

State Fire Marshal warns of wildfire danger

Posted: Saturday, February 1, 2014 5:20 am

LINCOLN, Neb. – According to the Jan. 29, Nebraska Fire Danger Map from the Nebraska Forest Service, the wildfire danger status for the majority of the counties in our state were either HIGH or VERY HIGH.

The Nebraska Fire Danger Map is updated daily.

A lack of moisture, recent high winds, and individuals failing to exercise the proper level of necessary caution is a combination for disaster and causes concern for the Nebraska Fire Service.

Wildfires are uncontrolled fire in an area(s) of combustible vegetation.

These fires generally are in the countryside or a wilderness area, but may occur along roads, in fields, forested areas, and residential acreages. Statistics from the Nebraska Forestry Service indicated that the cause of most wildfires involve a human factor.

The primary cause of wildfires during five of the last six calendar years was debris burning.

State Fire Marshal Jim Heine says, “There are a few simple steps that we can all follow to avoid unnecessary damage and fire department responses caused by wildfires.”

Some of these steps are listed below.

Following all of these steps and exercising caution will help keep people and property safe from uncontrolled wildfires.

– Obtain required permits. Nebraska has a continuous ban on Open Burning.

This statutory ban against open burning is always in effect unless it has been waived in writing on the prescribed permit form issued by the local fire chief/designee.

The fire chief/designee may specify other requirements that must be met by the person to whom the permit is issued. Anyone intending to burn w

hen the burning ban has been waived shall notify the fire chief of his or her intention to burn prior to starting the burn.

- Avoid burning in windy weather. Wind increases fire intensity and the potential for a fire to spread. Also, wind decreases the ability to control the fire.
- Avoid throwing lit cigarettes on the ground. Do not throw lit smoking materials out of a moving vehicle or onto dry vegetation.
- Know the risk potential and act accordingly. Daily up-to-date Nebraska Forest Service Fire Danger Map link; <http://nfs.unl.edu/> and National Weather Service Fire Weather data are available on the web to help determine the fire risk potential for your specific geographic location.
- Make proper preparations. Heat producing activities such as fire pits, campfires, trash burn barrels, fireworks, and the use of spark and heat producing tools/ equipment can start a wildfire.
- Never leave a fire unattended. Make sure the fire is extinguished before leaving it.

Together we can help prevent wildfires if we all do our part.