



Media Advisory

3821 West Roosevelt Road
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UPDATED 17:44, Sunday, Aug. 3, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Photos of the SEATS can be downloaded at

<http://www.forestry.state.ar.us/media.html>. Click on the thumbnail image to bring up a high-resolution image, then right-click and select "Save Picture As." Photos can also be e-mailed upon request.

AFC Crews battle wildfires across Southern Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, ARK. – Arkansas Forestry Commission crews have responded to 13 wildfires in eight counties today, including a wildfire in Lafayette County that charred more than 300 acres approximately eight miles northeast of the community of Bradley. A Forestry Commission firefighter was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment for smoke inhalation and heat exhaustion. He was treated and released.

AFC personnel were dispatched to two fires in Lafayette County, four fires in Hot Spring County, two in Bradley County, and one fire each in Sevier, Miller, Ouachita, Dallas and Scott Counties.

According to the Arkansas Forestry Commission Dispatch Center in Malvern, 19 counties are currently under burn bans: Clark, Cleveland, Columbia, Crawford, Dallas, Faulkner, Garland, Hempstead, Jefferson, Johnson, Lafayette, Lincoln, Miller, Nevada, Ouachita, Polk, Pulaski, Saline and Sebastian. With little significant rainfall in sight, Arkansas residents living in forested areas should begin taking measures to protect their homes from wildfire. Even the smallest steps taken can lead to a huge advantage in ensuring your home will remain standing.

With a high fire danger risk, there are a few things to remember:

- Burning is strongly discouraged. This is especially true on days where humidity levels have dropped below 30 percent and winds are gusty. Fires can spread quickly in these conditions, and the extreme temperatures can put the health of firefighters and other emergency responders at risk.
- Never discard cigarettes from vehicles.
- Never park vehicles where grass or other vegetation can touch the exhaust system.

Arkansas FireWise Coordinator David Samuel recommends homeowners create a minimum 30-foot "defensible space" around their house. Defensible space is an area

around a structure that provides an opportunity to modify the existing vegetation to slow the rate and intensity of an advancing wildfire.

Homeowners should thin flammable trees, such as pine, near their home and remove undergrowth that can serve as a link for grass fire to reach treetops. Also, be sure to remove dead leaves and pine needles from roofs, gutters and along the base of your home.

Other suggestions include:

- Keep trees and shrubs pruned. Prune all trees from six to 10 feet above the ground.
- Remove overhanging branches from your roof.
- Mow your yard regularly.
- Store firewood away from the house.
- Dispose of cutting and debris promptly, according to local regulations.
- Homeowners should use 1/8-inch screen to cover open areas underneath decks. This prevents embers from igniting vegetation beneath the deck, which can in turn ignite the structure.

For more tips on Firewise landscaping and construction, visit www.arkansasfirewise.com. To view current burn bans and wildfire danger ratings, visit www.forestry.state.ar.us. To report a wildfire, call the Arkansas Forestry Commission Dispatch Center at 1-800-468-8834, or 911.

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The Arkansas Forestry Commission offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Arkansas FireWise is a program of the Arkansas Forestry Commission, that works closely with Firewise Communities/USA. Firewise Communities/USA is a part of the National Firewise Communities Program, an interagency program designed to encourage local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in the effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfire. The National Firewise Communities Program includes Firewise Communities workshops, Firewise Communities/USA recognition program, and support for fire organizations and community groups. The National Firewise Communities Program is sponsored by the National Wildfire Coordinating Group's Wildland/Urban Interface Working Team, a consortium of wildland fire agencies that includes the USDA Forest Service, the Department of the Interior, state forestry organizations, the US Fire Administration, and the National Fire Protection Association. For more information, visit www.firewise.org.