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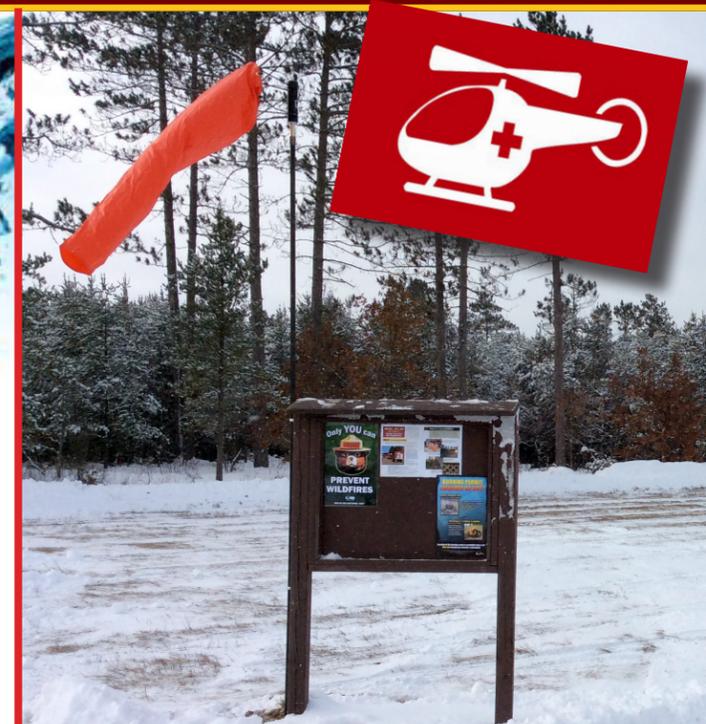
WILDFIRE Safety SPOTLIGHT

2018 Edition

The Town of Boulder Junction Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Boulder Junction Water Points

As part of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Boulder Junction has been maintaining and expanding water points for fire department access. These water points are a great asset to the fire department. These points allow easier access to water in the event of a fire. In 2017, they have worked on water points on Wild Rice Lake, Oswego Lake and at Rock Dam. Some of the maintenance included cleaning up brush and vegetative growth around the water points, creating easier access by increasing the radius of the turn arounds and fixing the ramps. New signs will be posted at the water points to assist in locating the points and prevent parking in front of them.



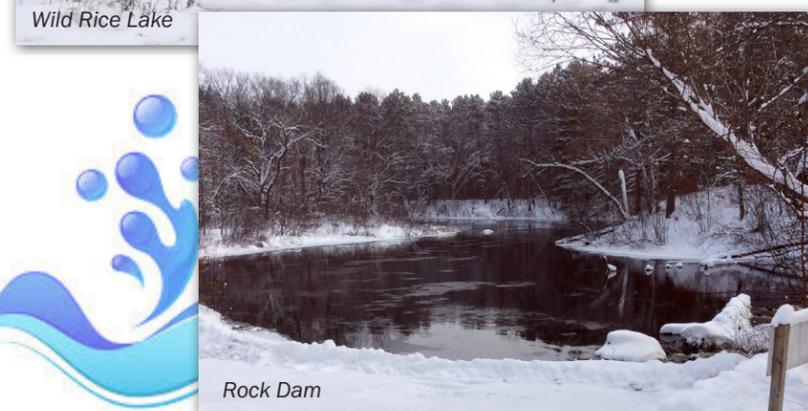
Marsh Road Fire Break

In the spring of 2017, Boulder Junction expanded the fire break on Marsh Rd. The aim is to provide a fire break that extends 100 feet from the center line to the south of the road. A fire break is a gap in combustible materials that acts as a barrier to slow or stop the progress of a wildfire. Fuels such as trees and brush are removed to change the fuels structure and reduce the intensity of a wildfire. Future maintenance of the break will include mowing and reseeding the cleared area.

By extending the fire break, it provided the town a new location for a helicopter landing area. A helicopter can safely land and take off from this new landing pad. This is a great asset to the town and will greatly assist emergency operations. A kiosk was created to provide information on wildfire prevention, the Marsh Rd. fire break and helicopter landing pad.



New signs to be posted at each water point



Avoid pruning oaks in the spring to protect them from oak wilt

by Linda Williams, WI DNR Forest Health Specialist

Do you value your oak trees? Oak wilt is a deadly disease of oaks caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*. Trees in the red oak group (those with points on their leaves) can be killed by oak wilt within two months of infection. Trees in the white oak group (with rounded leaves) are more resistant to the disease. Trees infected with oak wilt will start to rapidly drop green leaves in July and August.

