

# Fire-protection workshop slated for July 8

**Updated June 29, 2009**—The North Fork Landowners' Association Fire Mitigation Committee is planning a not-to-be-missed workshop for North Fork landowners on July 8 from 10 a.m. to noon, immediately preceding the Summer Inter Local Agreement meeting at Sondreson Hall.

The workshop will focus on the status of federal, state and private wildfire mitigation efforts on the North Fork six years after the Wedge Canyon fire. Representatives from the Forest Service, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation and the Northwest Regional Resource Conservation and Development Council will consider whether we're better prepared for wildfire than we were in 2003 and if so, how and why.

They will also consider what remains to be done in mitigating the risk of wildfire on and adjacent to private property, particularly the risk to structures. With the assistance of maps, the workshop will emphasize the complementary nature of federal, state and private efforts.

With the approval of the other signatories to the agreement, the summer Inter Local Agreement meeting has been scheduled for the afternoon instead of the evening to accommodate the workshop. The committee began planning the workshop at its February meeting.

Other items covered at the committee meeting were:

- Grant money is still available for landowner fire-mitigation projects (see "**Limited**," below left).
- Last fall, Flathead County finally burned the big, old, red slash piles along the North Fork Road..
- A number of U.S. Forest Service slash piles await disposal. The Forest Service reports that because of the 2008 California fires, it lost the money intended for a contract to chip the piles. The agency hopes to let a chipping contract this summer. If not, it will burn the piles this fall.
- Flathead National Forest Glacier View Fire Management Officer Michael Dardis reported at the Winter Inter Local Agreement meeting that the Forest Service's 2009 fire-response capability will be similar to that of 2008. The forest will have three engines available, one of them heavy, and 20 fire personnel. A helicopter will be available for initial attack.