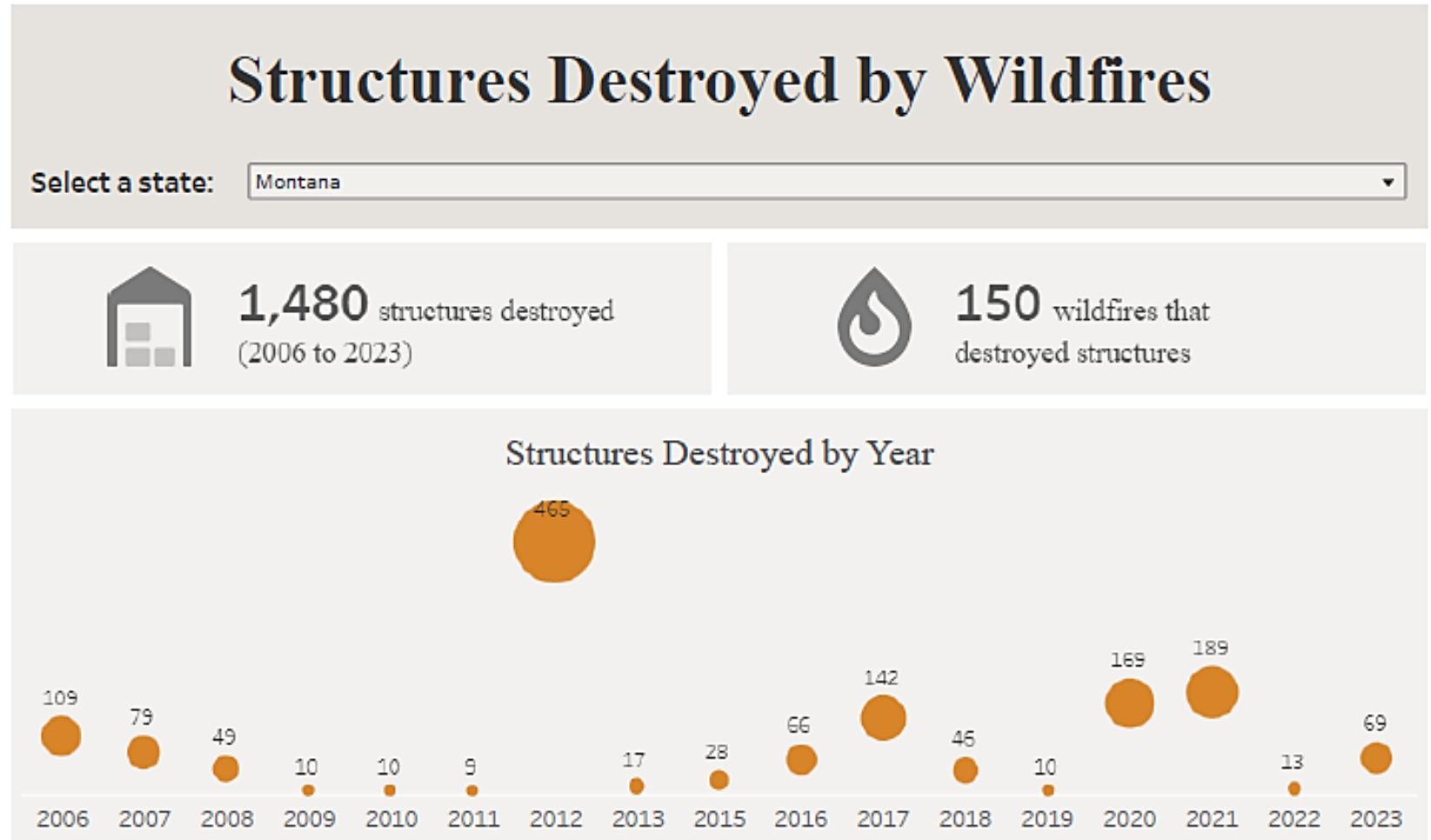
# When a wildfire ignites

- River Road East Fire (2023)
  - “Unknown” cause
  - 27 sq. miles burned
  - \$16.1 million firefighting costs
  - 711 crew members (at peak)
  - 64 structures destroyed
  - 4<sup>th</sup>-most destructive since 2006



