

Times Union
July 13, 2012

Cuomo issues outdoor burn ban

Citing potential for wildfires, governor says no residential brush fires until Oct. 10

By Rick Karlin

ALBANY — Citing the dry weather, Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Friday placed an immediate ban on outdoor residential brush burning through Oct. 10.

Emergency personnel are also a heightened state of alert for potential wildfires.

"These conditions should not be taken lightly," Cuomo said in issuing the burn ban. "The potential for disastrous wildfires is present in all areas of the state and we must do whatever we can to prevent fires from occurring."

The state Department of Environmental Conservation had previously issued burning permits to residents of 104 towns and the Adirondacks and Catskills. Those are now suspended.

Last year, DEC issued 3,543 burn permits. The permits are typically for people wishing to burn brush

In addition to the ban, officials are urging campers and even people cooking outdoors to be especially careful.

New York hasn't seen the kind of vast wildfires that have been plaguing Colorado and other spots in the far west — the climate and ground isn't as dry here.

But after a months without any substantial rain in parts of the state, fire is a concern, even in the mountains.

"There is a lot of water around, but that doesn't mean the place is fireproof," said John Sheehan, spokesman for the Adirondack Council.

"A quick spark can touch things off pretty quickly," said Sheehan who like the governor was urging people to be careful, especially with outdoor campfires and portable stoves.

The governor's office noted that last winter brought relatively little snowfall, which has contributed to the dry conditions.

In some parts of the state there has only been 25 percent of the normal spring and early summer rainfall. And forecasts call for above-normal temperatures, further elevating the danger.

Upstate and Western New York are at particular risk while the threat is described as moderate for New York City and Long Island.

The hot dry weather is also threatening to stunt some crops, with farmers worrying about what would normally be their second and third hay cuttings, said Steve Ammerman, spokesman for the state Farm Bureau.

"There is general concern about the crop damage," he said. Also sparking concern is the corn crop which needs moisture to fully mature.

rkarlin@timesunion.com • 518-454-5758 • @RickKarlinTU

Fire safety measures

Here are some of the fire precautions officials want the public to take:

Refrain from starting any type of outdoor fire. If you have to light a fire, take extreme caution.

Be watchful and keep a close eye when grilling outdoors.

For smokers, make sure your cigarettes are completely extinguished.

When camping, use existing campfire rings and keep fires small.

Scrape away litter, duff, and any burnable material within a 10-foot diameter circle of the fire.

Never leave a campfire unattended.

When you're done with a campfire, drown it thoroughly with water. Make sure all embers, coals, and sticks are wet. Stir the remains, add more water, and stir again.

Source: Executive Chamber

Read more: <http://www.timesunion.com/local/article/Cuomo-issues-outdoor-burn-ban-3706413.php#ixzz20ohhmOXZ>