

NOTIFICATION OF INTENT  
TO ISSUE AN AIR QUALITY OPEN BURNING PERMIT

Date of Mailing: December 2, 2025

Name of Applicant: The Nature Conservancy

Source: Major Open Burn Permit

Location: Those sites throughout Montana that have been or will be submitted to the monitoring unit of the Montana/Idaho Smoke Management Group as “proposed burns” as part of the major open burn permit application.

Proposed Action: DEQ proposes to issue an air quality major open burning permit, with conditions, to the above-named permittee. The permit will be assigned number SM-0007.

Proposed Conditions: See attached.

Procedures for Appeal: The permit shall be deemed final in accordance with this notice, which is January 19, 2026, unless the permittee requests a hearing before the Montana Board of Environmental Review (Board). Any appeal must be filed within 15 days after the Department notifies the permittee of its intention to issue the permit. The request for hearing shall contain an affidavit setting forth the grounds for the request. Any hearing will be held under the provisions of the Montana Administrative Procedures Act. Submit requests for hearing in triplicate to: Chairman, Board of Environmental Review, P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620. The filing of a request for hearing postpones the effective date of the modifications to the permit until the decision of the Board becomes final or judicial review has been concluded.

For the Department,

Sincerely,



Troy M Burrows  
Air Quality Bureau  
Phone: 406.444.1452  
E-Mail: [troy.burrows@mt.gov](mailto:troy.burrows@mt.gov)

TMB: Enclosure

## Montana Air Quality Major Open Burning Permit

Issued To:	The Nature Conservancy of Montana	Permit #:	SM-0007
	P.O. Box 8316	Permit Application Received:	11/28/2025
	Missoula, MT 59807	Department Decision on Application:	12/2/2025
	406-543-6681	Permit Final:	1/1/2026
	<a href="mailto:michael.schaedel@tnc.org">michael.schaedel@tnc.org</a>	Expiration Date:	1/1/2027

An air quality major open burning (MOB) permit is hereby issued to The Nature Conservancy of Montana pursuant to the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.8.601, *et seq.* under the following terms and conditions:

### Section I: Permitted Activities

The Nature Conservancy of Montana, hereafter referenced to as the permittee, is permitted to conduct prescribed wildland open burning activities in Montana in which descriptions have been provided to the Department of Environmental Quality (Department). Planned, scheduled management-ignited burn descriptions shall be submitted to the Department prior to any burn. All burns must be conducted in accordance with this MOB permit.

While not an enforceable condition of this permit, for major open burners that are members of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group, all burns must be submitted to the Monitoring Unit of the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group in accordance with the Smoke Management Unit's Operations Guide. All burns must be approved through a coordinated effort between the Department and the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group.

### Section II: Limitations and Conditions

#### A. Emission Limitations and Control Requirements

1. Anyone conducting burning for their own use, as a service to an unrelated entity, or burning conducted by proxy, shall comply with Best Available Control Technology (BACT) during ignition and throughout the duration of burning (ARM 17.8.610(4)(a)). BACT is accomplished by employing such techniques and methods that may include (ARM 17.8.601(1)(a)):
  - a. Scheduling of burning during periods and seasons of good ventilation;
  - b. Utilizing dispersion forecasts and predictive modeling results to schedule burns so that the smoke impacts are minimized;
  - c. Limiting the amount of burning to be performed during any one time;
  - d. Using ignition and burning techniques which minimize smoke production;
  - e. Selecting fuel preparation methods that will minimize dirt and moisture

- content;
  - f. Promoting fuel configurations which create an adequate air to fuel ratio;
  - g. Prioritizing burning such that air quality impacts are minimized and assigning control techniques accordingly;
  - h. Promoting alternative treatments and uses of materials to be burned; and
  - i. Selecting sites that will minimize smoke impacts.
2. Permittee shall not burn prohibited materials as listed in ARM 17.8.604. Prohibited materials include, but are not limited to, garbage; building demolition waste; Styrofoam and other plastics; rubber materials; treated lumber and timbers; and dead animals or dead animal parts. Consult ARM 17.8.604 for an expanded list of prohibited materials (ARM 17.8.604).
  3. Permittee shall only conduct burning for the purposes of hazard reduction, site preparation for regeneration, range improvement, wildlife habitat improvement, control of forest pests and diseases, and any other accepted silvicultural practice (ARM 17.8.601(8)).
  4. Permittee shall notify the fire control authority having jurisdiction in the area of burning/events prior to ignition. An additional fire safety permit may be required from the appropriate fire control authority (ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
  5. Permittee shall have appropriate fire control available during the course of burning (ARM 17.8.601(1)(a)).
  6. All burning conducted under this MOB permit shall be done in a manner such that no public nuisance is created. Section 27-30-101, Montana Code Annotated (MCA) defines nuisance as anything which is injurious to health, indecent or offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as to interfere with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property, or which unlawfully obstructs the free passage or use, in the customary manner, of any navigable lake, river, bay, stream, canal, or basin or any public park, square, street, or highway. Enforcement of this requirement would likely reside outside of the Department (MCA 27-30.101 and ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
  7. During the period of September 1 through November 30 and prior to conducting burning, Permittee shall obtain dispersion and air quality information. The Department's message for the day can be obtained by reviewing the meteorology section of [www.burnclosures.mt.gov](http://www.burnclosures.mt.gov). The permittee may also obtain further information from [www.smokemu.org](http://www.smokemu.org). Pursuant to ARM 17.8.601, the Permittee may call the Department toll-free (1-800-225-6779) to check for open burning restrictions, however, these restrictions are simplified for the minor burner audience. Review of the meteorology section of [www.burnclosures.mt.gov](http://www.burnclosures.mt.gov) provides further information regarding the basis for the Department's message for the day (ARM 17.8.601(1)(b)).

