

ODNR ISSUES STATEWIDE WILDFIRE ADVISORY

Warm spring temperatures, combined with low humidity and locally high winds have created dangerous conditions for wildfires across the state. John Dorka, chief of the ODNR Division of Forestry says that the leading cause of woodland fires in Ohio is human carelessness and arson.

“We ask Ohioans to use extreme caution under these volatile conditions. A carelessly tossed cigarette or even the smallest unattended fire can lead to large wildfires, threatening not only fields, forests and wildlife, but also people and their homes,” he said.

The advisory remains in effect until vegetation becomes fully green or the state experiences significant rainfall.

The ODNR Division of Forestry offers the following suggestions dur-

ing extreme wildfire conditions: *First and foremost, cancel or postpone any unnecessary burning. If you must burn, do not leave fire unattended. Avoid the use of equipment such as cutting torches that may spark and generate a fire. Remember, Ohio Law prohibits outdoor burning in rural areas from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. during the months of March, April, and May. Do not burn within 200 feet of any woodland, brushland or field with dry grass. Use a proper burning container or barrel with a lid. Always keep a bucket of water or a garden hose nearby in case the fire escapes containment. Call 911 or notify your local fire department if you see an escaped fire.*

Each year, about 1,000 wildfires consume nearly 6,000 acres of forest and grassland in Ohio.

Pickaway County Master Gardener Program



The Ohio Master Gardener Program is dedicated to provide horticulture knowledge in each county where the Master Gardeners are an active organization. The time and talent of the volunteers have allowed The Ohio State University Extension Service to achieve stronger, more relevant programs and to be more visible in Pickaway County. The consumer horticultural education delivery system maximizes human, material and natural resources through valuable teamwork and excellence in the educational programming. Last year Pickaway County Master Gardeners provided your community with 1750 volunteer and education hours.

Need help with a gardening problem? Our hotline hours are Monday 5:30 to 7:30 and Thursday 10:00 to noon. Call the Pickaway county Extension Office at 474-7534 to talk to a Master Gardener during hotline hours or leave a message at other times. We will return your call. If you are interested in joining the Master Gardener Program, leave your name and number at the Extension Office. You will be contacted when we are scheduling classes.



Are You Firewise?



The ODNR Division of Forestry has recently made an addition to its list of priorities: Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Safety. WUI is the situation where homes are built in wooded areas or grasslands, and are therefore much more susceptible to damage by wildfire. The Division of Forestry has implemented a statewide program dedicated solely to urban interface fire prevention and education. The Firewise Ohio Program is a multi-organizational initiative designed to include not only fire safety professionals, but also community leaders, planners, and homeowners in localized efforts to reduce the risk of interface wildfires. The ultimate goal of this program is to decrease the susceptibility of homes, communities, and structures to wildfire through cooperative education, mitigation, and planning techniques. As more homes are built in and near the woods and fields of

Ohio, the existing firefighting resources are less able to protect all high value property while trying to control wildfires. Through awareness, prevention, and supportive mutual effort, Ohio property owners can take proactive steps that may reduce the risk of property loss and/or damage.

There are four major controllable factors that contribute to the Firewise safety of a home: access, structure, site, and burning practices. Each of these items needs to be carefully considered and planned for maximum effectiveness.

With awareness, knowledge, and effort, wildfire hazards around the home can be recognized and mitigated, resulting in a defensible area much more resistant to encroaching wildfires. The name of the game is plants of low flammability and less fuel to burn. Decisions that are made before a wildfire event can help prevent damage and heighten

(Firewise article continued)

safety should a wildfire occur. For more information about wildland urban interface mitigation, check out the Ohio Division of Forestry website at: www.ohiodnr.com/forestry. Be Firewise, Ohio!!
