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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dry conditions in Flagler County spurs brushfire safety warning

May 6, 2024 – The lack of recent rain means conditions are getting drier in Flagler County, increasing the potential for brushfires. Taking a few precautions now can go a long way to protect homes and businesses from these fires, which can be all too common this time of year.

“Fires cannot burn without fuel, so the best defense is a good offense,” said Flagler County Fire Rescue Chief Michael Tucker. “In short, clear the area around your house of anything that will go up in flames easily – including stacks of firewood, portable propane tanks, and dead, dry vegetation.”

The rule of thumb accepted by a variety of fire prevention agencies, including the National Fire Protection Association, is that all flammable items within 30 feet of a structure should be removed. Homeowners should clear roofs, eaves, gutters, wood decks and patios of leaves, needles, and other debris.

“Additionally, do not store things under decks or porches, and consider using rocks or gravel in those areas instead grass or mulch,” Tucker said. “Wood-driven fires, like brushfires, create embers that can be carried quite far, and tend to find their way to the same nooks and crannies where leaves accumulate. Trimming trees that are close to homes and other structures is also recommended.”

Barbecue coals should be fully extinguished before adding them to garbage receptacles.

“Please don’t throw cigarette butts out of car windows,” Tucker said. “It’s litter at best and fire hazard at worst.”

The current Keetch Byram Drought Index (KBDI) mean is 343 for Flagler County with some areas as low as 267 and other areas as high as 394, and up 12 points from the previous day. The KBDI is a range from 0 (zero) to 800 in which 0 is the wettest condition and 800 is the driest, or drought.

“If something catches fire in your yard – or if you see something burning as you are driving, please call 9-1-1 sooner rather than later,” Tucker said.

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