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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 2/26/2024

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Arkansas Department of Agriculture Urges Caution Due to Wildfire Risk

LITTLE ROCK, AR – The Arkansas Department of Agriculture’s Forestry Division is reminding Arkansans that wildfire danger is elevated across the state, and currently, 14 counties are under a burn ban. The Forestry Division maintains a county-by-county map that identifies wildfire danger risk levels, burn bans, and prescribed burns. Find the map at mip.agri.arkansas.gov/agtools/Forestry/Fire_Info.

“Conditions are dry with low humidity statewide, and we are forecasted to experience periods of high winds in the coming days.” said State Forester Kyle Cunningham. “We are seeing an increase in the number of wildfires and their intensity, and that’s a trend that will continue until we see significant rainfall. With this in mind, we are asking citizens of the state to be mindful of this risk and avoid burning.”

Wildfire danger is broken down into four risk levels: low, moderate, high, and extreme. Risk levels are determined by drought status and long-term weather forecasts and are defined by how easily fires can start and how hard they are to contain. The risk level definitions are:

- **Low:** Fuels do not ignite easily. Weather conditions will lead to slow, easy to control fires.
- **Moderate:** Fire can start from accidental causes. May not become serious, but caution should be taken.
- **High:** Fires ignite easily and spread quickly. Unattended brush fires and campfires are likely to escape. Fires may become serious if not attacked early.
- **Extreme:** Fires start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely. Every fire started has the potential to become large. Expect extreme, erratic behavior.

Currently, 42 counties in the state have been given the “high” designation, while the rest of the state remains under “moderate” risk levels. Additionally, the following 14 counties are under burn bans: Ashley, Carroll, Columbia, Faulkner, Fulton, Independence, Madison, Ouachita, Phillips, Searcy, Sharp, Union, Van Buren, and White. Burn bans primarily prohibit activities that involve an open flame. This includes fireworks, campfires, trash burning, open flame grilling, and prescribed or controlled burns.

The Forestry Division is asking those who see fires to report them by calling 1-800-468-8834 and to avoid flying drones in the area. When drones are present, those fighting the fires are unable to perform detection flights or fly single engine airtankers (SEATs) to drop water.

To learn more about burn bans in your county, find your local official’s contact information at arcounties.org/counties/.

The Arkansas Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the development and implementation of policies and programs for Arkansas agriculture, forestry, and natural resources conservation to keep its farmers and ranchers competitive in national and international markets while sustaining natural

resources and ensuring safe food, fiber, and forest products for the citizens of the state and nation. Visit agriculture.arkansas.gov/. The Arkansas Department of Agriculture offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.