



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**With fall fire season approaching,
N.C. Forest Service offers tips to prevent wildfires**
Oct. 8-14 is Fire Prevention Week

RALEIGH – As fall wildfire season approaches, the N.C. Forest Service encourages North Carolinians to heed the call of National Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 8-14, and take steps to ensure careful burning of leaves and yard debris.

Fall wildfire season typically lasts from mid-October until mid-December, the time of year when people do a lot of yard work that may include burning leaves and yard debris. These fires sometimes escape and start wildfires. In fact, debris burning is the top cause of wildfires in North Carolina.

“Between October and November of 2016, there were 1,138 wildfires that burned more than 59,511 acres across North Carolina,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “All of us can do our part to avoid another fall fire season like last year by exercising caution while burning debris.”

There are many factors to consider before burning any debris. The N.C. Forest Service encourages residents considering debris burning to contact their local county forest ranger. The ranger can offer technical advice and explain the best options to help maximize the safety to people, property and the forest.

Follow these tips to protect property and prevent wildfires:

- Consider alternatives to burning. Some types of debris, such as leaves, grass and stubble, may be of more value if they are not burned, but used for mulch instead.
- Check local burning laws. Some communities allow burning only during specified hours. Others forbid it entirely.

- Make sure you have a valid permit. You can obtain a burning permit at any Forest Service office or authorized permitting agent, or online at <http://ncforestservice.gov>.
- Keep an eye on the weather. Don't burn on dry, windy days.
- Local fire officials can recommend a safe way to burn debris. Don't pile vegetation on the ground. Instead, place it in a cleared area and contain it in a screened receptacle away from overhead branches and wires.
- Household trash should be hauled away to a trash or recycling station. It is illegal to burn anything other than yard debris.
- Be sure you are fully prepared before burning. To control the fire, you will need a hose, bucket, steel rake and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire. Keep a phone nearby, too.
- Never use kerosene, gasoline, diesel fuel or other flammable liquids to speed debris burning.
- Stay with your fire until it is completely out.
- These same tips hold true for campfires and charcoal grills as well. Douse burning charcoal briquettes or campfires thoroughly with water. When soaked, stir the coals and soak them again. Be sure they are out cold and carefully feel to be sure they are extinguished. Never dump hot ashes or coals into a wooded area.
- **Burning agricultural residue and forestland litter:** In addition to the rules above, a fire line should be plowed around the area to be burned. Large fields should be separated into small plots for burning one at a time. Before doing any burning in a wooded area, contact your county ranger, who will weigh all factors, explain them and offer technical advice.

Studies have shown that taking these and other measures can reduce the possibility of wildfires. For more information on ways you can prevent wildfires and loss of property, log onto <http://ncforestservice.gov>.