



March 4, 2006

# Ironton Ranger District Fire Information Update

USDA Forest Service—Wayne National Forest  
Contact the District Office at 740-534-6500

## Series of Fires In Lawrence County

Despite colder temperatures, Ironton Ranger District fire fighters, crews and equipment from a half-dozen other national forests, plus other national, state and local support personnel are attempting to contain and extinguish two main fires this weekend.

The first of these fires was reported Wednesday morning, March 1, with fire crews responding to the Five Forks area north of Kitts Hill in Aid Township. This fire quickly spread, growing to about 187 acres.

As the Five Forks fire spread, the Forest Service began to call for assistance from other resources at other national forests, state agencies and other fire contract sources.

A second fire was reported Friday afternoon, just south of the Five Forks fire, near Fradd Cemetery. This fire

was contained in a smaller area, only covering about 37 acres. Fire crews and engines from the Ironton Fire Suppression Team responded to this report.

Faced with these two fires, plus other smaller ones that were reported during the same time, the Forest Service placed requests for additional support. Fire crews and engines responded from as far away as the White Mountain and Green Mountain national forests in New England, and from the Huron-Manistee NF in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Crews and equipment have come from the Monongahela and Hoosier national forests, and Indiana Dunes National Park as well. That support list grew even longer by Saturday with the additional request for aviation support, which came in from Minnesota midday Saturday.



These units and personnel are supported by local emergency medical technicians and other ground support as other smaller fires have broken out and been contained and extinguished.

In all, 12 fires have been reported in and around Forest and the Ironton District's fire response area outside the Forest boundary. Most of the fires were 1 acre or less, and contained and extinguished. Crews are still working to completely contain the Five Forks fire.

### **FOLLOW THESE OUTDOOR BURN SAFETY TIPS:**

- \* Do not burn trash or debris on windy or gusty days (wind or gusts more than 10 mph);
- \* Do not leave fires unattended;
- \* Do not leave accelerants (charcoal fluid, gas, etc.) in containers within 50 feet of the fire;
- \* Make sure you have a safety zone (no flammable materials) around burn piles of at least 10 feet;
- \* Observe the restriction on burning between 6 AM and 6 PM;
- \* If your fire gets away from you, call 911 immediately, even if you think you can contain it or put it out yourself.

## Wildland/Urban Interface and the Threat of Fire

Wildfires occur regularly. Whether started by humans or by lightning, they are part of a natural cycle that helps to maintain the health of our forests. Today, more than ever, people are moving

into remote areas, with the desire to "get back to nature," without addressing the dangers that exist around them. A tremendous wildfire danger exists where homes blend together with the wild-

land, creating the wildland/urban interface (WUI). The addition of homes there interrupts the natural cycle of wild-

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## Wildland/Urban Interface

fires. Ultimately, this contributes to a dangerous build-up of old vegetation, leading to an uncontrollable wildfire. Nearly every state has been devastated by wildfires in the last century. More than 140,000 wildfires occur on average each year. Since 1990, more than 900 homes have been destroyed each year by wildfires.

For more information, contact the Ohio State Firewise Coordinator, Aaron Kloss:

**614-265-6896, or 1-877-247-8733**

Or Jessica Magoto on the Wayne NF:

**740-753-0101**

## Make Your Community Firewise!

Citizen involvement is the cornerstone of a successful Firewise Communities/USA program. A smaller geographic unit can more easily create a plan that reflects the needs of its specific locale. When a whole community is Firewise, everyone is safer. It only takes the efforts of a few concerned individuals to form a community group to begin to develop a Firewise Community Plan. Currently there are no Firewise communities in Ohio, but Lawrence County could change that.

The steps below outline the program:

### Step 1: Contact Firewise

Becoming recognized as a Firewise Community/USA begins with the community itself. A community representative completes an on-line request for contact by a Firewise representative on the Firewise Communities/USA web site, [www.firewise.org/usa](http://www.firewise.org/usa).

### Step 2: Site Visit

At an agreed-upon time, the local Firewise Communities/USA representative schedules a site visit and assesses the site. The visit is coordinated with local fire officials.

### Step 3: Community Representatives

Meanwhile, community representatives create a multi-discipline Firewise board/committee. It should include homeowners and fire professionals. Participation by planners, land managers, urban foresters and/or members of other interest groups is also encouraged. Board members should be informed that development of the WUI plan will take up to six months.

### Step 4: Assessment & Evaluation

Upon completion of the site assessment and evaluation of the community's readiness to withstand a WUI fire, the WUI specialist schedules a meeting with the local Firewise board. The assessment and evaluation are presented for review and acceptance. If the site assessment and evaluation are accepted, the process continues. If they are rejected, it terminates.

### Step 5: Create Plan

The local Firewise board uses the report to create agreed-upon, area-specific solutions to its WUI fire issues. All members of the Firewise board must concur with the final decisions. Their recommendations are presented to, and approved by, the WUI specialist. The specialist may, at that time, work with the community to seek project implementation funds, if those are necessary.

## BEWARE:

### Snags, Hazards From Ice Storm Damage

*Fire fighters face dangers from flames and smoke, but in the case of these fires, downed trees, limbs and snags pose significant problems in getting to and fighting fires. Especially snags.*

*A snag is a standing dead tree that has the potential to fall at any time, particularly in windy conditions. These snags pose significant hazards to fire fighters working to contain and extinguish wild fires. Slash, or piles of debris and brush on the ground, along with snags, are making it more difficult for fire fighters to get to these fires.*

*These forest hazards add fuel to the fires, possibly causing them to burn longer or hotter and increase spreading.*

### Step 6: Implement Solutions

Local solutions are implemented following a schedule designed by the local Firewise board and WUI specialist. A permanent Firewise task force, committee, commission or department is created that will maintain the program into the future.

### Step 7: Apply for Recognition

Firewise Communities/USA recognition status is achieved after the community submits its registration form (available at [www.firewise.org/usa](http://www.firewise.org/usa)). A completed Firewise community plan and Firewise event documentation must also be provided to the local Firewise representative.

### Step 8: Renewing your recognition status

Recognition renewal is completed annually by submitting documentation indicating continued community participation to the State Coordinator. This can be accomplished by using on-line form available at [www.firewise.org/usa](http://www.firewise.org/usa).

**If you have any information about these fires,  
or suspect arson, please call the Ironton  
Ranger District at 534-6500**