

## Needs

What do you need? Housing, equipment, labor, clothing, emotional support, legal advice?
Thankfully, nothing
I am lucky and don't need anything
A sheriff's department that functions
Nothing, we're good
Nothing thanks!
Revegetation advice
Help understanding where we start in restoring our devastated land.
Probably labor
Labor - helping clean up burned trees.
NA
We don't have any needs.
Nothing
I'm doing ok.
Thankfully, we are FINE. We have donated money and goods in a few ways, as suggested and through other projects (i.e, Stix Yarn put out a pattern and skeins of wool to buy and make a Jackson Creek Hat with proceeds being donated.)
Legal advice I
Nothing
None
Doing okay right now
Nothing, thank you and hoping it stays that way.
Nothing
I'm doing ok.
good...oh...except I need to refill the five diesel containers I dumped before evacuating.
housing (3-6 months? 2 ppl, 2 dogs)
Probably labor
Nothing, thank you and hoping it stays that way.
Nothing, we're fine.
NA since the fire did not come our way, thank goodness. Thanks for all your work on this, Tom.
So far we are in a motel doing fine .
The fire missed our property

Property not burned. No immediate needs other than to get the latest information on fire containment, road closures and prevention steps.

Nothing

## What worked well?

What worked well? (Your good ideas, or effective responder actions)

Fire crews managing the threatened properties

Getting a call and an email to evacuate. Thank you

Our instinct

Emergency EVACUATIONS system was great, 211 was amazingly helpful, firefighters and police were wonderful, info from BCPOA and everyone were fantastic

I heard Lowell kept wetting BCR....that stopped the fire from jumping?? Don't know if it is a rumor.

Communication from sheriff and fire department was excellent.

Our well mowed lawn saved our house.

What doesn't work well.... for any BC subdivision in the WUI to have rules that don't allow individual owners to thin live trees and harvest dead and live trees to create a fire ready landscape, especially in hilly terrain. Also common open space forests **MUST BE KEPT FIRE READY TO PROTECT THE OWNERS**. Bridger Canyon POA must have rules that supersede and over-ride outdated and poorly thought out subdivision rules. No one is an island. One burns, we all burn.

Yours and Bruce Jodar's emails were SO helpful in knowing what was going on the day the fire blew up. I was appreciative of the communication. I felt like given how quickly things went badly that the responder actions were managed well.

As much as I hate Facebook, the one centralized location for information was helpful.

wonderful to get your emails!!

Having firemen go around our house and removing everything from the decks, shutting off the propane, closing windows. Most of all the **CORRESPONDENCE** was terrific and kept us up to date. Bruce Jodar updated JC and Tom Fiddaman updated the canyon. The community efforts as a unit to fight the fire and to care for the community was stellar. It was an amazing experience.

Firefighters worked hard and were kind and neighbors were kind and supportive.

Friday 9/4 communication

Takeover by the Incident Mgmt Team. Everbridge Community alert system.

Knowing neighbors phone numbers and staying in contact with them. The best info came from neighbors from different parts of the canyon (especially Saturday and Sunday)

-Had an evacuation checklist ready, including moving accelerants (fuel cans, propane grill tanks) away from buildings and shutting off water and gas mains.

-Prearranged rendezvous point for family members.

-Having a landline and old telephone that doesn't need electricity to function to receive/make calls in case power goes out.

-Backed cars out of the garage, turned them around, and packed them Friday night. When a down

canyon friend called around 2 o'clock Saturday to get out and shortly thereafter we saw the first flames come over the ridge 1/4 mile away, we barely had enough time to scoop up our pets and get out.

-Kudos to Tom Fiddaman for all his regular updates and help. He seemed the most "visible" person in the community.

Tom Fiddaman was essential in dissemination of information. However, it seems unrealistic that one person could typically do what he does, or did, during the event (and continues to do). Too much on one person. He's truly one of a kind. Such dedicated service to the Canyon through the years. He deserves an award!

