

U.S. Forest Service - News Release

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Buffalo Gap National Grasslands Moving to Stage 1 Fire Restrictions on July 19, 2016

Wall, SD - Recent hot and dry weather conditions across central and western South Dakota have created favorable conditions for wildfires. Due to these climatic conditions and the large fire activity in the region, the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands are implementing Stage 1 Fire Restrictions for the Buffalo Gap National Grassland. The Fort Pierre National Grassland and the Buffalo Gap National Grassland now have similar fire restrictions. The Buffalo Gap National Grassland and the Fort Pierre National Grassland stretch from southwest to central South Dakota.

Under Stage 1 Fire Restrictions, visitors may only have campfires in developed campgrounds or improved sites. Outdoor cooking is restricted to grills, stoves and lanterns using gas, jellied petroleum, and pressurized liquid fuel with a ¼" spark arrester type screen. Smoking is not allowed on the grassland unless it is done while in a vehicle or building, a developed recreation site, or in an area at least three feet in diameter that is cleared of flammable vegetation. Welding and operating acetylene or other torches are prohibited except in cleared areas of at least 10 feet in diameter and in the possession of a chemical pressurized fire extinguisher. Lastly, all motorized travel is restricted to designated forest system roads that are clearing marked for travel.

"The current drought in the area coupled with the increased fire activity in South Dakota and the region, necessitates the implementation of these fire restrictions. Large fires in the area have drawn down our firefighting resources. Through the implementation of Stage 1 Fire Restrictions the public can play a huge part in helping us reduce the risk of unwanted wildfires," states Kurt Pindel, Acting Forest and Grassland Supervisor for the Nebraska National Forests and Grasslands.

These fire restrictions are set in place for public and resource safety. For further information, please contact the supervisor's office in Chadron, NE (605) 279-2125.

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