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Arkansas Residents Urged to Use Caution with Outdoor Burning throughout Thanksgiving Holiday

LITTLE ROCK, AR – Current drought conditions and weather forecasts for low humidity and periodic gusty winds create wildfire danger across Arkansas through the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Until rain is received, residents are urged to use caution with outdoor burning, and should avoid outdoor burning and grilling altogether if winds exceed 5-10 miles per hour.

Arkansas currently has five active Burn Bans in Cleburne, Conway, Perry, Searcy, and Van Buren Counties. Arkansas Forestry Commission (AFC) dozer crews remain on high alert through the holiday weekend; AFC pilots will assist these efforts by flying aerial wildfire detection routes until wildfire danger decreases. **Arkansas residents can report wildfires to the AFC Dispatch Center by calling 1-800-468-8834.** The AFC Dispatch Center is manned 24 hours a day.

Similar weather conditions last weekend resulted in 54 wildfires suppressed by AFC crews on 502 acres. Wildfires are more frequent during weekends and holidays due to increased public presence in forested areas, and because of an increase in outdoor activities that include campfires, grilling, and debris burning. The following precautions should be taken when burning:

- 1) Always check the weather before you burn; avoid burning when humidity is below 35%, or if the wind is blowing more than 5 mph.
- 2) Report your burn to the AFC Dispatch Center at 1-800-830-8015, or your local fire department.
- 3) Create a safety barrier by digging down to mineral soil in a complete circle around your burn area. And, move your fire or grill away from leaves, overhanging branches, garages, and other flammable debris.

Find a complete list of burning safety tips, [here](#). Residents can stay updated on county Burn Bans (declared by County Judges) and Wildfire Danger at: www.arkfireinfo.org. Find the most recent drought report from the U.S. drought monitor, which lists more than 97% of Arkansas as suffering abnormal dryness or drought conditions, [here](#).

Arkansas has experienced low wildfire activity over the last four years with 1,173 wildfires having burned 20,931 acres in Arkansas so far during 2017. The most recent high wildfire year in Arkansas was 2012, when 34,434 acres burned in 2,148 wildfires.

The Arkansas Forestry Commission is an agency of the Arkansas Agriculture Department. The AAD is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture and forestry to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Learn more at aad.arkansas.gov.

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