Although oak wilt has been present since the late 1800's, and can be common in the southern 2/3 of Wisconsin, it is uncommon in many areas of the north. New oak wilt infections occur when beetles that carry the fungal spores are attracted to fresh wounds on your oak trees, but you can help prevent new infections!

Help prevent oak wilt – don't prune, wound, or cut your oaks in spring

Avoid pruning, wounding, or cutting your oaks from April thru July. Some examples of situations where oaks could be damaged in the spring include: lot clearing for a better lake view, sprucing up yards in the spring, making openings for better satellite dish reception, using spikes to climb a tree for pruning, putting nails in trees for hanging flower baskets or bird feeders, cutting roots for new driveways or underground lines, construction projects, and spring storms.

Help prevent oak wilt – paint wounds immediately

If injury occurs to your oak, immediately paint the wounds to prevent the beetles from accessing the fresh wound.

Help prevent oak wilt – don't move firewood

Don't move infected firewood to your property. When a tree is killed by oak wilt the wood is infectious for 1 full year, regardless of whether the tree is still standing or is split into firewood. Firewood from oaks with loose bark, or oaks that have been dead for more than one year, can be moved safely. Limiting the distance you move firewood can help prevent the spread of other insects and diseases as well.

Help prevent oak wilt – stay informed

Be aware of where oak wilt is known to be. A map showing locations of known oak wilt in the northern counties can be found at dnr.wi.gov search "oak wilt". If you think you have oak wilt in an area now highlighted on the map please report it to your local DNR Forester or Forest Health Specialist. And if you already have oak wilt you can find info on how to stop it from continuing to spread.

Your help in preventing new oak wilt infections can reduce potential fire risk and keep your trees healthy for your enjoyment, for wildlife, and for other forest benefits.

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Spark a Change, Not a Wildfire

Catherine Koele, wildfire prevention specialist, Wisconsin DNR

It's no surprise that the number one cause of wildfires in Wisconsin is from human carelessness. What is surprising is that the peak of fire season is in the spring, shortly after the snow-cover disappears and just before vegetation greens-up. Many individuals this time of year are outdoors burning leaves, brush and pine needles from their annual yard clean-up. All too often, this method of debris disposal can spark a wildfire.

The reality is, there are numerous other ways a wildfire can occur, such as campfires, fireworks and ashes from woodstoves. A close second behind debris burning is equipment. Nearly 20% of all wildfires in Wisconsin are caused by activities such as logging and farm operations, hot exhaust systems from vehicles, recreational vehicles, such as ATV's or motorcycles, operating without spark arresters or even simple things like dragging chains from trailers.

Most of these fires can be prevented by doing routine maintenance on equipment to ensure machinery is clean from debris or carbon build-up and checking tire pressure and brakes to avoid metal-to-metal contact. Taking the time to look around before parking hot exhaust systems or pipes in dry, grassy areas can also make a difference. And, getting an early start with any logging and farm operations during times of elevated fire danger. This can greatly decrease your chances of starting a wildfire since temperatures are warmer, humidity decreases and winds are gustier in the afternoon which can lead to rapid fire spread.

To help support these fire safe recommendations, the DNR will be launching a new fire prevention campaign focusing on equip-

ment-caused fires in 2018. Year-one and two will target the general public to promote proper auto and recreational vehicle use and chainsaw operations. Year-three will focus more on industry such as business-based logging, farming, welding and grinding operations. The end goal is to heighten awareness that equipment can cause a wildfire, encourage routine maintenance, make good decisions when operating this type of equipment under elevated fire conditions and ultimately adopt a fire safe lifestyle for future generations.

If you see opportunities to help spread the message about equipment-caused wildfires in your community, feel free to contact Catherine Koele, Wisconsin DNR, wildfire prevention specialist at catherine.koele@wisconsin.gov

Spark a Change, Not a Wildfire

- Secure dragging parts & trailer chains
- Check tire pressure for exposed rims
- Maintain brakes to prevent metal-to-metal contact
- Avoid operating vehicles on dry grass

CHOOSE NOT TO BURN

Each year, all the brush at the brush collection site is chipped. The company takes the chips and recycles them.

The Town of Boulder Junction has a brush collection site located at 1000 Old Hwy K.

