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News Release

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Wildfire Preparedness is Year-Round:

Turn that last summer vacation into a teaching moment of campfire safety

Santa Fe, NM – Summer is quickly coming to an end, and students across New Mexico will soon be heading back to school. Many families may be planning one last vacation to our beautiful State Parks, national forests, and other public lands before shifting their focus to school shopping and reading lists. And while it's a perfect time to make lasting memories around the campfire with the kids, it's also an opportunity to teach them about wildfire safety.

People cause up to 90% of the wildfires in the U.S. each year. Many of those fires start from unattended fires left to burn at campsites. The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) Forestry Division, in cooperation with partners, wants to remind residents and visitors to make sure campfires are out cold before leaving. Continuing our “wildfire preparedness is year-round” campaign, our message for August is to turn that last summer vacation into a teaching moment of campfire safety.

While recent moisture has decreased fire danger, most of New Mexico remains in a long-term drought, and we must all continue using extreme caution. So if you're planning to camp out for that final summer trip, be sure to [bring along the following safety tips](#) to teach the kids while cooking up delicious s'mores around the campfire!

- Choose campsites with preexisting fire circles or fire pits, or consider portable propane fire pits that produce instant heat and can be turned off immediately with no hot coals to worry about.
- Clear a 10-foot-wide space around the fire ring and make sure there are no low-hanging limbs or branches over the fire area.
- Keep campfires small and never build a fire in dry or windy conditions.
- Pitch tents and park campers at least 15 feet away and downwind of your fire.
- **EXTINGUISH THE FIRE PROPERLY BEFORE LEAVING OR GOING TO BED:** Drown the campfire with water, stir everything in the pit with a shovel, then test for heat with the back of your hand. If it feels warm, it's still too hot to leave. Add more water, stir, and keep testing until the fire is dead out.
- Always check for [fire restrictions](#). Some areas of New Mexico may still be under fire restrictions due to severe drought conditions and may not be listed in the link above. Check with the local fire department or government agency that oversees your planned location **BEFORE** leaving for your trip.

The [Forest Stewards Guild](#) and the [Fire Adapted New Mexico learning network](#) is working with [EMNRD Forestry Division](#), [Cibola](#), [Carson](#), and [Santa Fe National Forests](#), [National Park Service](#), and [Bureau of Land Management New Mexico State Office](#) to build a 2021 wildfire preparedness calendar and share messages across multiple platforms, including social media, webinars and community events. Bookmark the [wildfire preparedness webpage](#) to follow the campaign throughout the year.

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The Forest Stewards Guild and Fire Adapted New Mexico are equal opportunity employers.