The sheriffs at the checkpoints were kind and understanding and validating and truly amazing. All good interactions. Helped with emotional support, actually.

Sheriff briefings also helpful... and Tom's follow up with each one so helpful.

I thought it was important that the warning given the day the fire exploded said "to use one's own judgement and not wait for an evacuation order." I did use my own judgement and it may have saved my life. If not for those words, I probably would have waited for the order. Tom advising to get our evacuation kits ready also spurred me into action. Denial is powerful and I would probably been more lackadaisical if not for this prompting.

Firefighters amazing! Took such good care of our property and seemed truly interested in doing so.

Bozeman folks have been ridiculously supportive. Truly amazing.

Inciweb pretty good. A central place for accurate information was important.

Bridger Canyon neighbors were great — stuck together and had each other's backs. Great community.

Red Cross was quick with resources, like hotel rooms, although not too many.

The Gallatin County emergency broadcast system worked well. I got calls and texts on every device. We should all be signed up for this.

Mowing really seemed to make a difference. All the ponds were crucial for fire fighting. Defensible space around our home was crucial.

Our H/O's insurance company, CHUBB, has been great so far. They viewed our property immediately and started a claim without us even asking them to. Hub Intl., the insurance broker, was also quick and personal.

Gathering items for evacuation and preparing the property for potential fire seemed like useful and important moves. Parking important vehicles, etc. in open areas seemed liked a smart move. Removing combustibles from the house (I drove away with a gas can, bear spray, and a propane tank in my car!) seemed useful.

My ex- and I worked well together in the heat of the moment, and since, to protect and care for our property. We each did our part and didn't argue. We worked quickly and efficiently. We were supportive with each other.

Personal visit from deputies with EVAC packet.

the periodic updates were essential to my feeling well-being on on top of what was happening...so as to make good decisions...Thank you

Having a 40 ft watered lawn surrounding your house and outbuildings and no trees very close to the house.

Getting through police lines saved our house from total loss. Watering done around the property was effective in minimizing approach.

Family came and helped us create a defense able space around our home. Sprinklers were placed on the roof and around the house and house and deck were soaked down then left in place in case we had to evacuate. We had extra drivers and all rigs were ready and positioned for exiting out Kelly Canyon, if need be. Two of us at a time took two hour shifts through the night to make sure the winds remained calm and in a favorable direction and the fire remained on the other side of BCD.

Virtual meetings; sheriff coming by (great help); road closures; other information provided; quickly deciding what to pack; previously had all important documents, etc. in one place so we could just grab them and go; getting out quickly without dithering over what to take; cat loved the camper.

The response at our house (under the M) was amazing and constant. Since the fire started here and the prevailing winds were away from there, responders were able to work effectively to set a perimeter here. We never knew what was going on past the first few hours except from friends in town. Firefighters were talking to us initially since they were staging on both sides of our house and crossing back and forth initially.

effective responder actions

The fireman came to our door and saved our lives. We are so grateful. The evacuation call arrived at the same time. Several years you sponsored a grant to clear brush around the house. We participated. That helped save the house.

Text messages from neighbors with updates and emails from the Incident Commander

My sister Kate and I called in and helped contain the second fire in the Canyon that day, in the north Bridgers below Ross Pass, while driving to a morning hike. We worked with Steve and Carrie Kohlmeyer and flagged down another hiker, Matt, then used shovels, saws and water from Steve's trailer/camper to remove brush and control the fire until the Forest Service arrived to extinguish it 45 minutes later. Recommend all hikers/hunters in the Canyon carry a shovel, saw, extra water and cell phone with coverage in their cars/campers to control small fires and call them in quickly. Good tools and speedy response were essential in putting out that fire. Despite the fire's remote location, we did also have the advantage of better access than the M fire, which was on a steeper slope with no nearby road. It is also worth noting that we thinned the trees on our 60 acres of property several years earlier, which likely would have slowed the progress and intensity of heat had the fire from the M gotten further north past Bridger Bowl. Fingers crossed that it still won't. Another positive was the quick and effective evacuation conducted when the M fire got out of control, which saved lots of lives and property. Kudos to all involved.

