

GMNF FOREST ORDER ON FIRE RESTRICTIONS – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Why did the Forest Service issue these restrictions?

A: Vermont is currently experiencing severe to extreme drought with abnormal fire danger.

- Fire danger conditions and dry fuels on the forest are significantly elevated.
- Though daily fire danger ratings may fluctuate, the overall situation is significantly elevated beyond what is typical for this area at this time of year.
- We have received roughly 10-12 inches less precipitation since October 1 of last year than our 30-year precipitation average.
- All forest vegetation and organics soils are available to wildfire spread under current and expected conditions.
- Increasing leaf-off and drought / seasonally driven curing of live fuels is expected to increase fire danger and opportunity for fire spread.
- Elevated wildfire conditions are expected to continue through the month of September and may persist through October or November.

Q: What is the Forest Service noticing in the field that is different than in a typical year?

A: Forest Service staff have had to put out several unattended campfires this season.

- Local fire resources have responded to more than 17 wildfires since August 1, all were human caused escaped campfires and cigarettes.
- This is approximately 400% of our annual average fire response on the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests.
- Firefighters have also responded to dozens of abandoned campfires that were left burning after campers departed the campsite.

Q: What exactly does this order restrict?

A: While the forest fire restrictions are in place, the following activities are illegal:

- Building, maintaining, attending, or using a fire, campfire, charcoal, or wood grill outside of a Forest Service provided metal fire pit, metal fire ring, or pole mounted grill at a developed campground or developed recreation site. (36 CFR 261.52(a))].

- Smoking, except within an enclosed vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or while stopped in an area at least 3 feet in diameter that is barren or cleared of any flammable material. 36 CFR §261.52(d)
- Having campfires at backcountry shelters. (A device solely fueled by liquid petroleum fuel that can be turned on and off used in an area barren or cleared of all flammable materials within three feet of the device can be used).
- Violators of these prohibitions could face civil and criminal penalties and fines up to \$5,000.

Q: What should the public do if they see a wildfire or unattended fire?

A: Please report any wildfires by calling 911, or NECC Dispatch (603)536-6208 for fires on National Forest lands. Firefighters have responded to dozens of abandoned campfires that were left burning after campers departed the campsite.

Q: How long does the Forest Service expect these restrictions to be in place?

A: Until the Forest Service rescinds the order. We will continue to monitor the situation, fuel conditions and weather. Up-dates and information are available on the Fire page of our website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/gmfl/fire>

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