Winter hours: (November 1 – April 30)
 Sunday 8:00-1:00,
 Tuesday 2:00-7:00,
 Thursday 8:00-1:00,
 Saturday 8:00-5:00

Summer hours: (May 1 – October 1)
 Sun. 10:00-2:00;
 Mon., Thurs., Fri., and Sat. 9:00-5:00;
 Tues. 9:00-1:00; and Wed. 8:00-8:00

The brush site accepts leaves, grass clippings, vegetable matter, brush and branches less than 8" in diameter. Stumps, nails, metal, and construction material are not accepted.



Burning permits are required if you choose to burn. Call 1-888-WIS-BURN (947-7876) or dnr.wi.gov, keyword "fire." Check burning restrictions every time before you light the match!

A History Lesson from the Desk DNR Ranger: Richard Lietz Wildfire in Wisconsin

With the recent news media and outreach, we are learning more and more every day of the impacts that wildfire has on our local towns cities and states. This past summer alone was one of the most intense wildfire seasons out west with many catastrophic fires across Montana, Wyoming, and California. **Wisconsin is no different when it comes to the potential of having catastrophic fires.** In fact, history proves that this great state has experienced many fires in its past and will have more fires in the future.

Starting as far back as the early 1820's, settlers started to build in the southeastern part of the state; clearing land and burning plots of land for agriculture. By 1871, most of the Wisconsin landscape was being logged, cleared and burned, causing large fires across the landscape. **1871 is also the year that the Peshtigo Fire occurred right in our backyard. Between 1,200 and 1,500 lives were lost and more than 1.5 million acres burned.**

Time moves on and in 1905, a decision was made to appoint 249 town fire wardens across the state. This was the beginning of DNR Fire Control and Prevention. From this point on, the state organized fire protection builds with new ranger stations and lookout towers statewide. In 1911, the first forest rangers were hired and in 1915 the first forest fire flight patrol was conducted cementing in history the beginning of fire detection by airplane which is still used today.

By the time the 1930's came, an estimated 2,950 fires burn 336,000 acres annually in Wisconsin. The need for better firefighting equipment was eminent and in 1935 the first tractor/plow machine was built to put in mineral fire breaks on fires. This



Saratoga Fire, 6,159 acres

changed the way firefighting was conducted for all Wisconsin DNR staff and made a significant decrease in the number of large fires on the landscape.

Jumping ahead to the early 1960's an average of 1,880 fire burn 8,700 acres each year. It was determined that railroads were the leading cause of wildfire in the state. The late 70's and early 80's were drought years for Wisconsin, and several catastrophic fires such as the Saratoga fire (6,159 acres) Brockway fire (17,590 acres) and the Five-mile fire (13,375 acres) burned in the central and north west portions of the state.



Brockway Fire, 17,590 acres

Through the 1990's an average of 1,600 fires burn 3,400 acres each year and **the main cause of wildfires in Wisconsin was debris burning.** The 2000's were no different, two large fires, Cottonville in 2005 and Germann Road in 2013 burned almost 11,000 acres and 440 structures in total. Most recently the, wet springs have dampened the fire activity in Wisconsin but in 2017 there has been 692 fires that burned 685 acres. The main cause is still debris burning.



Cottonville Fire, 2005

As history has proven, wildfire is still an eminent threat in Wisconsin. Through great relationships, advances in equipment and firefighting technology, and prevention, the DNR, USFS, and your local fire departments remain on call, ready to fight the next wildfire

through the state. Though the number of fires and acres burned continues to decrease through time, the wildfire threat is still a danger and continues to be one of our main focus's.



Germann Road Fire, 2013

For more information on wildfire history and or information on wildfire in Wisconsin, please check out our website: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/ForestFire/index.asp>

Debris Burning is the #1 cause of Wildfires in Wisconsin

- **Get a DNR burning permit;** burning permits are required whenever the ground is not completely snow covered.
- **Burning permits are not required for campfires.** There is a distinction between a debris fire and campfires. Your fire is no longer a campfire when your objective is in fact the disposal of debris. Debris burning in a "fire ring" does not constitute a "campfire"
- **Check daily restrictions** before you burn
- **Comply** with local ordinances
- **Clear the area** of flammables before starting your debris pile.
- **Keep** the fire small
- **Only** burn legal materials
- **Have a water source** and firefighting tools nearby
- **Never leave** the fire unattended
- **When you are done** burning, make sure the fire is completely out. Soak it with water, stir the ashes, then soak it again.