

DATE: May 5, 2017  
CONTACT: Catherine Koele, 715-356-5211 x208, catherine.koele@wisconsin.gov  
SUBJECT: Angler advisory, fire danger elevating for fishing opener

MADISON – Wisconsin’s inland-lake fishing season opener begins on May 6 resulting in many tourists and residents traveling throughout the state and conducting various burning activities. DNR fire control officials remind anglers that this weekend is expected to be warm and dry resulting in increased wildfire activity, regardless of any recent precipitation.

Weather conditions play an important role in how fires start and spread. Warmer temperatures, low relative humidity, gusty winds and dry vegetation can lead to increased chances of fire starts. Over 98% of all wildfires in Wisconsin are caused by people. The combination of people and fire leads to the threat of potential wildfires in areas where access could be an issue for firefighters.

“We tend to see a few more fire starts over the weekend of opening fishing due to many people enjoying the outdoors, having shore lunches, cleaning up around seasonal homes and choosing to burn their debris. Unfortunately, these activities coupled with dry and windy conditions can lead to large fires, threatening people, homes and surrounding communities,” says Catherine Koele, DNR wildfire prevention specialist.

Embers from campfires or burn piles can remain hot for days. Wind can expose smoldering embers hidden in the ashes, allowing them to escape and cause a wildfire. Never leave a fire unattended and more importantly before leaving, drown the remains with plenty of water, stir and repeat until cold.

Ashes from fireplaces or woodstoves, charcoal briquettes, cigarettes, chain saws, off-road vehicles or other small engines also have the potential to throw a spark and ignite a dangerous and destructive fire, if presented with the right conditions. Always use caution this time of year when conducting any of these activities in the outdoors.

“Spring time is when the majority of forest fires occur. The vegetation is brown and trees are starting to grow new leaves and needles. The lack of moisture results in greater susceptibility to burning,” says Koele. “The key is to know the current fire danger, be aware of your surroundings and always make sure fires are out.”

The DNR will continue to monitor precipitation levels and the greening of vegetation over the next couple weeks and continue to alert the public of any elevated fire danger. DNR burning permits are required for burning for the purposes of vegetative disposal anytime the ground is not completely snow-covered. Small fires for warming or cooking do not require a DNR burning permit.

To obtain a free DNR burning permit or to keep an eye on the changing fire danger and any burn restrictions, visit [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) search keyword ‘[fire](#)’ or call 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-2876).