

Cold Springs NWR • Columbia NWR • Conboy Lake NWR • Hanford Reach National Monument
McKay Creek NWR • McNary NWR • Saddle Mountain NWR • Toppenish NWR • Umatilla NWR



NEWS RELEASE



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MID-COLUMBIA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES ISSUE FIRE PREVENTION ORDER

Due to extremely dry conditions, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has imposed a complete ban on activities likely to start a fire on refuges in the Mid-Columbia. Included in the order are the Hanford Reach National Monument and Columbia, Cold Springs, Conboy Lake, McKay Creek, McNary, Toppenish and Umatilla National Wildlife Refuges. Building any fire, including the use of charcoal briquettes and cooking stoves, is prohibited. Also banned are fireworks, smoking outside of an enclosed vehicle, and operation of any motor without an approved and working spark arrester.

Fortunately, the 2009 fire season has not produced many fires yet. However, the extremely dry conditions and the upcoming holiday weekend could change that. FWS Fire Management Officer, Chris Schulte, noted that, "Although the weather has been cooler and more overcast than we are all accustomed to, it has still produced dry vegetation and optimal burning conditions on the Hanford Reach National Monument and all of the refuges in the Mid-Columbia. Conditions are ripe for fires that are fast spreading, potentially large in size, and challenging to manage," he added.

– FWS –

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