BCPOA warning of coming fire and ongoing communication updates; Gallatin County Emergency notification system

## What would you do differently?

What would you do differently to protect your family, animals and property, either in the heat of the moment, or to prepare?

Have a plan

Have all my papers in order.

Better organization within BCPOA since we can't rely on Gallatin County Emergency

Although we've done much fuel reduction, will look into doing even more.

I would make sure our pond is full....since the small earthquake the spring shifted and we lost our water. That pond would be awesome for us on Green Mountain...any ideas?

We will do more to fireproof our property.

Pack more essentials ie med's, pictures, clothes

Unsure.

We need cell towers in the canyon. Time to stop allow landowners in the canyon the ability to erect a tower if they want. [Note: cell towers have been explicitly allowed in the zoning since 2014, when BCPOA spearheaded an amendment; before that they were a gray area. BCPOA used input from Verizon and Atlas Towers in the drafting. The problem is that the providers simply aren't interested – Verizon is the only company on the existing Bridger Bowl tower.]

I have done fire mitigation on my property, but I'd step it up around my house with stonework and probably take down some more trees. In the moment, I felt like I did my best.

I realized how much more prepared I need to be. The animals were a no brainer but that's all I grabbed. It took me two days to realize that my freezer was full and the power was out.

have an evacuation/ fire list, 100 ft hoses for every hose bib, fire blankets to lay over outside furniture too heavy to move alone, pre-charged external phone chargers(mophie), a generator, additional fire gel, cut back trees that are too close to the house

Do what the firemen did around our house so they wouldn't have to spend their time removing furniture and all. Now we know what they did and can do it again.

Cut our hay fields and turned off the propane.

Communication broke down 9/5. When fire line broke, residents were not notified. A friend called from town to tell us to go. We ran for our lives at 2:10. Still no notification.

Have a list of items to take.

Would have sprinklers already setup on perimeter

-Will refile evacuation checklist after this weekend's real experience

-Consider leaving earlier when a wildfire has potential to become a real threat. The crazed driving on Jackson when the flames came to around mile marker 9 and 10 was almost as frightening as the fire. Had the wind suddenly gone a different direction, people could have been trapped in their cars on Bridger/Jackson. We were lucky no one died.

Mow, mow, mow. Defensible space - I wouldn't plant trees close to my home, even though they look great that way. Storing firewood on the front and back porches, like we all do, doesn't seem so prudent anymore, even though it's so handy when it's cold in the winter. Maybe there's a reason for a "wood shed," away from the house!

Determining whether to stay and defend one's property, or leave for personal safety, was a really hard call. It would help to be better informed about how to make this call, and how to prepare for fire in general. When it all went down, I'm not sure there was much I could have done to protect my property more. It seemed ferocious when it came through.

Cats were a problem, one disappeared and the others were very vocal in the crates. Should have loaded them earlier and in the trailer once they were crated. Our other cat showed up after we let them out. If we had not had support from family and neighbors, we would have had to do things differently. One neighboring property has hay fields that have not been mown for a few years, wildlife does not graze them and there is an accumulation of dry grass from the previous growing seasons under this years growth. Seems that hay fields need to be grazed or mown yearly to keep tinder at a minimum, especially in mixed use areas like our canyon.

Have a packing list ready

I realized how much more prepared I need to be. The animals were a no brainer but that's all I grabbed. It took me two days to realize that my freezer was full and the power was out.