8. During the period of December 1 to February 28, Permittee may conduct burning if the following conditions are met and approval is granted by the Department:
  - a. Provide the Department meteorologist with the following at least 72 hours in advance of proposed burn date (ARM 17.8.610(1)):
    - i. a legal description of each planned site of open burning or a detailed map showing the location of each planned site of open burning;
    - ii. the elevation of each planned site of open burning;
    - iii. the method of burning to be used at each planned site of open burning;
    - iv. the average fuel loading or total fuel loading at each site to be burned.
  - b. Receive morning of approval from Department meteorologist before ignition.
  - c. The Department reviews wintertime open burning requests (December 1 through February 29) on a case-by-case basis. The Department may prohibit wintertime open burning at any time (ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
  - d. This permit may be subject to superseding local authority in Lewis and Clark, Flathead, Missoula, Lincoln, Yellowstone, and Cascade counties. Local jurisdictions may impose different or more stringent requirements. Permittee shall confer with county authorities when performing burning in their respective jurisdictions.
9. For all burning described in Section II.A.7 and II.A.8, BACT includes burning only during the time periods specified by the Department, which may be determined by calling the Department at (800) 225-6779 (ARM 17.8.601(1) and ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
10. Anyone conducting burning shall comply with requirements of ARM Title 17, Chapter 8, Subchapter 6.
11. Permittee shall not conduct burning within the city limits of any city in the state of Montana (ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
  - a. The Department may, on a case by case basis, grant exemption to Section II.11, provided a written request is made from the Permittee, and written exemption granted by the Department.
  - b. An exemption is conditional based on Permittee's adherence to any supplementary conditions set forth in the Department's written exemption.

12. For each proposed burn, Permittee shall provide the Department with the proposed burn date, burn identification, location, size in acres, elevation, method of burning, and average fuel loading or total tons of fuel to be disposed (ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
13. Permittee shall categorize smoke emissions from each proposed burn and as either natural or anthropogenic. The categorization should be entered into the AMS database (ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).
14. By February 15th, Permittee shall submit to the Department an annual report containing completed burning information from January 1st to December 31st of the preceding year. The report should be made in excel or equivalent format, and include the information required by Section II.A.12 (ARM 17.8.505(13)).

B. General Conditions

1. Inspection

The Permittee shall provide the Department access to any burning site at reasonable times for the purpose of making inspections or surveys, collecting samples, obtaining data, and otherwise conducting all necessary functions related to this MOB permit (ARM 17.8.610(4)(b)).

2. Waiver

The MOB permit and all the terms, conditions, and matters stated herein shall be deemed accepted if the recipient fails to appeal as set forth below.

3. Compliance with Statutes and Regulations

The citation of requirements, limitations, and conditions in this MOB permit does not relieve the applicant from the obligation to comply with all applicable statutes and administrative regulations, including amendments thereto, nor waive the right of the Department to require compliance with all applicable statutes and administrative regulations, including amendments thereto (ARM 17.8.756).

4. Enforcement

Violations of limitations, conditions, and requirements contained herein or the violation of any applicable statutes and administrative regulations may constitute grounds for permit revocation, penalties or other enforcement as specified in Section 75-2-401 *et seq.*, MCA.

5. Appeals

When the Department approves or denies the application for a MOB permit under this rule, a person who is jointly or severally adversely affected by the Department's decision may request a hearing before the Board of Environmental Review (Board). The request for a hearing must be filed within 15 days after the Department renders its decision. An affidavit setting forth the grounds for the request must be filed within 30 days after the Department renders its decision. The contested case provisions of the Montana Administrative Procedure Act, Title 2, Chapter 4, Part 6, MCA, apply to a hearing before the Board under this rule. The Department's decision on the application is not final unless 15 days have elapsed from the date of the decision. The filing of a request for a hearing does not stay the effective date of the Department's decision. However, the Board may order a stay upon receipt of a petition and a finding, after notice and opportunity for hearing, that: (a) the person requesting the stay is entitled to the relief demanded in the request for a hearing; or (b) continuation of the permit during the appeal would produce great or irreparable injury to the person requesting the stay (ARM 17.8.610(3)).

Upon granting a stay, the Board may require a written undertaking to be given by the party requesting the stay for the payment of costs and damages incurred by the permit applicant and its employees if the board determines that the permit was properly issued. When requiring an undertaking, the Board shall use the same procedures and limitations as are provided in 27-19-306(2) through (4) for undertakings on injunctions.

6. Permit Inspection

Pursuant to ARM 17.8.755, Inspection of Permit, a copy of this MOB permit shall be made available for inspection by Department personnel at the permitted facility during the burn (ARM 17.8.755).

7. Permit Fees

Pursuant to Section 75-2-220, MCA, an MOB permit application is deemed incomplete until the Permittee submits the proper MOB permit application fee as required by that section and rules adopted by the Board of Environmental Review.