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Commissioner

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Department of
Natural Resources

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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May 4 – 10 is Alaska Wildland Fire Prevention & Preparedness Week

(Anchorage, AK) – As the snow melts and spring arrives across Alaska, Governor Mike Dunleavy is proclaiming May 4 - 10 as Alaska Wildland Fire Prevention and Preparedness Week. This yearly reminder urges residents and visitors to safeguard Alaskan communities, first responders, natural resources, and expansive wilderness from the threat of human-caused fires.

Despite the remaining cold and snow in some regions, the risk of wildfire looms as dry grasses and tundra are exposed, creating ideal conditions for rapid fire spread. In addition to naturally occurring wildfires, fires caused by people happen every year and typically pose more of a threat to Alaskan communities, firefighters, and property.

“Alaska’s vast expanses of wildland serve as habitat for fish and wildlife, provide abundant recreational opportunities for residents and visitors, are home to extensive timber resources, and enrich our Alaskan lifestyle,” **said Governor Dunleavy**. “I urge Alaskans to use precaution, practice prevention, and be prepared to protect their communities.”

The wildfire season officially began April 1, when the Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection began requiring burn permits for any outdoor open burning or burn barrel use on state, municipal or private lands in Alaska. **Of the 36 fires reported so far this season, all 36 have been determined to be caused by humans.** While these fires have fortunately been small, some have threatened homes and required division wildland firefighters and local fire departments to respond.

“If you are doing any kind of burning, whether it’s brush piles or using a burn barrel, it’s critically important to get a burn permit and follow the safe burning guidelines listed on it,” **said Deputy Director of Fire Protection Norm McDonald**. “The Alaska Division of Forestry & Fire Protection, Bureau of Land Management Alaska Fire Service, and the U.S. Forest Service fire managers urge Alaskans to take responsibility for protecting their homes and communities this summer by preventing human-caused wildfires and taking steps to fireproof their properties.”

For more information about safe burning in Alaska, go to <http://forestry.alaska.gov/burn>

The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve, and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.

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