

## **FIRE!** Caution is the Watchword in our Forests and Fields



16-Mile Fire, Pike and Monroe Counties - 2016

"Despite past cold temperatures and snow cover across much of the state, spring weather has shown it just takes a few days of sun and wind to allow brush and forest fire danger to develop quickly," said Cindy Adams Dunn, Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). "Most of the reported fires last year are linked to people; people cause 98 percent of wildfires. A mere spark by a careless person can touch off a devastating forest blaze during dry periods when conditions enable wildfires to spread quickly."

DCNR statistics show nearly 85 percent of Pennsylvania's wildfires occur in March, April and May, before the greening of state woodlands and brushy areas. Named for rapid spread through dormant, dry vegetation, under windy conditions, wildfires annually scorch nearly 7,000 acres of state and private woodlands.



16-Mile Fire, Pike and Monroe Counties - 2016

reported field, brush, and forest fires that scorched more than 12,000 acres across the state.

The combination of bright sun, strong winds, and warming temperatures can quickly increase wildfire dangers across Pennsylvania's forests and brush lands. One only has to look back to early April, a week sandwiched between late spring snows and frigid temperatures. For one week, things dried out and volunteer firefighters and Bureau of Forestry personnel were scrambling to extinguish scores of field, brush, and forest fires across the state.

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March marks the start of a "sometimes very dangerous three months," Dunn said. "That's why Governor Wolf proclaimed March 4-10 "Wildfire Prevention Week."

"The value of vigilance is driven home when we look back at the tragedy of Tennessee's wildfires in 2016 that killed 14," Dunn noted, "and Pennsylvania's wildfire in April of that year that burned for almost two weeks across more than 8,000 acres on the Pike-Monroe county line."

In 2016, the DCNR Bureau of Forestry personnel and volunteer firefighters battled more than 850

## FIRE (continued)

"Common sense can limit the threat of wildfires," said Dunn. "When state residents and forest visitors are careless with burning trash and debris, campfires and smoking, volunteer firefighters often pay the price, answering call after call in spring woodlands that are ripe for damaging, life-threatening wildfires."

Anglers, campers and other state forest visitors are reminded open fires are prohibited on state forestland from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 25<sup>th</sup>, and when the fire danger is listed as high, very high, or extreme, unless authorized by district foresters.

Communities in heavily wooded areas are urged to follow wildfire prevention and suppression methods of the Pennsylvania Firewise Community Program (<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA>) to safeguard life and property.



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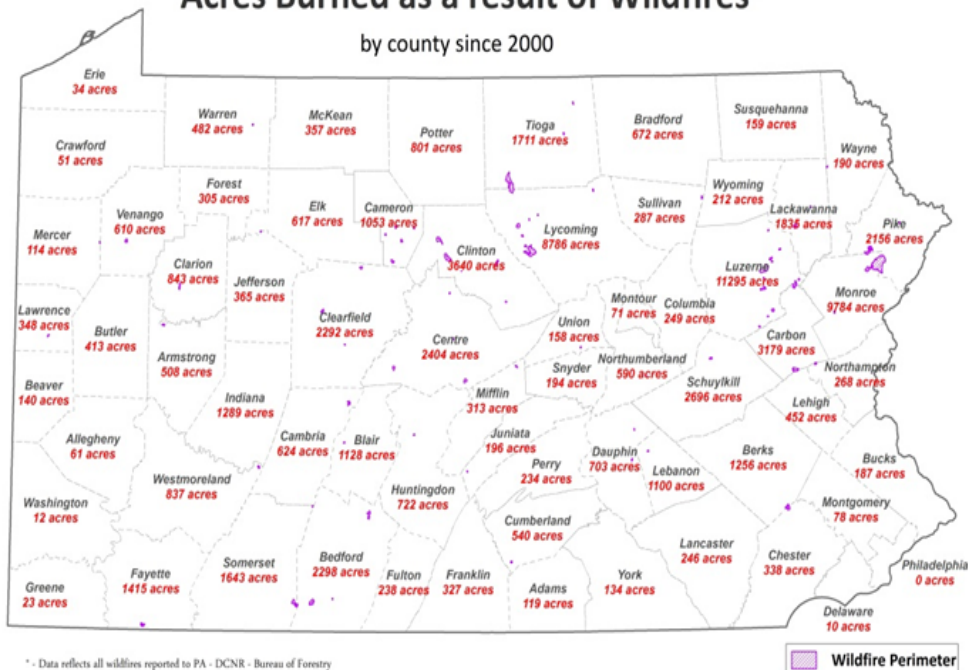
DCNR's Bureau of Forestry is responsible for prevention and suppression of wildfires on the 17 million acres of state and private woodlands and brush lands. The bureau maintains a fire-detection system, and works with fire wardens and volunteer fire departments to ensure they are trained in the latest advances in fire prevention and suppression.

