

WILDFIRE REPORT

APRIL 12, 2012

STATEWIDE SUMMARY

Gusty winds were experienced statewide this week and humidity was low, resulting in High to Extreme fire danger and calling for the suspension of burning permits in many parts of the state and Red Flag Warnings on Easter Sunday. Outdoor fires, including outdoor fireplaces, fire pits, prairie burns, and broadcast burning were prohibited by numerous fire departments and fire districts as well this week. Emergency burning restrictions remain in place for the storm damaged areas in Burnett, Douglas, Polk and Washburn counties. The burning ban will remain in effect until the vegetation fully greens up and the threat of large fires subsides.

In the past week, 96 wildfires burned 156 acres in DNR Protection Areas; 20 structures were threatened and two were lost. Debris burning was the leading cause of fires this week (34 fires). In some cases, the debris burning fires occurred in areas where burning permits were suspended due to hazardous fire conditions. Other causes of wildfires this week were equipment (12), campfires (7), ash disposal, power lines (5), and arson (5). The public is urged to stay aware of fire danger and burning permit requirements by checking our web site dnr.wi.gov (search 'fire') or call 1-888-WISBURN. Information is updated each day at 11 am.

With the spring turkey hunt, people are also urged to be cautious with warming fires. Make sure the area 10 feet around a campfire is completely free of fallen leaves and anything else that can burn. Don't burn at all when it's windy. Remember that there is still an abundance of dead plant material this time of year, which does not hold moisture for long, making it very flammable.

Firewise tip: Wildfire Prevention Week starts Sunday, April 15th and goes until Saturday, April 21st. Keep your roof, rain gutters, and the space 5 feet around buildings free of leaf and pine needle debris. Firebrands from a wildfire could easily ignite these fuels which in turn could ignite your home.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

There was quite a bit of fire activity in the past week; in total 17 fires burned 26 acres. The leading cause of fires was debris burning (7 fires) - the largest was a 7-acre fire in Iowa County. A 5-acre fire, caused by a campfire, burned in Crawford County. Other fires were caused by equipment, power line, and ash disposal. An accidentally caused fire burned 5 acres on the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest near Eagle on Saturday, requiring three fire departments and DNR crews to extinguish it.

WEST CENTRAL REGION

Black River Falls Dispatch Group –It's been 12 days since there has been significant rainfall so it's very dry out there! Fire control staff responded to 5 wildfires which burned about 3 acres this past week. The biggest of these was a 1.5 acre fire caused by debris burning. Some folks

were up to their cabin for the first time this spring and decided to do burn some piles of old lumber. Unfortunately they chose to burn on a day when burning permits had been suspended due to the fire danger and the fire escaped their control.

Wisconsin Rapids Dispatch Group - Fire control staff responded to 10 wildfires which burned about 11 acres this week. The largest was a 5 acre fire caused by a power line in Portage County. Six structures were threatened by fires this week but ultimately were saved with suppression efforts. Four of the saved structures were related to a fire in Adams County caused by debris burning in a subdivision.

NORTHERN REGION

Brule Dispatch Group - Nine wildfires burned 5 acres this week. Two fires were caused by equipment; the other 7 were caused by debris burning. Two structures were saved this week from approaching fires - one in the Pattison FRU (Fire Response Unit) and the other in the Brule FRU. For the 2012 Fire Season Brule D.G reports a total of 24 fires for 32 acres in this young season. DNR crews continue to remain vigilant day and night, prepared for quick response to any ignition in the wildland.

Cumberland Dispatch Group

Five fires burned less than 5 acres this week. The causes were debris burning and ash disposal. One structure was threatened, fortunately none were lost. A Single Engine Air Tanker was utilized on a fire in a wetland in Polk County on Wednesday.

Park Falls Dispatch Group

In total, 12 fires burned 18 acres this week; the main cause was debris burning (5 fires); other causes were campfires, equipment, and ash disposal. One fire burned 6 acres in Taylor County when a campfire escaped and burned into the Pershing Wildlife Area marsh. A debris burning fire, thought to be extinguished, burned 3 acres in Taylor County on Easter Sunday. The DNR and Gilman Fire Department responded to suppress the fire and protect the home. A Price County home was threatened when a fire in a burn barrel escaped and burned 3 acres. Phillips Fire Department protected the structure.

Woodruff Dispatch Group

In total, 13 fires burned 39 acres this week. The causes were debris burning, ash disposal, and equipment. Two structures were lost and another 4 were threatened. Multiple fire departments assisted with wildfire suppression and structure protection this week.

NORTHEAST REGION

Peshtigo Dispatch Group

In the past week, 18 wildfires burned 79 acres. The main causes were debris burning, campfires, equipment, and power lines. The largest was the Wontor Road Fire which burned 70 acres in Marinette County on Easter. The fire started when a tree fell against a power line. The fire burned rapidly through a young red pine plantation before getting into mixed hardwood,

swamp conifer and aspen stands. It was contained along the edges of a large area of white cedar before it could reach more upland forest and spread to nearby homes. A two acre fire southwest of Peshtigo, also on Easter Sunday, resulted from a holdover in a large debris pile that had previously been burned when the ground was snow covered several weeks earlier. At least two other fires over the weekend were also from debris piles that had been burned during snow covered conditions several weeks earlier and thought to be out.

Waupaca Dispatch Group

Eleven fires burned 8 acres in the past week. Causes were campfire, debris burning, equipment, smoking, and one arson fire. The largest was an equipment-caused fire which burned 2.5 acres in Waushara County.

On Monday, a large wildland fire scorched 90 acres in Manitowoc County near Valders. The fire also burned a shed and a barn requiring 17 fire departments to extinguish. At the height of the fire local residents voluntarily evacuated from in front of the fire.