



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

NEWS RELEASE

Dakota Prairie Grasslands

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Potential for wildfires requires burn planning

BISMARCK, April 2, 2010 – Spring in North Dakota is here and so is the potential for wildfires. While parts of the state are experiencing flooding and snowy conditions, other areas have the potential for wildland fires until the green-up of the grass occurs.

Currently, the potential for wildland fire is the highest in the western part of the state where less snow and drier conditions exist. While the potential still exists in eastern North Dakota, flooding, snow, and wet conditions pose less fire risk.

If you plan on burning this spring, know what the weather forecast is for the day you plan to burn as well as the following day. Do not burn on hot, dry or windy days. A warm, dry, and windy day following a burn could refuel a fire that is nearly out and spread embers.

Be sure to have a “clear zone” around the fire, equal to four times the flame height. A clear zone is an area that is free of flammable vegetation such as shrubs, dying or dead trees, and dry grasses. This will help prevent fires from spreading into undesirable locations and allow for better control of the area to be burned. If you start a fire, never leave it until the area burned is cold to the touch and the flames are out.

Before you burn, know if there are any local restrictions on fire. Know who to call and how to report a fire that has gotten out of control. If you need to report a fire, know your surroundings so you can give an accurate description of your location. Know the approximate size of the fire and describe any homes or structures that may be threatened. Stay on the line unless directed otherwise. Directions or more information may be needed from you as the fire department responds.

Over 90 percent of wildfires in North Dakota are caused by human error or intention. Plan before you burn. For more information on prescribed burning or wildfire prevention, please visit the North Dakota Forest Service’ Fire Management website at www.ndsu.edu/ndfs/fire_management.

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