# When a wildfire ignites

Source: Headwaters Economics, 2024



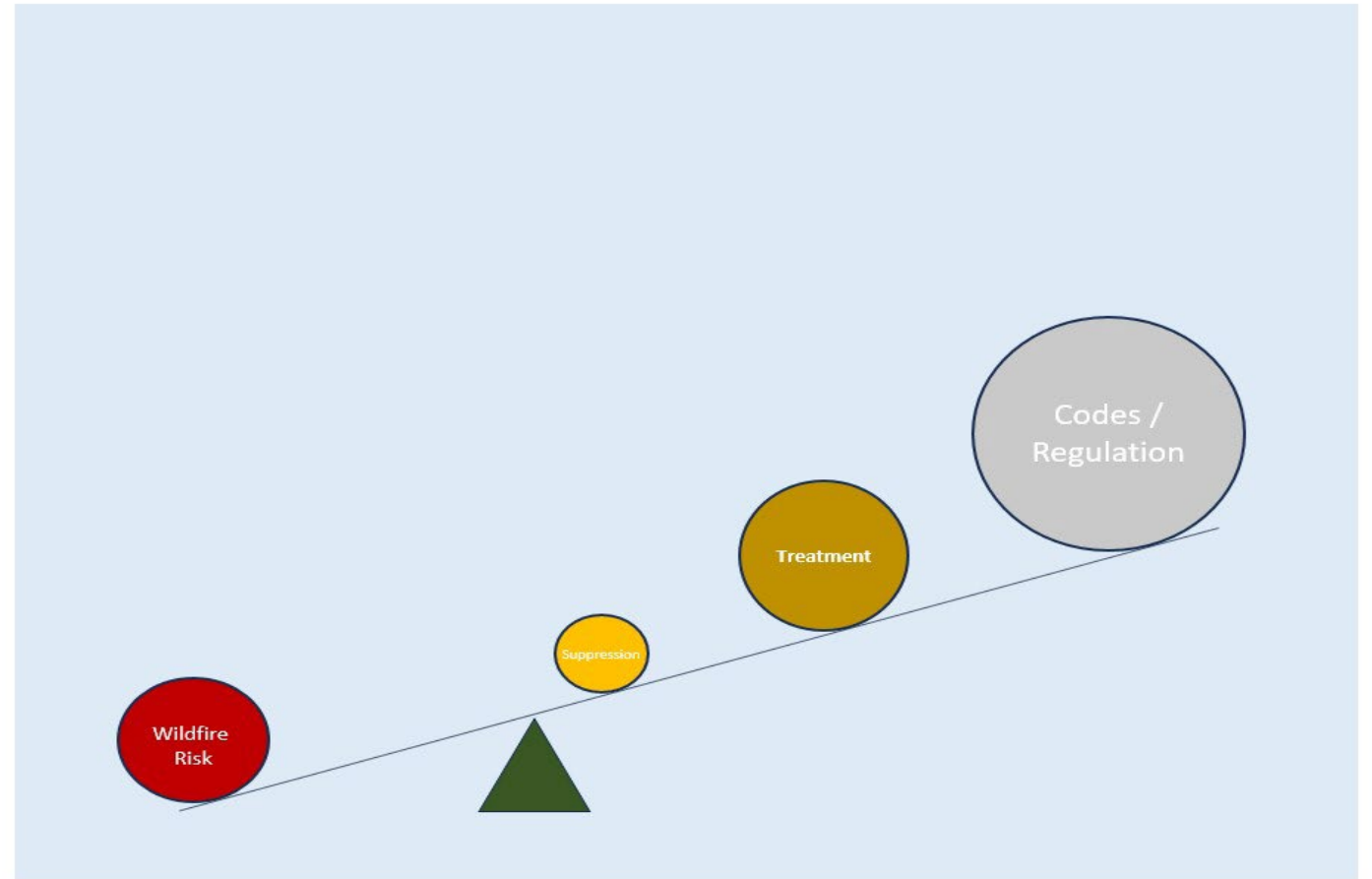
# Reducing wildfire risk

- 3 methods:
  - Suppression
  - Mitigation
  - Regulations



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# State wildfire laws

- Montana State Fire Policy, 76-13-115, MCA
- Timber Resources: Protection of Forest Resources, Title 76, Chapter 13, Part 1, MCA
- Timber Resources: Provision of Fire Protection Services, Title 76 Chapter 13, Part 2, MCA
- Local Government Fire Protection, Title 7, Chapter 33, MCA
- Liability for Forest or Range Fires, 50-63-104, MCA
- Railroad Control of Fire Hazard Along Right-of-Way, 69-14-721, MCA



# Legislative wildfire studies

- **Price of Flame (Fire Suppression Interim Cmte., 2008)**

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- **Prescribed Burning: Fires not gone wild (EQC, 2018)**

