

Campers: Moving firewood in NH just got tougher

DURHAM, N.H. -- Hauling firewood from far away locations to New Hampshire state and federal campgrounds is quickly becoming a thing of the past.

State of New Hampshire and White Mountain National Forest campgrounds no longer allow firewood coming in from out of state. Other than local firewood, only kiln-dried firewood with its original packaging and label will be allowed. Campers are still allowed to bring in firewood purchased locally or hauled from in-state locations.

People caught hauling their own untreated firewood from out of state to these campgrounds will receive oral and/or written warnings and eventually face penalties.

"The closure order is in response to the threat posed to forest resources by two highly destructive non-native invasive insects," said WMNF Supervisor Tom Wagner. "The emerald ash borer and the Asian longhorned beetle are known to be transported in firewood. Both of these insects have been detected within 200 miles of the National Forest."

Firewood is a known vector for the spread of invasive species, a top U.S. Forest Service concern.

While the two bans refer to separate lands and regulations, there has been a concerted effort to align firewood enforcement strategy between the two.

"Our forests are essential to the social, economic, and environmental well-being of our state," said New Hampshire Interim State Forester Brad Simpkins. "The Division of Forests and Lands and the White Mountain National Forest are committed to working collaboratively in an effort to protect our valuable forest resource."

State Forest Health Manager Kyle Lombard explained the shift in strategy. "For years we chose to only advocate leaving firewood at home. That helped. But many people continued to haul their potentially-infested firewood to our campgrounds. Now we are moving toward the law enforcement phase of this issue."

"Our goal is to get those visitors who continue to bring out of state firewood with them to leave their firewood at home," he added. "It's all about protecting our forests. It takes just one load of infested firewood to wreak havoc on an entire forest," said Lombard.

Recent surveys indicate about 1 in 4 visitors to New Hampshire campgrounds come from out of state and haul their own firewood.

The closure orders apply to all state reservation lands and national forest lands within New Hampshire, including their respective campgrounds.

The bans do not affect New Hampshire's privately-owned campgrounds, although many private campgrounds may voluntarily join the ban.

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