

# Critical weather watch in effect

## Critical fire weather across northern Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is asking the public to avoid burning due to critical fire danger across northern Wisconsin. A fire weather watch is in effect and the DNR and partners at the National Weather Service (NWS) are closely monitoring the situation.

The sandy pine areas of northern Wisconsin are always the slowest to green up. Additionally tree growth in this part of the state is at a volatile stage. Combined with very low humidity and the potential for winds, fires could spread out of control rapidly at this time.

Areas with very high fire danger include Ashland, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marinette, Oconto, Oneida, Polk, Price, Sawyer, Vilas and Washburn counties.

All DNR-issued annual burning permits for debris piles, burn barrels and prescribed burns are suspended today in 21 counties where the DNR has burning permit authority.

The DNR has responded to 281 wildfires burning more than 3,358 acres so

far this year. Most of these were related to debris burning, which is the single largest cause of wildfires in Wisconsin.

The current fire danger in the southern half of the state is low as vegetation has greened up and the area has received periodic rain over the last few weeks.

### Fire safety tips

- Avoid outdoor burning until conditions improve. Burn permits for debris burning are currently suspended in numerous counties.
- Operate equipment (chainsaws, off-road vehicles, lawn mowers, etc.) early in the morning or late in the day to avoid sparks at peak burn hours.
- Secure trailer chains to keep them from dragging.
- Delay having campfires until the evening hours as fire conditions tend to improve; keep them small and contained. Make sure they are completely extinguished before leaving them unattended.
- Report fires early, dial 911.

Fire control officials are pre-positioning equipment for rapid response including two Wisconsin Army National Guard Black Hawk helicopters stationed in Rhinelander and two single engine air tankers in



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Areas of very high fire danger include Iron, Oneida, Price and Vilas counties as of press time on Wednesday, May 17.

Solon Springs.

May 14 marked the 10-year anniversary of the Germann Road Fire in Douglas and Bayfield counties, which burned 7,499 acres and destroyed 104 structures, 23 of which were residences. An estimated 350 structures were saved due to fire control efforts. The

fire began around 2:45 p.m. on May 14, 2013, and covered a swath nearly 10 miles long and 1.5 miles wide before being declared 100% contained on May 15 at 9 p.m.

Check current fire danger, wildfire reports and burning restrictions on the DNR website.

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