

STATE FOREST RANGER

Over the past two years, New Hampshire has experienced its busiest fire seasons since 1989. 1,090 acres burned during the 2016 season. The White Mountain National Forest experienced its largest fire since becoming a National Forest, burning 330 acres in the town of Albany in November. Fires falling under state jurisdiction burned 759 acres, with the largest fire of 199 acres occurring in Stoddard. The extremely dry summer led to a busy fall fire season with large fires occurring into mid-November. Drought conditions hampered fire suppression efforts and extended the time needed to extinguish fires. Your local fire departments and the Division of Forests & Lands worked tirelessly throughout the year to protect homes and the forests. The statewide system of 16 fire lookout towers continues to operate on high fire danger days. Our fire lookouts are credited with keeping many fires small due to their quick and accurate spotting capabilities. The tower's fire detection efforts were supplemented by the NH Civil Air Patrol when the fire danger was especially high.

Many homes in New Hampshire are located in the wildland urban interface, which is the area where homes and flammable wildland fuels intermix. Several of the fires during the 2016 season threatened structures, and a few structures were burned; a constant reminder that forest fires burn more than just trees. Homeowners should take measures to prevent a wildland fire from spreading to their home. Precautions include keeping your roof and gutters clear of leaves and pine needles, and maintaining adequate green space around your home free of flammable materials. Additional information and homeowner recommendations are available at www.firewise.org. As we prepare for the 2017 fire season, please remember to contact your local Forest Fire Warden or Fire Department to determine if a fire permit is required before doing ANY outside burning. Under State law (RSA 227-L:17) a fire permit is required for all outside burning, unless the ground is completely covered with snow. Fire permits are also available online in most towns and may be obtained by visiting www.NHfirepermit.com. The burning of household waste is prohibited by the Air Resources Division of the Department of Environmental Services (DES). Safe open burning requires your diligence and responsibility. Thank you for helping us to protect New Hampshire's forest resources. For more information please contact the Division of Forests & Lands at (603) 271-2214, or online at www.nhdf.org.

NH FIRE STATISTICS

<u>CAUSES OF FIRES REPORTED-2016</u>		<u>TOTAL FIRES</u>		<u>TOTAL ACRES</u>
Campfires	35	2016	351	1090
Lightning	09	2015	124	635
Equipment	18	2014	112	72
Arson	15	2013	182	144
Debris	85	2012	318	206
Children	10	2011	125	42
Smoking	12			
Railroad	02			
Misc*	148			

*Misc: power lines, fireworks, electric fences, etc.)

LOCAL FOREST FIRE WARDEN

I am going to use this year's report to give details on outdoor burning rules as there were a couple of unpermitted burns last year that ended up being costly for the person who lit the fires and hopefully it can be avoided in the future. First let me explain the burn rule and what you can or can't burn are not rules established by the Town of Plainfield or the Wardens. The rules for burning are state rules set up by the legislature and what you can burn are rules set up by the Department of Environmental Services. We are only agents enforcing the rules.

Any open burning, including things like chimnies , fire place cooking fires that are wood fed, need a permit unless there is ample snow cover, usually considered at least 3 inches. There are several types of burn permits: Category I means a small controlled fire, such as a camp or cooking fire no greater than 2' in diameter contained in a ring of resistive material or in a portable fireplace. A category I fire may be kindled with a permit anytime of the day whether raining or not. Category II Fire means a controlled fire, such as a camp or cooking fire no greater than 4' in diameter contained in a ring of resistive material or portable fireplace. A category II fire, may only be kindled with a permit between the hours of 5:00pm and 9:00 am unless it is raining. Category III Fire means any other fire, not category I or category II or a fire greater than 4' in diameter or not contained in a ring of resistive material. A category III fire, conditions permitting , may only be kindled with a permit between the hours of 5:00 pm and 9:00 am unless it is actually raining.

Liability: Any person, firm or corporation causing or kindling a fire , when a permit is required, and also any person by whose negligence or the negligence of his agents any fire shall cause, is liable to the town for all expenses incurred in attending or extinguishing such fire. Every person who shall set fire on any land that shall run upon the land of another, shall pay the owner all damages done by such fire.

Penalty- For kindling a fire in woodlands of another without written permission of the landowner or for kindling any fire without a written permit when a permit is required, a person may be guilty of a misdemeanor and fined up to \$2000.00 and/ or imprisoned for a period of up to 1 year.

These rules are direct copies of the rules in RSA 227-L:17 and Res 5600 from the State of New Hampshire.

Frank Currier Plainfield Fire Warden