It took time to hook up all available hoses around my property to make it easier for FF to save property...if it had been necessary. I Should have had it done earlier.
Water more extensively prior. Stayed longer in the area to protect neighbor's structures. A backup generator to power the well pump.
Pack more essentials ie med's, pictures, clothes
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Wet down the deck; have more photos and documents scanned.
Make an efficient bug out list for immediate vs 1 hour vs longer. I have done that now. We are removing vegetation from our yard now, buying a larger generator or two, and will be keeping 5 gallon buckets filled for when the power goes out.
have more concrete plans ahead of time
My husband had foot surgery on Friday. We returned Saturday about 1:30 from dressing change at hospital. We had no time to prepare.
We would have begun to pack up Saturday morning when the wind picked up
While the M fire ultimately didn't (hasn't yet) reached the north Bridgers, I would have recommended that the fire response team continue their intensive air and ground efforts to control that fire on Saturday morning, when there was a window of opportunity to keep it from blowing up as it did that weekend.

## What could be improved?

What could the community or agencies have done to improve the response?
Pray
More water and fire retardant on the burning areas.
Evacuation at noon on Saturday and block Jackson Creek from fire tourists
Nothing. I thought they were tremendous.
They were all awesome!!
Saturday morning's response could use some explanation. It may have been fine, but the lack of aerial response in the early hours leaves me with questions.
Lots of misinformation about when we could access our homes.
Been quicker with communication and one site to go to
It was not well communicated that horse trailers would not be allowed back through the road block on Saturday just after the evacuation order was given. If this was clearly communicated, residents could have shuttled livestock to the roadblock to another trailer and then gone back for more at their ranches. As it stood, some livestock had to be left behind to fend for themselves. Luckily many neighbors worked hard to get any stray animals out to safety and none were harmed in our herd.
Everything was and has been incredible.

Weather watchers could see the possibility of the fire cresting the Bridgers from west to east and blowing up. It could have blown up the west side too. Evacuations and routes out are the most important. Have maps with evac outlines on them. Make sure people know the funnels. Both sides of Bridgers and north of I90. S of I90. Bridger Canyon is a beautiful but deadly trap.

Not everyone lives inside Facebook and Twitter. Tom Fiddaman was a terrific pass-through of information but these incredibly short time fuses need to go out like Amber Alerts. Tornado sirens are all over the Midwest. Why not fire sirens in the WUI?

Not impressed with inci website and its oh-so-infrequent updates.

Cell towers. Initial notification could have been sent out like the Kelly canyon amber alert type notification.

I think some people felt that they should have gotten a warning then the evacuation notice, but I didn't have that concern because I didn't wait for either. I felt like we got good information given the situation from the community and agencies.

I felt like I wasn't informed as quickly as I would have liked in regards to evacuation orders and status, but I feel like the resources were being used where they were needed most and I'm grateful for that.

better communication! especially more up to date, maybe hourly reports of where exactly the fire was

Air power early Saturday as the wind really kicked up. We knew it was coming and water and retardant possibly could have prevented the raging spread. I really have to applaud all whose effort went into organizing around this fire. The sheriff's office and FB page were so valuable. Thank you to everyone!!!

Need much better evacuation orders and better coordination between agencies and departments . Why does amber alert work and you can't alert us on our cell phones??

You have to notify residents the minute the wildfire gets out of control. Some of us at the 10-mile marker could not see it coming. We had 10 minutes to help neighbors (wake up from a nap) hitch up horse trailers and flee.

I am not sure of what happened on Saturday morning. There seemed to be little to no air resources then. By comparison, there were a lot of helos dropping water and aircraft dropping retardant on Friday. By Saturday morning the fire activity seemed to be significantly less. It seemed like we had a chance to make some real progress before the winds picked up on Saturday afternoon. Given that the forecast was for high winds, I do not understand why there were limited or no air resources being used in the morning before the winds picked up and the fire exploded. Can you explain what happened?

Also, get the word out about the Everbridge Community Alert System. That was the only way we knew it was time to evacuate.

More communication about fire activity in the early stages. Especially on Friday and Saturday (early).

-Better communication like getting evacuation notice BEFORE I left the house (I received my call 2 hours afterward) to communicating the rationale behind prohibiting residents access after 2 mornings of access. Having specific reasons would have made waiting easier. Failure to communicate erodes trust and compliance. Moreover it was a down canyon FRIEND and my own eyeballs—not reverse 911— that told me to GO.

