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Department of
Natural Resources

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Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: July 1, 2020

Remain vigilant to prevent wildfires this Fourth of July weekend

(Fairbanks, AK) – Despite above-average rainfall in June that tempered wildfire activity across much of Alaska the last two weeks, state wildland fire managers are urging the public to use caution with any activity that could spark a wildfire over Independence Day weekend.

A high-pressure ridge is expected to build over the state beginning today and persist through the holiday weekend, bringing much warmer, drier conditions to most parts of the state for the next several days, according to the National Weather Service. Even with the recent rain, fuels will dry quickly with warmer weather and the long daylight hours, increasing the potential for wildfire ignitions.

The Fourth of July Weekend traditionally produces an increase in recreational traffic that can lead to human-caused wildfires. Whether it's fireworks, campfires, barbecue grills or other activities people will partake in this holiday weekend, the public needs to remain vigilant to prevent wildfires.

"It's been a relatively tame fire season up to this point but that can change quickly with just a few days of drying weather," Division of Forestry Wildland Fire and Aviation Program Manager Norm McDonald said. "People just need to use common sense, be cognizant of the different ways a wildfire can start and take a few simple steps to ensure that doesn't happen."

As of Wednesday, July 1, there have been 279 wildfires recorded in Alaska this season that have burned approximately 170,882 acres. There are currently 96 active fires that are being monitored. Only one of those fires – the Isom Creek Fire (#187) along the Dalton Highway about 125 miles north of Fairbanks – is currently staffed with wildland firefighting personnel.

The use of fireworks is a major concern over the Fourth of July weekend. If you plan to celebrate with fireworks, use them responsibly and only where it is legal to do so. State statutes prohibit the use of fireworks on public or private forested lands during fire season from April 1 to August 31. In addition, many municipalities and boroughs prohibit the use of fireworks. People need to check with their local government officials to see what fireworks regulations apply where they live.

Campfires and barbecue grills are two other potential wildfire culprits. Campfires should be located in a designated fire ring or pit, if possible, or placed on dirt or gravel to reduce the chance of escape. Campfires should be kept small and be attended at all times, with tools and water nearby to keep them contained. Most importantly, campfires must be completely extinguished before leaving the site. The fire should be doused with water and stirred repeatedly until the ashes/coals are cold to the touch.

Like a campfire, a barbecue grill should be attended at all times while in use and properly extinguished when finished. Ashes should be placed in a metal container. Never dump charcoal ashes or coals where they could spark a wildfire, as they can retain heat for hours or even days after use.

As is always the case, anyone burning brush or using a burn barrel needs to obtain an Alaska Division of Forestry burn permit and follow the safe burning guidelines listed on the permit, one of which is calling your local Forestry office or going online to make sure burning is allowed in your area on the day you intend to burn. Burn permits are available for free at local Division of Forestry stations, some fire departments or online at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/burn>. As of Wednesday, July 1, a burn permit suspension prohibiting brush pile burning and the use of burn barrels remains in effect on the Kenai Peninsula. The Division of Forestry encourages Alaskans to “Take Time To Learn BEFORE You Burn” by visiting its [burn permit web page](#).

Remember, you are responsible for every fire you start and anyone who starts a wildfire, even by accident, can be held accountable for suppression costs incurred by state or federal agencies.

For statewide fire information, visit the [Alaska Interagency Coordination Center](#) and [Alaska Wildland Fire Information](#). You can also follow the [Alaska Division of Forestry Facebook page](#) and the [BLM Alaska Fire Service Facebook page](#).

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