



West Virginia Division of Forestry
www.wvforestry.com
Joe Manchin III, Governor
Randy Dye, Director/State Forester

News Release: Aug. 27, 2010

Contact: Leslie Fitzwater, Public Information Specialist, 304.957.9342 or 304.541.8102, Leslie.C.Fitzwater@wv.gov

**Outdoor Burning Discouraged in Eastern Panhandle
Persistent drought conditions pose danger of increase in forest fires**

Officials at the West Virginia Division of Forestry (DOF) are asking residents of the Eastern Panhandle to refrain from outdoor burning until the area receives an inch or more of rain.

“Although the Division of Forestry has not received any reports of increased or threatening wildfire activity in the Eastern Panhandle, we are concerned about the potential for an increase in the number of fires because much of the area is experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions,” said Assistant State Forester Ben Webster. “This is a request for help from the public and not a burning ban. If conditions in the Eastern Panhandle worsen, the DOF will explore taking additional steps that may include restricting all outdoor burning, which would include campfires and outdoor cooking.”

Webster said he and the DOF’s designated fire personnel have been paying close attention to conditions throughout the state this summer, but are particularly concerned about the Eastern Panhandle. The panhandle has experienced a pattern of dry, warm weather that Webster says is not expected to change over the next six to eight days.

Even though statewide restrictions on outdoor burning don’t start until Oct. 1, Webster said he hopes people will take extra precautions at this time. “If people will delay outdoor burning activities until the area gets an inch or more of rain, the Eastern Panhandle should be in good shape.”

For more information, visit the Division of Forestry’s website at www.wvforestry.com.

###

Regional Offices
Farmington 304.825.6983
Beckley 304.256.6775
Milton 304.743.6186