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Burn Ban Lifted

In a special meeting called for Friday, November 4, 2011, Ellis County Commissioners voted unanimously to lift the ban on outdoor burning, at least temporarily.

“Gentlemen, you saw the recommendation from the Texas Forest Service,” said County Judge Carol Bush. “Now is a good time to burn, but if we don’t get any more rain, we are going to have a problem again.”

As of 3:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 3, the Keetch-Byrum Drought Index (KBDI) stood at 578, with 500 being the usual “cut-off point” for enacting a ban. However, farmers in the area are anxious to move forward with burning that is necessary to crop production.

Citizens are reminded to observe warnings such as high wind days, fire alert days, or red flag days, and to use extreme caution if outdoor burning is necessary. For instance, those conducting a burn should be sure to provide a wide buffer zone around the fire, in which all combustible material has been removed. It is important to keep a good water source or other extinguishing agent handy, and never to leave a fire unattended for any reason. Additionally, wind speed should be between 5 and 10 mph for optimum safety, and citizens should exercise respect for their neighbors by ensuring that excessive smoke does not drift toward other homes and businesses.

“It is helpful to call the Sheriff’s dispatchers and your local fire department, also, to let them know that you are starting a burn,” Bush added.

Sheriff’s Dispatch can be reached at 972-937-6060 for non-emergency calls.

Citizens can be held liable for any property damage that results from their fire.

Bush directed her staff to ensure that consideration of a new ban on outdoor burning is included on the regular agenda for the November 14 meeting of the Court.