

News Release

**USDA Forest Service
Bridger-Teton National Forest
P.O. Box 1888
Jackson, WY 83001**

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CONTACTS: Mary Cernicek (307) 739-5564

Unwanted Human Caused Fires Keep Local Firefighters Busy on the Bridger-Teton National Forest

Western Wyo. – Teton Interagency Fire Center has responded to 15 human-caused wildland fires during the past three weeks. All of these fires were the result of abandoned warming fires. Morning temperatures are chilly and many visitors will start warming fires, but then fail to extinguish them properly thinking the cool temperatures or wet weather will allow them to naturally go out. History has proven that these small warming or cooking fires can easily cast off embers, or spread through adjacent vegetation to ignite a wildfire.

“The cost of fire suppression is high and the threat to campers and adjacent private lands is unacceptable,” said Forest Supervisor Tricia O’Connor. O’Connor insists that recreationists should never be careless or complacent with fire. “Warming fires are generally small in size but lack many of the safety features of a regular campfire,” she said. “They are usually built on top of dry forest fuels without a rock ring to keep the fire from creeping and spreading.”

Remember these tips for fire safety;

- Know where fires are allowed; campfires are only permitted in designated campsites at Grand Teton National Park and are not allowed in the National Elk Refuge.
- Keep fires small
- Build fires in a fire safe area
- Never leave a fire unattended
- Drown the fire with water and stir until it is **COLD TO THE TOUCH** (lack of smoke showing does not mean the fire is out)
- When finished with charcoal briquettes, dunk them in water

Fire danger for the Teton Interagency area is currently moderate which means that fires start easily, spread at a moderate rate, and can start from most accidental causes.

For more information on preventing wildfires, visit www.tetonfires.com. To report a fire call 911 or Teton Interagency Dispatch Center at 307-739-3630.

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