

OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD, AND FORESTRY

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PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2017

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Oklahomans urged to help prevent wildfires

While battling one of the state's largest wildfires in recent history, Oklahoma Forestry Services is urging all Oklahomans to step up their wildfire prevention awareness and tactics. The Northwest Oklahoma Complex Fire includes three separate fires in Beaver, Harper and Woodward Counties and has burned over 800,000 acres across Oklahoma and Kansas, with significant loss of property and livestock. Citizens can prevent additional fires from igniting by following some simple precautions.

“Conditions are very dangerous today and we are urging everyone to use extreme caution and avoid any activity that can cause a spark,” said Oklahoma Forestry Director George Geissler. “The Northwest Oklahoma Complex Fire, as well as other fires around the state, are pushing resources to their limits and the last thing we need is to have additional fires.”

Due to current conditions, Oklahoma Forestry Services is urging firefighters and the public to prepare for the possibility of an increase in the number and severity of wildfires.

The public is encouraged to use fire prevention tactics such as heeding burn bans, avoiding any activities that can spark a blaze, not allowing chains to drag from vehicles and not parking on dry grass.

Additionally, we are asking everyone to report any wildfires immediately through 911, avoid the vicinity of wildfires to allow firefighters faster access to fires 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 homes.

Oklahoma Forestry Services, working with the National Weather Service, Southern Area Coordination Center and with input from interagency and local fire resources, monitors fire conditions daily for the state and informs the firefighting community with its Fire Situation Report, which is available on its website.

Additionally, the agency has prepared for heightened fire danger conditions by pre-positioning its firefighting crews in high risk areas of the state to work with local fire departments. Additionally, OFS has brought in federal and regional resources, including firefighters, engines, dozers and aircraft.

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

Note to Media:

For information regarding the **Northwest Complex Fire** contact:
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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. The most current information is posted on our Facebook page @Oklahoma Forestry.

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>.