

Fire crews continue to put out wildfires and insure area safety

By ROSYN CLARIDY

RCLARIDY@NEWS-JOURNAL.COM

While fire crews continue putting out hotspots at the site of area wildfires in the Northeast Fire Complex, first responders took on 60 small East Texas fires.

The Texas Forest Service took on the 60 smaller uncontained fire, which have been reported across Northeast Texas with in the past 30 days, because they have a high potential for reburn under the draught conditions.

According to a press release issued by emergency management officials, firefighters are being asked to check the fires for residual heat and hot spots, and are mopping the area. Mopping means crews

are extinguishing all smoldering material along the edge of the fire; ensuring debris cannot roll across the fire line; and searching for underground burning roots near the line, Texas Forest Service officials said.

In addition to sending crews daily to the complex fires, which include the Magnolia Complex, Bear Creek, Dodson, Bowles Creek Bottom, Rhonesboro and Gethsemane fires, crews are also being sent to the new fires to ensure the fires don't have potential to reignite and spread.

"The public may not be aware of these smoldering fires, but there may be heat contained within them, particularly underground, where

tree roots are still smoldering," Assistant Chief Regional Fire Coordinator David Abernathy said. "We've had a lot of leaf litter dropping from the trees in the last several weeks, and this has created a new fuel bed that could easily ignite."

Abernathy said Texas Forest Service officials were serving as a liaison between residents and home owners to coordinate access prior to entry on private property, as well.

He noted that the No. 1 cause of wildfires have been people burning trash.

Fire experts urged residents to remember not to burn and to be careful of anything that could cause a spark, because it could lead to a fire.

→ Cypress Valley, Texas Parks partner to create Texas Paddling Trail

ROBIN Y. RICHARDSON

RYRICHARDSON@MARSHALLNEWSMESSENGER.COM

The Cypress Valley Navigation District recently approved to enter into a partnership agreement with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to create and maintain a Texas Paddling Trail.

This will be done with the assistance of an additional community partner, Back Water Jacks Landing and RV Park, said CVND chairman Jeff Thompson.

"I believe this is going to be a great public use opportunity," said Thompson. "It is a great eco-tourism opportunity - one that both Harrison County and Marion County will benefit from greatly.

"It will be a great opportunity, too, for our area to be advertised on the TPWD (Texas

Parks and Wildlife Department) and the TPT (Texas Paddling Trails Web) site," he continued.

Thompson said the CVND will work with TPWD and Back Water Jacks to develop the guidelines of a paddling trail for the area. The goal of the partnership is to encourage paddling, angling and public access to Texas rivers and bays and build and foster a constituency for environmental flows and river conservation through this initiative.

According to the agreement, Back Water Jacks will take the lead role in development and maintenance of put-ins, takeouts and interpretive kiosks. Texas Wildlife Department will be responsible for specific components of marketing efforts and development of inter-

pretive materials.

Thompson reiterated that he is thrilled about the partnership and considers it a win-win for all involved.

"It would be a great opportunity for the public to be able to utilize the streams, for those that take advantage of the sport of paddling," said Thompson.

"To me, as chairman and a county commissioner, it is ecotourism," he added. "It's getting folks to come to the Harrison County area, to utilize tourism opportunities and stay in our motels, spend money, and at the same time, enjoy the beauty and nature of Caddo Lake.

A Paddling Trails team will visit all paddling trail applicants Nov. 15-18 to conduct surveys of the trails.

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