For more information on Wildfire Prevention Week activities, contact local district foresters; call the Bureau of Forestry at (717) 787-2925; or visit [www.dcnr.pa.gov](http://www.dcnr.pa.gov) (select "Forestry" then "Wildland Fire").

Thank you to Terry Brady, DCNR; Press Secretary, for providing this information.

### Acres Burned as a result of Wildfires\*

by county since 2000



\* - Data reflects all wildfires reported to PA - DCNR - Bureau of Forestry

Did you know, wildfires most often occur during spring and fall when vegetation is dormant.

The leading causes for wildfires include:

- Homeowners burning debris (trash, brush, leaves, etc.).
- Fires set with the intent of causing destruction to the woodlands (arson)

To learn more about your community, go to [www.Ready.PA.gov](http://www.Ready.PA.gov) and select, "Know Your Community" in the "Be Informed" Section.

## Fire Weather

Fire weather season in Pennsylvania typically occurs in two separate periods – spring and fall. During the spring months, prior to the trees and grasses “greening up”, fires can spread rather quickly when several factors come together at the same time.

In Pennsylvania, conditions for rapid fire spread and growth include the following:

- Wind of 20mph or stronger for at least two hours
- Relative humidity of 30 percent or lower
- Moisture content in small twigs of less than 10 percent for a few days or more

The National Weather Service (NWS) in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), work to provide fire weather forecasts for the entire Commonwealth. When the factors listed above are reached, the NWS will issue alerts to warn of the potential for rapid fire spread.

### Know Your Terms

The NWS may issue a **Fire Weather Watch** if all three conditions are forecast to occur no more than a day in advance. A watch is more of a preparation or “heads up,” meaning you should put any plans for outdoor fires on hold and make sure you’re extra careful with any sparks or anything that produces high heat when outdoors. Ensure your home is free of any debris or brush to ensure the fire cannot spread quickly to your property. Consider holding off on use of gas powered equipment that may produce heat or throw off sparks which can easily ignite dry fuels.



The NWS will issue a **Red Flag Warning** when the three favorable fire weather conditions are occurring or just about to occur, usually during the middle of the day. This is an “act now” message, meaning you should not have any open flames or heat sources outdoors which can spark a rapidly spreading fire.

If you’re avid in the outdoors, make sure you are extra careful not to accidentally start fires while enjoying parks and trails. A discarded cigarette or an ember from a smoldering campfire can be all it takes to start a multi-acre blaze.

As we continue into these spring months, it is important to be extra vigilant when enjoying outdoor fires for recreation. Monitor the NWS for the latest forecast to best prepare for fire weather season.

**What should you do if a Red Flag Warning is issued for your area?** Use caution when dealing with anything that could pose as a fire hazard. Do not start a campfire or ignite a burn pile. Do not burn trash. Avoid using equipment such as a lawnmower, chainsaw, or any other implement that may emit sparks. Do not dispose of cigarette butts on the ground or outside of your car. It is okay to use your grill, just have a water source nearby and do not dispose of the ashes until the Warning has been cancelled and the ashes are fully extinguished. Watch for smoke nearby. If there is an unattended fire, report it immediately by calling 9-1-1 or your local emergency number.



