

DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY

Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Wildlife and Fisheries Commission

Prohibition of Fire on LDWF Owned or Managed Lands

In accordance with R.S. 49:962 of the Administrative Procedure Act, and under authority of R.S. 56:6, R.S. 56:32, R.S. 56:115 and R.S. 56:702, and LAC 76:XIX.111.A.1 and LAC 76:XIX.111.G.1.c, the Secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries (LDWF) adopts the following Emergency Rule:

Louisiana is experiencing a period of severe drought and extreme heat, resulting in more than 440 wildfires since August 1, 2023, which continue to burn thousands of acres across the state. As a result, the Office of State Fire Marshal issued a Cease and Desist Order dated August 7, 2023 for all private burning. On August 11, 2023, Governor John Bel Edwards issued Proclamation 141 JBE 2023, declaring a statewide emergency, while authorizing and ordering all departments, commissions, boards, agencies and officers of the state to cooperate in actions the State may take in this event. On August 25, 2023, the Office of State Fire Marshal issued a statewide burn ban prohibiting all private burning with no limitations. Conditions conducive for wildfires are expected to continue through the Labor Day weekend and beyond, putting at risk the life, safety and welfare of the citizens of Louisiana as well as fish and wildlife resources. As a result, the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries executed a Declaration of Emergency dated September 1, 2023, prohibiting the ignition of fires of any kind upon LDWF owned or managed lands. On September 6, 2023, the Office of State Fire Marshal issued a news release stating that outdoor cooking can resume with safety measures in place, despite the continuation of the statewide burn ban.

Now, the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission hereby declare a statewide emergency regarding all LDWF Wildlife Management Areas, refuges, and conservation areas ("LDWF owned or managed lands"). As a matter of public safety and protection, and in order to protect the fish and wildlife resources of the State of Louisiana, all burning upon LDWF owned or managed lands is strictly prohibited. However, outdoor cooking is allowed using contained cooking equipment, designed for cooking purposes only, on a flame-resistant surface with a water source or fire extinguisher nearby. Failure to abide by this Declaration of Emergency shall constitute a Class 2 violation.

This Declaration of Emergency is effective September 7, 2023 at 5:00 PM, rescinding and replacing the Declaration of Emergency dated Friday, September 1, 2023. It remains in effect through Thursday, October 5, 2023, unless otherwise rescinded or modified by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries or the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission.

Robert E. Shadoin
Secretary