



West Virginia Division of Forestry
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Earl Ray Tomblin, Governor
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Warm Up Increasing Risk of Forest Fires Officials ask residents to use caution when burning

Charleston, W.Va. – Warmer weather not only is raising the spirits of winter-weary West Virginians, it also is raising the risk of forest fires throughout the state.

In the past week, forest fires have occurred in Berkeley, Boone, Clay, Hampshire, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mercer, Mingo, Pendleton, Pocahontas and Wayne counties.

“So far, the fires we’re seeing are relatively small and we’re getting them under control fairly easily,” said Regional Forester Kevin Arnold. “More than 50 percent of these fires are resulting from debris fires that are getting away from landowners and spreading into the woods. Anytime you burn outdoors, be sure to stay with your fire at all times to help prevent this.”

Arnold also recommends the following tips when conducting outdoor burning:

- Wait until evening to burn because that typically is when winds are calmer.
- Create a 10-foot perimeter around the fire so that if it does get away from you it won’t spread too far.
- Keep a rake, shovel and water source nearby in case the fire does escape.
- If the fire breaks into the woods, call 911 immediately.

Since Jan. 1, 74 fires have burned 476 acres.

The spring forest fire season starts on March 1, 2011. During March, April and May, outdoor burning is restricted to between the hours of 4 p.m. and 7 a.m.

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

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