Wildfire prevention tips for this Memorial Day Weekend

Local News

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OLYMPIA - The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is urging people to be extra careful with fire this Memorial Day Weekend. Wildfire season has just begun here in Washington, and there have already been over seventy small wildfires across the state. During holiday weekends, public lands tend to be a favorite destination for people looking for outdoor recreation opportunities. "Whether you are hiking or riding on DNR-managed lands, please be safe and use caution around fire," said Peter Goldmark, Commissioner of Public Lands.

Here are some steps to ensure a fire-safe holiday weekend: Make sure all off-road vehicles have a properly functioning catalytic converterDispose of lit smoking materials appropriatelyOnly build campfires when and where authorizedRemember that discharging fireworks is illegal on public lands **Outdoor burning**In Washington, outdoor burning is a leading cause of wildfire ignitions. Greg Sinnett, DNR Chief Meteorologist, says, "As we transition into late spring, the westside can experience strong eastwinds, and the eastside can have fast moving, dry cold fronts. So be aware of rapidly changing weather conditions, especially if burning outdoors." Before burning, call 1-800-323-BURN (2876) or log onto http://fortress.wa.gov/dnr/firedanger. **Home survival of wildfire** Holiday weekends are a good time to look at the *structure survivability* of your home, business or other buildings. How well a structure resists fire ignition and can suppress any fire ignition that might occur will depend on: *Structure survivability performance:* Are the roof and any decking made of fire resistant materials? *Fire exposure:* Are there tree limbs, wood piles, or vegetation close to the structure that could easily ignite? Is vegetation growing close to the structure well maintained, low growing, and not dried out?*Safe Access:* Are your house or other structures in a place that firefighters can locate, reach, and safely remain to fight a fire? To prevent fire ignition around structures, improve the structure's survivability. Remember, ‘Only You Can Prevent Wildfire.' **DNR's wildfire mission** Administered by Commissioner of Public Lands Peter Goldmark, DNR is responsible for preventing and fighting wildfires on 12.7 million acres of private, state and tribal-owned forestlands in Washington. DNR is the state's largest on-call fire department. During fire season, this includes more than seven hundred DNR employees who have other permanent jobs with the agency and about 375 seasonal workers. DNR also participates in Washington's coordinated interagency approach to firefighting.