

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Elevated Fire Weather Conditions Anticipated Thursday

Due to strong southerly winds, the Oklahoma Forestry Services predicts that the highest fire danger will remain in the western portion of the state as well as the Panhandle. This afternoon's forecast calls for humidity levels to help moderate fire behavior experienced on wildfires today. Fire behavior is expected to be at a near critical level through Friday.

"We are anticipating that our humidity levels are going to be in the 18-23% range on Thursday and recover up to 30% through the day on Friday. On Saturday our weather will be back in our favor with higher humidity levels before dropping again on Sunday," said Oklahoma Forestry Services Fire Management Chief Mark Goeller. "On the Northwest Oklahoma Complex crews are working to shore up existing fire lines, mopping up approximately 150 feet into the black making sure heat is extinguished. The complex is approximately 80% contained, and we are continuing to work with local fire departments to fully contain these fires."

The Southern Red Team, a Type 1 Incident Management Team, along with Beaver, Buffalo, Laverne, Mooreland, Slapout and Woodward Fire Departments, remains in Unified Command of the Northwest Oklahoma Complex. On the ground, firefighting resources from Arkansas, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana and Tennessee are on the complex, along with management personnel from 34 states and Washington D.C.

Because of the anticipated increase in fire behavior on Thursday, crews have been identified to respond to requests for assistance for initial attack. Air resources remain ready for response, and are prepositioned throughout the state. Officials are asking the public to remain vigilant in their fire prevention efforts and to prepare for the possibility of an increase in the number and severity of wildfires. Current burn bans may be found on the Oklahoma Forestry Services' website, the public is asked to continue to heed these bans and practice fire prevention tactics such as avoiding any activities that can spark a blaze, not allowing chains to drag from vehicles and not parking vehicles on dry grass.

The public is requested to report any wildfires immediately through 911, avoid the vicinity of wildfires to allow firefighters faster access for initial attack and to heed all evacuation notices. Families are advised to have a plan for wildfire incidents. Homeowners can also make their home more defensible by moving trash, debris and other flammable items like firewood piles or portable propane tanks a safe distance away from their home.

Oklahoma Forestry Services is the state's lead agency related to wildland fire prevention and protection. For additional information about wildfires, visit www.forestry.ok.gov/wildfire-information.

Note to Media:

For questions regarding the **NW Oklahoma Complex fire**, contact the PIO office at 405-586-0404

For the latest Oklahoma “Daily Wildfire Situation Report” visit www.forestry.ok.gov and click the link on the homepage (green box on right hand side.) The report contains information about recent fire activity, predicted fire weather and a link for current burn bans.

About Oklahoma Forestry Services

Oklahoma Forestry Services, a division of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, is committed to conserving, enhancing and protecting Oklahoma’s 12.5 million acres of forests and woodlands. Since 1925, Oklahoma Forestry Services has worked with individuals and communities throughout the state to create resilient landscapes, fire-adaptive communities and provide wildfire response. Headquartered in Oklahoma City, the division also has regional offices in Broken Bow, Wilburton and Tahlequah. For more information, visit <http://www.forestry.ok.gov>.