-Better information overall. If it hadn't been for Tom Fiddaman, I would've really spent a lot of time trying to find information and news.

-Have law enforcement keep "fire gawkers, tourists, and photographers" off evacuation routes. It was dangerous on Jackson with all the lookie-lous, people evacuating, people trying to get to their homes.

-Have a yearly tabletop natural disaster exercise involving local and regional emergency response providers and leaders. Invite residents to observe to better grasp what happens behind the scenes during a disaster response and also to offer input on what would help us help ourselves.

Evacuation orders were vague and ambiguous initially... and then too late when they finally occurred. That one woman emailing at like 3 pm whether she should leave or not.... terrible. At that point, it was truly dangerous. By the time the Order came, I was gone and Fire was at my door!

Everyone should be part of the Gallatin County emergency broadcast system, or whatever it's called. I didn't even know it existed until the night the fire was at the "M" and I started looking for resources. It was great with the early warnings, but seemed to get caught off guard with things started going down fast (around 2 pm the second Fire day). The most important call I received, just after deciding on my own to evacuate, said nothing at all, just identified itself with no message. This was really effective in its quick and effective destination of information, but the information itself could be improved.

As a community we need to be better prepared for wildfire in terms of knowing how to prepare our property for fire. I had to literally Google it the day the fire roared up the Canyon. All the information was about what to take for evacuation. It was very hard to find information on what to do to my home as the fire's onslaught approached. I finally found an article on CHUBB's website that explained things like putting ladders to your roof for firefighters access, to bring deck furniture inside, to remove firewood from around your house, to move combustibles and furniture away from windows and to the center of each room, to fill tubs and sinks with water to potentially fight small fires if power goes out, etc. I had to really hunt for this information. It needs to be readily available to all of us.

CHUBB's @Wildlife Defense Team" seemed non-existent until the fire had already moved through and destroyed our property. I had assumed, by their representations all these years, that they would be actively assisting as the threat of fire loomed and during the fire. There was no support beforehand and certainly no support during. They made it sound as though they would send a crew, or air support?, to "gel" or "foam" our home. This never happened.

Afterwards, more hotel rooms would have been great. Tom Fiddaman supported the whole community from his camping spot on the lawn at the MOR. Come on! The Lark should have put him up in a penthouse suite!! I think I read that the Red Cross had 11 rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn. We can do better than that. The fairgrounds "support" event was described by one person as "predatory." Let's not do that again!

Where was the checkpoint to the Canyon a couple of days after the fire? One day they're up; next day gone; next day up? I saw cyclists on the road the day there wasn't a checkpoint. Lame.

Preparing for the future? More education. When I saw the fire at the "M", it was scary, but I never imagined the fire could reach our property, on the other side of the road and over 8 miles away. When it did, it took just 2 hours to travel that distance. I was really ignorant and naive about the power of fire. Maybe I've been told, but I didn't hold that information. I should have been preparing, really preparing, the moment the fire broke out at the M. We need to really educate people even more about wildfire prevention and preparation. We are so fortunate that no lives were lost.

Provided regular accurate fire information maps on the internet so residents would know the growth and extent of the fire.

Overall, we feel there is and has been an excellent response by the agencies involved. Deputies visiting us and patrolling our road were very much appreciated as well as seeing an Ellis Fire vehicle in our road. Guessing that was who was managing our area and familiarizing themselves with the area as they monitored the fire.

We were very sorry to not have seen an all out assault on the active burning area early Saturday morning, the day after the fire broke out. We certainly aren't in the profession and understand the lack of resources and the procedural trail that must be followed. However, from our viewpoint if the retardant drops could have started at sunrise, the fire probably would not have made the big leap to the north as it did once the predicted winds picked up. The area that was burning overnight was mostly rocky and sparsely forested. We could see how lucky we were that the winds were not out of the W or SW.



