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# St. Maries Gazette Record

## IDL: fire season normal, still urging caution

- Tyson Juarez The Gazette Record

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The Idaho Department of Lands St. Joe Fire District says they expect a mild fire season this year though they anticipate to raise fire danger levels to high as dry weather continues to impact the region.  
Tyson Juarez

As summer heats up the local Idaho Department of Lands is prepping for fire season and is encouraging the public to take steps to prevent forest fires.

IDL fire warden Corey Flesher says fire season should be normal this year with grass and other vegetation starting to dry out due to streaks of warm weather in area.

“We are at moderate right now but it’ll probably go up to high in the coming weeks,” Flesher said.

He said having a cool and wet June has helped to contribute to having more moisture in rural regions throughout the county.

“We are not looking like we did during the major fire seasons we had in 2015 and 2021,” he said. “Things look fairly normal right now.”

Flesher said in June 2021, the area had only accumulated around a half inch of rainfall. This year, June saw more than two and a half inches and record low temperatures in some areas.

“June is a big determiner of what our fire season will be like,” Flesher said.

Flesher said the area has seen some fires over the last few months though. He reported the IDL has responded around 12 fires so far this year.

The IDL responded to a few fires in April and May as there were reports of burn piles getting out of control, prompting a response from the agency.

Flesher said the biggest fire they have had so far this year was around five acres.

If fires do strike, the IDL has been preparing and has around 14 seasonal firefighters on board this year. Along with personal, the IDL is equipped with four engines, a dozer and multiple aircraft stationed nearby in Coeur d’Alene.

Flesher said the IDL is encouraging campers, hikers and other enthusiasts who will be recreating this summer to be mindful when traveling in dry areas. He also said escaped debris fires from controlled burns are one of the number one cause of fires in the state of Idaho.

The IDL has also put up traffic signs on local highways reminding motorists to not have their chains dragging.

“Roadside fire can start from sparks created by dragging chains,” he said.

For more information on the fire danger in the region or burn permits, call the Idaho Department of Lands at 208-245-4551.