

Wildfire Report for May 17, 2012

Warm, dry, and breezy weather kept fire danger between moderate and very high this week, causing the suspension of burning permits in several counties. Fifty fires burned 21 acres in DNR Protection Areas this week; one structure burned and 12 others were threatened by these fires. The main causes of wildfires were equipment, debris burning, and railroads. The vegetation, particularly in the northern half of the state, has a ways to go before it's fully flushed out. People are urged to continue to use caution with all types of outdoor burning and equipment use. Stay aware of the current fire danger for your area by checking our website: dnr.wi.gov (search 'fire').

Firewise Tip: Are there any branches close to power lines on your property? Ask the power company to clear them.

Northern Region

Brule and Cumberland Dispatch Groups

Warm, dry, breezy conditions have prevailed over the area this week, keeping the fire danger in the High to Very High range. **Brule Dispatch** reports six new fires for the week, totaling less than one acre burned. One fire was caused by a property owner who was burning tent caterpillars out of some brush. There is no need to burn tent caterpillars; it's safer to get rid of them by tearing up their nests with a stick and plunging the whole mess into a bucket of soapy water. **Cumberland Dispatch** reports four new fires for the week, burning half an acre. Burning permits have been suspended recently due to elevated fire danger. Emergency Burning Restrictions remain in place in the storm-damaged areas of Burnett, Polk, and Washburn Counties.

Park Falls and Woodruff Dispatch Groups

Eight fires burned four acres over the past week; one structure was threatened and none were lost. A cigar ash dropped in a grass field resulted in a 2.1-acre fire in Oneida County. A 1.6-acre fire in Price County resulted from a residential broadcast burning project that escaped the property owner's control. Other causes of fire this week were equipment and improper ash disposal.

Northeast Region

Eighteen wildfires burned 10 acres in DNR Protection Areas this week; 9 structures were threatened yet saved with suppression efforts. A string of railroad fires burned in Marquette County May 10th. A Waupaca County fire burned in the peat (under the soil surface) from Monday through Wednesday (May 14-16), indicating a lack of moisture in the soil and need for rain. Several debris burning fires occurred this week as well. Property owners are reminded to remain present when burning debris in a barrel or on the ground – should your fire escape, you can be held responsible for the cost of fire suppression and any damages resulting from the escaped fire. Residential debris burning is allowed from 6:00pm to midnight with an annual permit. Burning is not allowed on Sundays or holidays.

West Central Region

Fire danger has been moderate to high this week. Burning permits have recently been suspended due to increased fire danger. Fire control staff in the Black River Falls Dispatch Group responded to four fires

which burned 4.5 acres in the last week. The largest fire was caused by a campfire and burned just over 3 acres. One structure was destroyed by a 1 acre fire in Jackson County. In the last week, fire control staff in the Wisconsin Rapids Dispatch Group responded to eight small fires which together totaled 1.75 acres. Fire causes included equipment, railroad and debris burning. One structure was threatened by a wildfire caused by a lawn mower but was ultimately saved due to suppression efforts.

South Central Region

Green up and regular precipitation has minimized wildfire activity in the region. Two fires burned this week in DNR protection areas – a 0.1 acre fire in Columbia County and a 0.2-acre fire in Sauk County, both caused by equipment. An annual burning permit is required for burning after 6pm in DNR protection areas. Make sure you notify your local sheriff's department of when you are starting to burn and when it's out. Any daytime burning must have a special burn permit from the DNR Fire Control Ranger.