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## **Preventing Wildfires**

DCNR Warns Pennsylvania Communities about Danger in Forested Areas

Township residents who live near state forests or other woodlands should be vigilant this summer and fall as the wildfire threat increases due to hot, dry conditions and changing weather patterns.

“Though forests are a renewable resource, they can quickly become endangered by acts of carelessness,” state Secretary of Conservation and Natural Resources Michael DiBerardinis said recently. “People cause 98 percent of wildfires. A mere spark can touch off a devastating forest blaze during dry periods when conditions are especially ripe for wildfires.”

According to DCNR’s Bureau of Forestry, nearly 10,000 acres of Pennsylvania’s forests are burned by wildfires each year, and while nearly 85 percent of those fires occur between March and May, the threat remains during the warm summer and early fall months.

Wildfires are so named for their rapid spread through bare vegetation in dry, windy conditions. State forestry officials urge landowners to be extremely careful when burning trash and debris, one of the most common causes of wildfires, and obey local open-burning bans. Many townships have such bans in place during the summer to minimize the risk of wildfires.

Education is still the best way to prevent wildfires, and the nation’s best-known fire prevention symbol, Smokey Bear, is still going strong after more than 60 years.

For more information about wildfire prevention and education, call DCNR’s Bureau of Forestry at (717) 787-2925 or log onto [www.dcnr.state.pa.us](http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us) and click on “Forestry.”