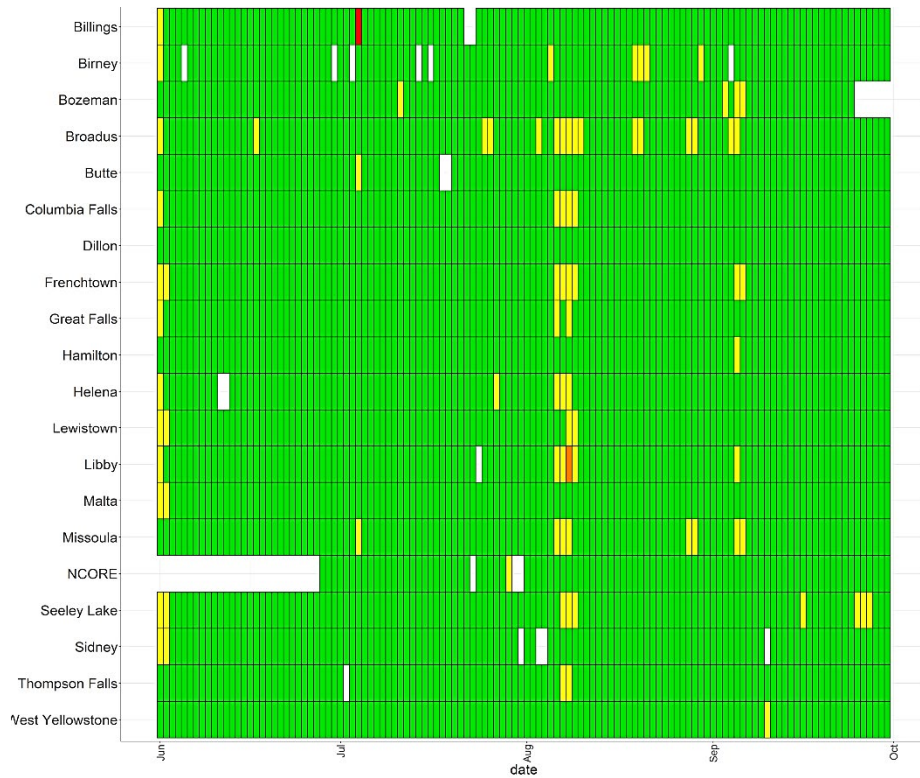
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- **SJ21: Preserving and Improving the Future of Volunteer Fire and Emergency Services in Montana (Local Gov't Interim Cmte., 2018)**

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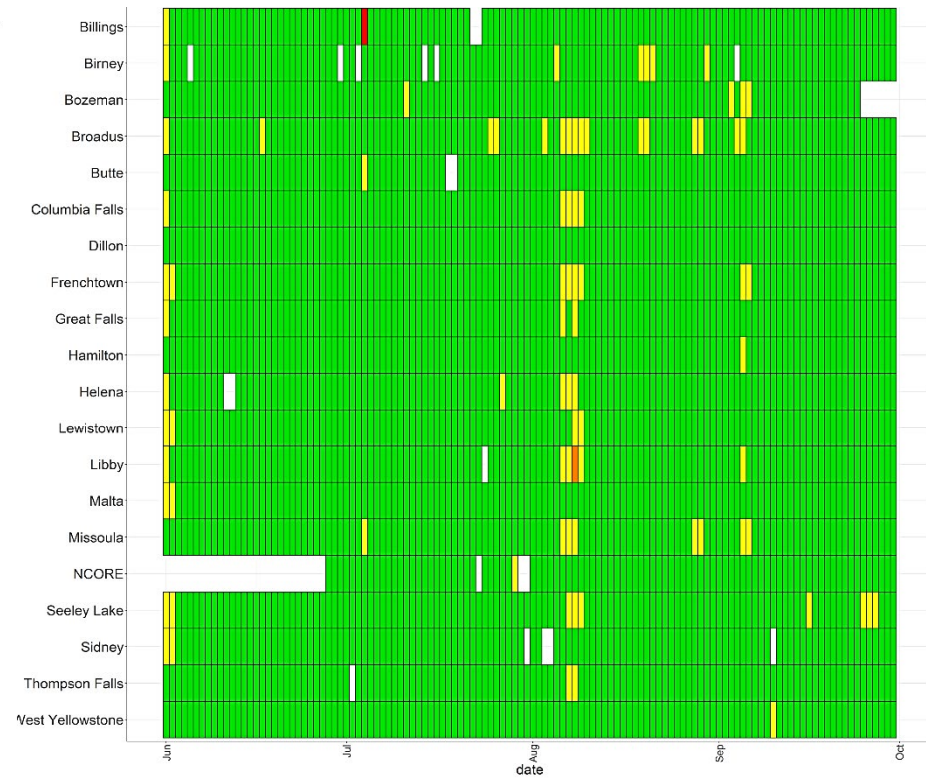
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Health effect air quality categories at Montana monitoring sites (PM2.5 concentration) 2019 vs. 2021 (Department of Environmental Quality)

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- **Utility Wildfire Liability Statutory Considerations (ETIC, 2024)**

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- Utility Wildfire Liability Statutory Considerations (ETIC, 2024)
- **Good Neighbor Authority (Farm Bill, 2014)**



# Wildfire suppression and mitigation: Assessing and planning for costs to the state of Montana

Legislative Fiscal Division

June 2024

