**DELIBERATIVE, PRE-DECISIONAL, FOR INTERNAL COORDINATION ONLY**

**­­­­**

**Topic:** **Wildfire Prevention, Mitigation and Recreation Tactics during Coronavirus Pandemic**

**Date:** May 20, 2020

**Contact:** John Phipps, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service, Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry

**Phone:** 202–205–1675

**Email:** [john.phipps@usda.gov](mailto:john.phipps@usda.gov)

**Issue Summary:** Protecting firefighters, employees and the communities we work in from COVID-19 is essential. Wildfire suppression, prevention and community mitigation efforts will be modified to reduce exposure while at the same time, many states are experiencing increased public lands use. This raises the potential for close social contact and increased human-caused wildfires. Large outdoor celebrations are still planned to take place when Stay-at-Home orders are lifted, increasing the need to maximize wildfire prevention, mitigation and recreation strategies.

**Current and Planned Actions:**

1. **Increase national messaging developed with the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Committee (Ad Council, National Association of State Foresters and USDA Forest Service).**

The Ad Council is leveraging the Smokey Bear and Discover the Forest campaigns to create public service announcements that focus on safe recreation on public lands and wildfire prevention with BeOutdoorSafe.org. The Target audience is outdoor recreationists (18-34), parents/caregivers visiting the outdoors with family, and Wildland Urban Interface residents.

Mid to Late May:

* Thursday May 21: Launch BeOutdoorSafe Campaign,
* Marketing begins May 21 with virtual media tour. Interviews by Conservation Education, Fire and Aviation Management and State Forest employees.
* Launch BeOutdoorSafe.org which drives visitors to both Discovertheforest.org and SmokeyBear.com.
* Update SmokeyBear.org toolkit with all wildfire prevention and safe recreation assets from BeOutdoorSafe Campaign for interagency field use.
* Distribute additional social and video assets for broadcast: On-Line video and Out-of-Home.

Completed Campaign Actions:

* Fully executed Ad Council agreement modification to add $465,750 for development and production needs for the campaign.
* Increased pushes of existing messages on both campaigns’ social media channels and websites.
* Offered printing of billboard creatives with messages of “Love thy Neighborhood – Prevent Wildfires” and “Prevent wildfires, for the love of the outdoors”.
* Widely circulated existing Smokey Bear creatives on [www.smokeybear.com](http://www.smokeybear.com) and [www.PSACentral.org](http://www.PSACentral.org) .
* Posted unique social distancing and safe recreation messages on Discover the Forest website and social media channels.

1. **Developed a virtual Fire Prevention Education Team strategy to assist regions, partners and states.**
2. **Established a National Fire Prevention Team that worked for the Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Branch Chief.**

* Provided support and resources for potential regional, state and local virtual Fire Prevention Teams.
* Developed a strategy for a Washington Office National Fire Prevention Team rotation to ensure continuation of operations.

1. **Coordinated inter- and intra-agency wildfire prevention and mitigation strategies.**

Completed Actions:

* Created intra-agency, interagency and regional teams to expand communication channels, encourage consistent messaging and work collaboratively on strategies and share information up the chain of command.
* Collaborated with research stations to address proposals for prevention-related decision mapping.
* Populated wildfire prevention graphics to <https://www.nwcg.gov/fpetdl/>, the National Wildfire Coordination Group Fire Prevention and Education Team digital library, making them available to the interagency community.
* Held a Fire Prevention and Education Team webinar on April 29, 2020 to describe virtual team deployments and use of the Fire Prevention and Education Team digital library.

Ongoing Actions:

* Coordinate with the International Association of Fire Chiefs to amplify the *Ready, Set, Go!* campaign. Stressed mitigation and electronic delivery of *Ready, Set, Go!* fire department member kits and individual home checklists.
* National Fire Protection Association and State Farm urging communities to substitute large community projects for those implemented by individuals. *Firewise* literature is available electronically.
* Coalitions and Collaboratives is providing virtual community mitigation assistance. They are working with Washington State University to develop virtual Community Mitigation Assistance Team and National Mitigation Best Practices trainings.

**Next Steps:**

* Continue pushing the BeOutdoorSafe Campaign through internal Forest Service channels, external sites and press pitching by the Ad Council.
* Work closely with regions/geographic areas to deploy Fire Prevention and Education Teams (virtually, too) based on fire weather conditions and anticipated wildfire occurrence throughout the fire season.
* Continue to actively seek opportunities across all levels of the organization as well as with interagency partners, to amplify wildfire prevention, mitigation and safe recreation efforts.