

## WILDFIRE NEWS FOR APRIL 19, 2012

Rain and snow kept fire danger low to moderate around the state this week; 47 wildfires burned 89 acres and threatened 8 structures in DNR protection areas since last Thursday. The main causes of the fires were equipment, railroad, and debris burning. This time of year there is still a great deal of dead vegetation that will dry out quickly and be available fuel for a wildfire. Low relative humidity, warm temps, and gusty winds quickly drive up the fire danger. Go to [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) and search 'fire' for more information on fire danger and fire prevention.

**Firewise Tips:** Be extra careful when working or playing outdoors. Do not leave your car or ATV idling over dry grass. Hot exhaust systems can start a wildfire. Do not set a hot chainsaw down on a pile of dry leaves – clear a spot down to the soil instead. Before welding, remove dead vegetation from the work area. If you're towing something, don't allow chains to drag on the road. Sparks generated by dragging chains can start a wildfire.

### NORTHERN REGION

**Notice: Even though we had rain and snow, Emergency Burning Restrictions are still in effect in the storm damaged areas of Burnett, Douglas, Polk, and Washburn Counties.**

**Brule Dispatch Group** - High and Very High fire danger over the weekend was alleviated by rain and snow at the beginning of this week. In this weather roller coaster, five wildfires burned 46 acres this week. The main cause was debris burning. The largest wildfire of the season to date was reported to Brule dispatch by the Washburn fire tower on April 14. Fire suppression resources called for several heavy units, a low ground unit along, several hand crews, and assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to help contain the fire. Approximately 5 ½ hours after the first sighting, the 45-acre fire was contained and mop-up began.

**Cumberland Dispatch** - Cool temperatures and precipitation curtailed fire activity this week. One fire burned 0.6 acre this week, caused by a power line. This was the FIRST wildfire within the blowdown area this spring - a testament to prevention efforts of DNR fire staff and public cooperators as well as the awareness and cooperation of the general public.

**Park Falls Dispatch Group** - Three wildfires burned 7.4 acres this week. The largest was a 7-acre marsh fire, believed to have been intentionally set. The public is asked to report any suspicious activity to local law enforcement authorities.

**Woodruff Dispatch Group** - Two fires burned less than an acre this week; one structure was threatened. A Forest County fire was started when a discarded cigarette ignited cured along a road. Debris burning is currently allowed, only from 6:00 pm – midnight with no burning on Sundays or legal holidays.

### SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Four wildfires occurred in the past week which burned just over one acre; the causes were railroad and debris burning. The Richland Center Volunteer Fire Dept. assisted in suppressing a grass fire that occurred when a property owner was burning some dead vegetation and the adjacent grass caught fire. In this case, the property owner was burning before 6pm. Burning is currently allowed in DNR protection areas after 6 pm with a valid burning permit. Make sure to notify your local sheriff's department of when you are starting to burn and when it's out. Any burning before 6 pm must have a

special burn permit from the DNR Fire Control Ranger. Turkey hunters are reminded to be extra cautious with anything (warming fires, smokes, etc.) that can start a wildfire.

## **WEST CENTRAL REGION**

**Black River Falls Dispatch Group** – Over the last week fire control staff responded to 5 wildfires that burned 3.6 acres. One structure was saved due to suppression efforts. The largest fire was a 3.27 acre fire in Eau Claire County caused by improper ash disposal.

**Wisconsin Rapids Dispatch Group** – Over the last week 12 fires burned 8 acres. A total of four structures were saved due to suppression efforts. Two homes were saved in Juneau County when a 1.9 acre fire caused by improper ash disposal was suppressed. A home and detached garage were saved when DNR fire control arrived on scene at a wildland fire in Portage County and took quick action to knock down flames under the deck of the home and hose down the garage. In an unusual twist, it appears that the wildland fire was started from the home, perhaps as the result of an improperly maintained pellet stove. Also in Portage County, a string of five railroad fires burned a total area of less than an acre.

## **NORTHEAST REGION**

### **Peshtigo Dispatch Group**

Eight wildfires burned 2.5 acres in the past week; the causes were debris burning, improper ash disposal, equipment, and fireworks. The seemingly insignificant act of burning boxes in a fire pit resulted in significant damage to personal property in Florence County when the small trash fire escaped, burned into a wood pile and destroyed a paddle boat and damaged vehicle paint, a jet ski, and grill cover. A Marinette County grass fire resulted from an individual burning trash in a fire ring, which escaped when the surrounding grass ignited. The public is reminded that burning trash in a fire pit does not make it a campfire. Burning permits are required for burning materials on the ground and in burn barrels and restrictions must be followed.

### **Waupaca Dispatch Group**

Six wildfires burned 7.4 acres in the past week; the causes were equipment, debris burning, and campfire. A 4.3-acre fire in Marquette County was caused by a campfire that had escaped, threatening one nearby structure. It's important to drown your campfire thoroughly with water and stir the ashes. Keep adding water until everything is cold to the touch, making sure the fire is completely out before leaving. Fire danger can be expected to quickly increase after the wet weather subsides. There is plenty of dry/dead vegetation in the woods and open fields, which can easily catch fire, especially on warm, windy days when humidity is low. Burning is allowed from 6:00 pm to midnight with a valid burning permit. No burning Sundays or holidays. For areas where the ground is completely snow-covered, a burning permit is not required.