



## NEWS RELEASE

April 5, 2023

**Contact:**

Greg Bilyeu  
Greg.Bilyeu@DOF.Virginia.gov  
(434) 981-6761

### PREVENT SPRING WILDFIRES BEFORE THEY START

*Reminder: 4 p.m. burn law in effect until April 30*

**CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA** – With spring fully underway, the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) wishes to remind Virginians that the 4 p.m. burning law, which restricts open-air burning of any kind until after 4 p.m., remains in effect through April 30.

Last month, VDOF responded to more than 150 wildfires that burned approximately 1,400 acres. Suppression efforts by VDOF and our firefighter partners since the start of this year are credited with saving more than 170 homes and buildings, with an estimated protected value in the millions.

“April is one of Virginia's busiest months in terms of wildfire activity each year,” said VDOF Director of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. “As we enter April, days are increasingly warm and windy. When these conditions combine with lower humidity, fire danger increases dramatically. If you plan on doing any outdoor burning, take the proper precautions.”

Unsafe equipment operation is a common cause of wildfires. Avoid driving through or parking on dry grass or brush, as hot exhaust pipes can set vegetation on fire. Sparks from lawnmowers and power equipment can also start wildfires. Mow before 10 a.m., but never when it's windy or excessively dry. Remember that lawn mowers are designed to mow lawns, not weeds or dry grass.

The leading cause of wildfires in Virginia every spring is escaped debris burning. Follow these tips when burning debris:

- **No open air-burning until after 4 p.m.**
- Check for local burn bans in your area
- Avoid burning on dry, windy days
- Keep your burn pile small
- Have a rake or shovel and a charged water hose on hand
- Have a phone ready to call 911 if a fire escapes your control
- Stay with your fire until it's completely out (drown, stir, drown again, ensure it's cool)

Remember Smokey Bear's words: only you can prevent wildfires.

###

***About the Virginia Department of Forestry***

*The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 billion annually.*

*Headquartered in Charlottesville, the agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.*