

Wildfire Season

With fall wildfire season underway in North Carolina, Forest Service agencies urging the public to use caution.

RALEIGH, NC (October 10, 2022) – With the impending arrival of fall wildfire season, the USDA Forest Service and N.C. Forest Service are reminding the public to exercise caution when engaging in recreational burning.

Peak months for the fall fire season run from October through early December and fires left unattended can get out of hand quickly, becoming wildfires that may threaten lives and property. Escaped fires due to careless backyard burning continue to be the leading cause of wildfires in North Carolina.

“Fall weather and the beautiful changing foliage in North Carolina draws people outdoors to take in activities such as camping, hiking or working in their yards to dispose of leaves and other yard debris,” said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. “When choosing to build a campfire, grill out in your yard or eliminate leaves by burning, it is important that you remain vigilant and safe with any outdoor fire to protect our forests. You are our best defense against wildfires.”

For fiscal year 2021-2022 there were 6,887 wildfires that burned 26,958 acres in North Carolina. Only 1% of those wildfires were directly linked to a natural ignition source such as lightning. The other 99% of wildfires during that span were directly related to human activity. Some of the state’s most intense wildfires during the fall of 2021 were caused by escaped campfires.

In November 2021, the Sauratown Mountain Fire in Stokes County burned more than 40 acres but required 16 days to control and fully contain due to the steep and difficult terrain. Shortly after on Nov. 27, 2021, the Grindstone Fire, the largest wildfire during North Carolina’s 2021 fall wildfire season, ignited at Pilot Mountain State Park in Surry

County and eventually burned 1,050 acres. Both incidents were caused by escaped campfires.

For those who choose to burn, the N.C. Forest Service offers the following tips:

- Make sure you have a valid permit. You can obtain a burn permit at any N.C. Forest Service office or authorized permitting agent, or online at https://www.ncforestservice.gov/burn_permits/burn_permits_main.htm
- Don't burn on dry, windy days.
- Keep your fire small, not tall.
- Be sure you are fully prepared before burning. To control the fire, you will need a hose, bucket, steel rake and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire. Keep a phone nearby, too.
- Never use kerosene, gasoline, diesel fuel or other flammable liquids to speed up burning.
- Douse burning charcoal briquettes or campfires thoroughly with water. Drown all embers, not just the red ones. When soaked, stir the coals and soak them again. Make sure everything is wet and that embers are cold to the touch. If you do not have water, mix enough dirt or sand with the embers to extinguish the fire, being careful not to bury the fire. Never dump hot ashes or coals into a wooded area.
- Never leave your fire. Stay with it until it is completely out.

The USDA Forest Service offers the following guidelines for safely extinguishing campfires and helping to prevent wildfires:

- Allow the wood to burn completely to ash, if possible.
- Pour lots of water on the fire, drown ALL embers, not just the red ones.
- Pour until the hissing sound stops.
- Stir campfire ashes and embers with a shovel.
- Scrape the sticks and logs to remove any embers.
- Stir and make sure everything is wet and that embers are cold to the touch.

- If you do not have water, use dirt. Pour dirt or sand on the fire, mixing enough dirt or sand with the embers to extinguish the fire.
- Continue adding or stirring until all remaining material is cool.
- Do NOT bury the fire as the fire will continue to smolder and could catch roots on fire that will eventually get to the surface and start a wildfire.

“Always exercise caution with any outdoor burning. Even when burn bans are not in effect, weather conditions may not be favorable for outdoor fires,” Troxler said. “Outdoor burning is discouraged during periods of low humidity or high winds.”

Studies have shown that taking these and other measures can reduce the possibility of wildfires. To learn more about fire safety and preventing wildfires and loss of property, visit www.ncforestservice.gov and www.smokeybear.com . For more information and tips to help create a defensible space around your home and protect your property from wildfire, visit www.resistwildfirenc.org .

Wolf Laurel RMS Mission Statement

The Wolf Laurel Road Maintenance and Security Homeowner’s Association is responsible for safeguarding and improving the roads, security, safety, infrastructure, neighborhood architectural standards, natural resources and quality of life of its property owners. WLRMS Officers, Board and Committee Members, and Staff, accept this responsibility, and pledge to continue to discharge their duties for the Wolf Laurel community with a robust and renewed commitment to integrity, fiscal responsibility and transparency.

*Wolf Laurel Road Maintenance & Security Homeowners Association Inc.
63 Village Lane, Mars Hill, NC 28754 (828) 680-9162
WolfLaurelRoadsandSecurity.com*



WLRMS covenants regarding outdoor fires

6. 10. A. Fires. Fires are a great hazard to all Owners in Wolf Laurel, which if not properly controlled can have catastrophic results. Outdoor fires shall be controlled and are the responsibility of the Owner of the Lot where the fire is located. Permission must be obtained from the appropriate governmental authority, fire authorities and the Association or its designee prior to igniting any outdoor fire, other than a fire contained within an approved fireplace, fire pit, or similar structure. No outdoor fire may be left unattended. Obtaining burning permits is the responsibility of the Owner.

6. 10. B Fireworks. Due to the danger of a forest fire, the possession, ignition, or displays of fireworks are not permitted in Wolf Laurel Resort unless under the supervision of a licensed operator and approved by the applicable fire control authorities and upon the written application to and approval by the board.