## **National Small Business Week** **(April 30<sup>th</sup> through May 5<sup>th</sup>)**

Each year since 1963, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation calling for the celebration of National Small Business Week. The Small Business Administration (SBA), which provides services through an extensive network of field offices and partnerships with public and private organizations, is the driving force behind Small Business Week. The agency provides access to training and mentoring programs, assistance in exporting, and, importantly SBA funding for startups and growing companies. For further information, go to [www.SBA.gov](http://www.SBA.gov).



## **National Peace Officers Memorial Week** **(May 13<sup>th</sup> through May 19<sup>th</sup>)**

*Honoring Our Heroes*



*National Police Week*

By a joint resolution on October 1, 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed Public Law 87-726 that declared May 15<sup>th</sup> as National Peace Officers Memorial Day and the calendar week in which May 15<sup>th</sup> falls as National Police Week, the annual tribute to law enforcement service and sacrifice.

Peace Officers Memorial Day and Police Week is an observance in the United States that pays tribute to the local, state, and federal peace officers who have died, or who have been disabled, in the line of duty. The Memorial takes place on May 15<sup>th</sup>, and Police Week is the calendar week in which the Memorial falls.

Take the opportunity to thank a law enforcement officer during this week. For further information, go to [www.policeweek.org](http://www.policeweek.org) or [www.nationalcops.org](http://www.nationalcops.org)

## **National Emergency Medical Services Week** **(May 20<sup>th</sup> through May 26<sup>th</sup>)**

In 1974, President Gerald Ford authorized EMS Week to celebrate Emergency Medical Services (EMS) practitioners and the important work they do in our nation's communities. National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT) partners with the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) to lead annual EMS Week activities. Together, NAEMT and ACEP are working to ensure that the important contributions of EMS practitioners in safeguarding the health, safety, and wellbeing of their communities are fully celebrated and recognized. For further information, go to [www.acep.org/emsweek](http://www.acep.org/emsweek) or [www.emsstrong.org](http://www.emsstrong.org)



*Thank  
you*



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[www.Ready.PA.gov](http://www.Ready.PA.gov)



**pennsylvania**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

[www.pema.pa.gov](http://www.pema.pa.gov)

### Preparedness Events in May

#### National Building Safety Month

([www.iccsafe.org/about-icc/building-safety-month/2018-building-safety-month/](http://www.iccsafe.org/about-icc/building-safety-month/2018-building-safety-month/))

#### Wildfire Community Preparedness Day (May 6<sup>th</sup>)

([www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Campaigns/National-Wildfire-Community-Preparedness-Day](http://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Campaigns/National-Wildfire-Community-Preparedness-Day))

#### National Dam Safety Awareness Day (May 31<sup>st</sup>)

([www.fema.gov/blog/2013-05-30/national-dam-safety-awareness-day-dam-safety-shared-responsibility](http://www.fema.gov/blog/2013-05-30/national-dam-safety-awareness-day-dam-safety-shared-responsibility))

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### Additional Resources

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency: [www.pema.pa.gov](http://www.pema.pa.gov)

ReadyPA: [www.Ready.PA.gov](http://www.Ready.PA.gov)

SERVPA: [www.Serv.PA.gov](http://www.Serv.PA.gov)

Federal Emergency Management Agency: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)

Office of the State Fire Commissioner: [www.osfc.pa.gov](http://www.osfc.pa.gov)

Pennsylvania Department of Human Services: [www.dhs.pa.gov](http://www.dhs.pa.gov)

Pennsylvania Department of Health: [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov)

PA State Animal Response Team: [www.pasart.us](http://www.pasart.us)

PA Department of Transportation: [www.penndot.gov](http://www.penndot.gov)

PA511Connect: [www.511pa.com](http://www.511pa.com)

Pennsylvania State Police: [www.psp.pa.gov](http://www.psp.pa.gov)

# WILDFIRE Prevention Tips



Check your forest district's wildfire alert system and for high winds before creating an outdoor fire



Never leave any fire unattended



Completely extinguish any outdoor fire you create with water and dirt



Don't throw cigarettes, other smoking materials or matches on the ground or out of vehicle windows



Be mindful when operating equipment outdoors that can create heat or sparks



Speak up and alert authorities if you suspect someone is in danger of starting a wildfire



**ONLY  
YOU  
CAN PREVENT  
WILDFIRES.**



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