



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Contact:

Riley Meredith, (406) 443-8313  
Marketing & Communications Director  
[riley@mtcf.org](mailto:riley@mtcf.org)

## Montana Community Foundation Distributes \$600,000 to Benefit Wildfire Relief Efforts

**Helena, Mont.**, January 31, 2018 – The Montana Community Foundation (MCF) announces the distribution of more than \$600,000 in grants from the Montana Wildfire Relief Fund. The fund originated as a partnership between MCF and the Montana Television Network and is dedicated to supporting wildfire relief efforts following Montana's unprecedented 2017 wildfire season. Launched in early September 2017, the fund has grown to more than \$600,000 through the extraordinary generosity of individuals, businesses, private foundations, and many others across the country.

"We're grateful to have played an important role in not only receiving these charitable gifts, but also in administering the grants," said MCF President and CEO Mary Rutherford. "We're looking forward to seeing the positive impact these funds will make on the recipient organizations and, in turn, the positive impact made on communities across Montana affected by the fires."

Grant amounts range from \$600 to \$15,000 and benefit 81 organizations across Montana, primarily rural volunteer fire departments. The majority of grant requests being fulfilled will be used to purchase much-needed personal protection equipment (PPE), radios, equipment such as hoses and nozzles, and other safety gear.

"Maintaining good communications on the scene of a wildland fire is an essential component of firefighter safety," said Red Lodge Fire Chief Tom Kuntz. "Fulfillment of our grant request ensures our volunteers have dependable and adequate radio equipment in our apparatus and will greatly increase their ability to operate safely and effectively when fighting wildland fires in our jurisdiction and throughout the State of Montana."

In addition to fire departments, other organizations that provided direct relief to victims of wildfires or that are located in a community that suffered losses, such as structural damage or economic hardship, will also receive funding.

"The Montana Community Foundation's grant toward the Bob Marshall Music Festival means so much to Seeley Lake," said Seeley Lake Community Foundation Board Member Emily Rindal. "After a long, hard fire season it gives our community something to look forward to. The festival will increase tourism, support the business vibrancy, boost morale and let everyone know that Seeley Lake still stands after the fire and is as beautiful as ever."

As a result of MCF's work with the wildfire fund, the organization has begun additional efforts in disaster recovery. In early December, MCF hosted the Montana Wildfire Early Recovery Workshop with the Center for Disaster Philanthropy. MCF also recently participated in the Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Long Term Recovery Meeting. Long-term, MCF has plans to establish a permanent, non-endowed fund dedicated to disaster relief in Montana. This fund will provide a mechanism for donors to give money in support of future disaster relief and worthy organizations to receive funding in support of disaster relief efforts.

For a full list of grant recipients, visit [mtcf.org/MWRF-Grants](http://mtcf.org/MWRF-Grants).

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### **About Montana Community Foundation**

Montana Community Foundation's (MCF) mission is to cultivate a culture of giving so Montana communities can flourish. Founded in 1988, MCF manages approximately \$100 million in assets and administers more than 900 philanthropic funds and planned gifts. MCF's accreditation through the Council on Foundations' National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations ensures MCF complies with the strictest standards in gift administration and grantmaking. Since its founding, MCF has reinvested more than \$41 million in Montana through grants to charitable organizations and causes across the state. MCF serves as a center for philanthropy in Montana, working with donors, charitable organizations and communities to provide simple and effective ways to give back to Montana.

For more information and to learn how you can support Montana communities, visit [www.mtcf.org](http://www.mtcf.org) or call (406) 443-8313. Find us on [Facebook](#).