Fire Safety in WL

Madison County Emergency Management and Fire Marshal

<https://www.facebook.com/Madison-County-Emergency-Management-and-FireMarshal-3120866257954267/>

North Carolina Forest Service

Mail:

District Forester Trent Duncan
220 Sardis Road
Asheville NC 28806

Telephone:

Voice: 828-667-5211

Fax: 828-665-0331

Email:

trent.duncan@ncagr.gov

Now Available: A Fire Resistant Home Poster

The new A Fire-Resistant Home poster features 10 simple fire-resistant landscaping tasks that any homeowner or tenant can complete.

[Click here to download poster](#)



<https://www.resistwildfirenc.org/>

Wildfire Mitigation Cost-share Program

We recently received notification of important changes to the wildfire mitigation cost-share program available to Wolf Laurel homeowners:

The non-profit organization, Mountain Valleys RC&D, will now offer 50% reimbursement to Wolf Laurel primary residents in both Madison and Yancey County who hire a contractor or rent equipment to reduce their home's risk of ignition by wildfire. Qualifying projects must be within 100 feet of the home or 10 feet from the driveway. Reimbursements are capped at \$2000.

The Cost-Share Process:

1. Wildfire Risk Home Assessment (free) *
2. Application
3. Reimbursement agreement
4. Proof of payment to contractor
5. Reimbursement

Visit www.mountainvalleysrcd.org/mitigationcostshare for more information.

*The Wildfire Risk Home Assessment is available to all Wolf Laurel owners and is highly recommended. To schedule a home assessment:

- Madison Co. - contact Jen Haas of Mountain Valleys jen.haas@mountainvalleysrcd.org (828) 206-6159 <https://www.mountainvalleysrcd.org>
- Yancey Co. - contact Jonathan Hartsell of Blue Ridge RC&D hartselljonathan@gmail.com (828) 284-9818 <http://www.blueridgercd.com>

Please note: Most projects covered by the cost-share program will not require removal of mature trees beyond the 30-ft home perimeter. Always contact the WLRMS business office to speak with the ARB Administrator, Jered Silver, as you plan your project for assistance in determining if a permit is needed.

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Firepit Guidelines:

1. Call the WL security gate (828-689-2111) to inquire about fire restrictions
2. Never build a fire in dry or windy conditions
3. Do not use flammable fluids (gasoline, lighter fluid, etc.) to light or relight a fire
4. Keep the area free of flammable objects and debris
- 5. Never leave a fire unattended - a Wolf Laurel Road Maintenance & Security requirement**
- 6. Maintain a fire suppression method, e.g., fire extinguisher or hose attached to water source**
7. Make sure embers are wet and cold before abandoning



Exactly What Is a Fire Pit?

Many residents have inquired about exactly what qualifies as “an approved fireplace, fire pit, or similar structure” referenced in the Wolf Laurel Covenants. Section 6.10A of the Covenants requires owners to obtain proper permission prior to burning outdoors other than in an approved fireplace, fire pit or similar structures. Outdoor fire structures vary in our community from simple portable fireplaces purchased at a big box store, to elaborate stone fireplaces with pizza ovens as part of an outdoor living area. Following a presentation by the NCFS Madison County Ranger on wildfire concerns specific to our community, the Wolf Laurel ARB devoted attention to developing uniform criteria and specifications for all outdoor fire structures in Wolf Laurel. The ARB presented its research and recommendations for discussion at the February public work session. After additional discussion and revisions, the ARB presented revisions to the ARB Guidelines for board approval on February 18, 2022, and the WLRMS Board of Directors approved the amendment.

Below is a summary of the highlights of the specifications for approval of all fireplaces, fire pits and other similar structures (both permanent structures and temporary or portable units) by the Wolf Laurel ARB. The criteria are grounded in safety concerns and borrow heavily from recommendations of the Forest Service and other fire safety organizations. In addition, the criteria set tangible criteria to fairly evaluate all owners’ structures in a consistent, uniform manner. For the complete text of the standards or your specific questions, please contact the Wolf Laurel ARB.

(continued)

- Owners are responsible for their guests and invitees and will take appropriate action to stop unsafe use.
- For pre-fabricated structures, Owners must follow manufacturer's instructions and conditions.
- A metal ashcan with a tight-fitting lid is required for ash disposal and must be located on the ground away from combustible materials.
- Owners may not leave any fire unattended and must have proper safety tools in the immediate area.
- The fuel area must not be larger than 40 inches in diameter.
- Covers are required to prevent flying embers or accumulation of leaves when not in use.
- A proper distance must be maintained from structures, propane tank.

Fire Pit Safety



Keep fire pits at least 10 feet away from any structure or combustible surface.



Clear the area of leaves, grass and other debris that may catch on fire.



Use crumpled paper or a store-bought fire starter covered with small sticks for burning. (Never start a fire with gasoline or lighter fluid.)



Avoid using pine or cedar as they can pop and throw sparks.



Keep water nearby or be sure to have quick, easy access to a hose incase the fire gets out of hand.



Do not light fires on windy days or nights and do obey any local burn bans.



Keep children away from fire pits and never leave them unattended even after the flames are out as there is still a chance of a child getting burned.



Never allow hotdog or marshmallow roasting without adult supervision and be sure there is plenty of space between roasters.