



United States Department of Agriculture

Forest Service

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News Release

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SMOKEY BEAR TO CELEBRATE HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY AT FENWAY PARK

“Only You Can Prevent Wildfires” as important now as it was 70 years ago

RUTLAND T (Aug. 12, 2014) – Dee Hines, acting Forest Supervisor for the Green Mountain National Forest, announced that Smokey Bear, along with U.S. Forest Service employees from Vermont, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Compact, will participate in the Aug. 15 Red Sox 7 p.m. pregame celebration at Boston’s Fenway Park. Hines commented, “This is a wonderful opportunity for Smokey to connect with the public and for us to help to educate folks about fire prevention, safety and our overall conservation efforts. We are very proud of the work that Smokey has done over the past 70 years – the best news is that he isn’t showing any signs of slowing down.”

Since his birthday Aug. 9, 1944, Smokey Bear has been a recognized symbol of conservation and protection of America’s forests. His message about wildfire prevention has helped to reduce the number of acres lost annually to wildfires, from about 22 million (1944) to an average of 6.7 million annually today. However, wildfire prevention remains one of the most critical issues affecting our country. Many Americans believe that lightening starts most wildfires. In fact, nine out of 10 wildfires nationwide are started by humans. 98 percent of the wildfires in Massachusetts last year were most commonly caused by unattended campfires, debris burning, children, and careless disposal of smoking materials.

“Our wildfire prevention campaign has helped children and adults throughout the country understand their role in preventing wildfires,” said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. “For 70 years, Smokey Bear has empowered people to make a difference; his message of personal responsibility continues to be as critical and relevant now as ever. We look forward to celebrating many more birthdays of our beloved icon.”

Some helpful wildfire prevention tips include:

- Always be careful with fire.

- Douse fires with water, stir the ashes and douse again; a fire isn't out until it's dead out.
- Keep flammable materials such as woodpiles, gas containers, shrubbery and home fuel sources a minimum of 30 feet away from your home.
- Clearly identify your home with a house number; keep your roof clear of overhanging trees; and make your driveway accessible to fire emergency vehicles.
- Help keep our forests healthy...stop the spreading of invasive insects by not moving firewood.
- And "Remember...Only You Can Prevent Wildfires."

U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, with a mission of sustaining the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Recreational activities on the country's national forests contribute \$14.5 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. The Forest Service's Eastern Region includes 20 states in the Midwest and East, stretching from Maine, to Maryland, to Missouri, to Minnesota. There are 17 national forests and one national tallgrass prairie in the Eastern Region.

Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Commission

The mandate of the Northeastern Forest Fire Protection Commission is to provide the means for its member states and provinces to cope with fires that might be beyond the capabilities of a single member through information, technology and resource sharing (mutual aid) activities and maintain a central agency (the Compact) to coordinate services needed by member states and provinces. Compact members include: [Maine](#), [New Hampshire](#), [Vermont](#), [Connecticut](#), [Massachusetts](#), [Rhode Island](#), and [New York](#); the Canadian provinces of [Québec](#), [New Brunswick](#), [Nova Scotia](#), New Foundland/Labrador, the New England national forests, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Park Service.

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