



# Douglas Forest Protective Association Fire Prevention Program

The Douglas Forest Protective Association takes great pride in its fire prevention program. In fact, every DFPA employee spends the majority of their time (over 80%) preventing human-caused fires. The following illustrates a breakdown of the different areas covered in our program.

## *School Programs*

Nearly 3,000 school children between the ages of five and nine are reached each Spring when DFPA visits each elementary school in the Douglas District. Our Public Information Officer develops a new and innovative educational program each year to keep fire prevention fresh and current. In 2004, the theme of the program focused on a campfire setting with marshmallows, songs and campfire stories. Children learned how to help their parents build campfires in safe areas and then fully extinguish the fire before leaving or going to bed. The story of Smokey Bear kept the children mesmerized and reinforced the dangers of playing with matches.

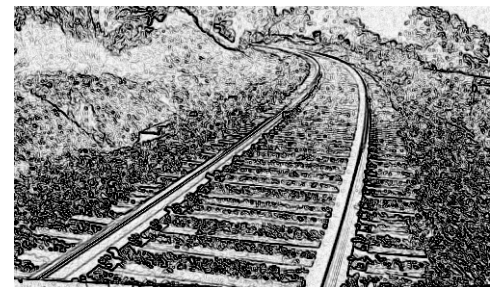


In May, DFPA participates in the Annual 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Forestry Tour. Older elementary students spend a day in the woods learning about forestry and wildlife. DFPA's role is to demonstrate the tools and techniques of wildland firefighting. Throughout the presentation, DFPA forest officers reiterate fire prevention/education measures as they point out that the easiest fire to put out is the one that never starts.

National Fire Prevention Week occurs each October. DFPA plays an active role within the Douglas County Fire Prevention Cooperative to teach fire safety to children and adults.

## *Railroads*

Douglas County is split down the middle with railroad tracks that primarily carry lumber products in and out of the area. Prior to fire season, DFPA works with the railroad industry on establishing right of way hazard abatement in an effort to prevent nearby vegetation from igniting. We also require that locomotive smoke stacks are equipped with approved spark arresters. The railroad is also required to follow specified fire season requirements that are tied to the Industrial Fire Precaution Level System. One such requirement is that locomotives must be followed by water cars between 10:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. during IFPL 2 or higher.



## ***Industrial Fire***



DFPA's Industrial Fire Program is geared towards working with landowners and operators to prevent operator-related fires. This program has been very effective over the years as the number of fires and acres burned has decreased over time. Operator meetings are held biannually in three different locations to inform industrial workers of law changes and revisit fire season requirements and prevention measures. Our Industrial Fire Forester works directly with the timber industry to assure that fire season requirements are met and that fire prevention measures are followed throughout the course of the fire season. DFPA forest officers pitch in to conduct inspections during routine patrols. In total, the Industrial Fire Forester and 16 forest officers conduct an average of 530 inspections each summer. "The Hot Sheet" is a two-page publication that focuses on current issues facing operators encountered during fire season. The educational newsletter is produced monthly (4 issues) during fire season. One such area of concern is the use of "hot" saws and their capability of sparking a fire.

## ***General Public***

The majority of the general public is reached through the media. The Association feels fortunate to have a strong working relationship with the regional newspaper as well as the many radio and television stations in the area. Besides fire coverage, these informational outlets provide in-depth editorials, public service advertising, and daily fire danger updates.



Other events that draw an abundance of people where we are able to spread the fire prevention message include the Douglas County Fair, Sportsman and Outdoor Show, Home Show, Graffiti Parade, Rodeo Parade and other community festivals and events.

DFPA's Burning Program is a tremendous fire prevention tool. Rural Douglas County residents are required to obtain a written burn permit after an on-site inspection of the incinerator or debris pile. This face-to-face contact is invaluable. It gives us the opportunity to discuss fire prevention measures as well as "defensible" or "survivable" space around homes and other structures. The mere presence of DFPA in these rural areas raises awareness and ultimately prevents human-caused fires. This is also true for our Pasture Burning Program for local ranchers and farmers. Annual pasture burning rids the county of unwanted weed and brush growth as well as insects and plant diseases, thereby promoting healthy and productive livestock grazing lands. It also eliminates these fuel loads that can turn small fires into large, out of control fires.



When fire season conditions become more severe, DFPA imposes a Regulated Use Closure for the general public. Typically, the closure prohibits smoking, off-road driving and campfires in wildland areas. Campfires are generally allowed in DFPA approved campgrounds unless extreme fire danger prohibits them entirely. Other restrictions may include non-industrial power saw use, mowing dry grass, fireworks and exploding targets, and welding or cutting of metal.

Our extensive sign program is another means of alerting the public during fire season. Signs strategically placed throughout the district on county roads include but are not limited to: Regulated Use Closure; No Smoking; No Campfires; Burning Permits Required.