<p>My neighbor and her 3 dogs desperately needed lodging Sat night. All hotels showed full. No idea that Red Cross had rooms set aside. Disconnect here in communications.</p>
<p>I felt like I wasn't informed as quickly as I would have liked in regards to evacuation orders and status, but I feel like the resources were being used where they were needed most and I'm grateful for that.</p>
<p>Was there any input from us that that would have found useful...re our status..or any observations re fire progress. E.g., my deck had a good view of fire progress. GCSO used it.</p>
<p>I think the firefighters did a great job of preparing the other agencies about the roads and locations of homes in our area. They gave them maps and showed them where to go in our area. The sheriff had officers come door to door and gave everyone an information packet of what to do in the event of evacuation. That was extremely valuable. We followed the guidelines and had everything ready to go when we had to evacuate.</p>
<p>After the initial wave burned through, there were no crews or resources following up to protect structures from flare ups. Obviously, not wishing for lives to be put in danger, but in the heavily burned areas most fuels (except houses) were already burned. Also, really wish retardant could have been dropped on the ridge line Sat morning before the winds picked up, to contain it on the west side. But other than a few strategic decisions made in the heat of the moment in an unpredictable situation, the community response and outpouring has been tremendous. Really grateful to be here.</p>
<p>Been quicker with communication and one site to go to</p>
<p>Overall, we feel there is and has been an excellent response by the agencies involved. Deputies visiting us and patrolling our road were very much appreciated as well as seeing an Ellis Fire vehicle in our road. Guessing that was who was managing our area and familiarizing themselves with the area as they monitored the fire.</p> <p>We were very sorry to not have seen an all out assault on the active burning area early Saturday morning, the day after the fire broke out. We certainly aren't in the profession and understand the lack of resources and the procedural trail that must be followed. However, from our viewpoint if the retardant drops could have started at sunrise, the fire probably would not have made the big leap to the north as it did once the predicted winds picked up. The area that was burning overnight was mostly rocky and sparsely forested. We could see how lucky we were that the winds were not out of the W or SW.</p>
<p>(1) People need to evacuate when ordered for the safety of firefighting efforts but also of their neighbors: our road was blocked by neighbors returning from a getaway (dead vehicle) just before we were supposed to be off our property. Lots of activity in our neighborhood by people who didn't evacuate. The more who don't evacuate, the more people think the orders don't apply to them (like COVID). (2) Helpers (e.g., with equipment) need to be approved by the fire department; others need to be out. (3) In addition, information was hard to find the first day or two, particularly on road closures; text to EVAC was on the paper we were told to post in our window so it didn't go with us! At first, we missed news of when we could get back into our house so missed coming back the first day.</p>
<p>From my perspective, the response was great. If there could be more detailed info in the emergency system alerts, that would be helpful; but I realize that there is no easy way for Gallatin County to break up the list or send more targeted info.</p>
<p>I wish we had more indication of what could happen .when we left for hospital Saturday morning . we thought it was contained at M. I admit that we were distracted by his surgery those 2 days and should have asked more questions. We appreciate all that the community is doing. We are fortunate. Our home survived.</p>
<p>It would have been nice if the fire station had set off the siren once they knew the fire was out of control. Once the planes and helicopters were pulled, the siren should have sounded giving people along Bridger and Jackson Creek time to grab a few belongings and get out.</p>
<p>See above for immediate fire response. Longer term, I would recommend more extensive thinning of trees by property owners and Forest Service throughout Bridger Canyon to reduce the likelihood and intensity of future fires. Also take advantage of lessons and learnings from this fire and others on how to make homes and property less vulnerable to fires if they do occur.</p>

Given the increase in fires across the western US that are expected to continue for the foreseeable future, including here in Bridger Canyon and Gallatin County where beetle devastation and disease has made the forest ripe for additional fire, I believe we need to develop a comprehensive fire prevention and protection plan and invest in additional resources (people, equipment, training, etc) to be able to protect our own community, rather than compete for and rely on state and national forest fire fighting resources. If we can afford a new prison in Bozeman we can afford to invest in plans and resources to protect our community from future forest fires that will continue to be a threat and danger.