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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Wildfire Preparedness is Year-Round: Don't Be Fooled, Prepare Now

Santa Fe, N.M. – The dry winter and spring combined with strong winds bring wildfire season to many parts of New Mexico already. To help communities throughout the state, the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department Forestry Division is working with local, state, federal, and tribal partners and non-governmental organizations to bring an April message to New Mexicans for the 2021 wildfire preparedness campaign: Don't be fooled, prepare for wildfire.

With the increasing fire danger bringing the threat of flames and embers to homes and property, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) provides us with guidance on preparing a [Home Ignition Zone](#). After starting with the home, move into the landscaped portion of your property, or Intermediate Zone. The Intermediate Zone is approximately 5-30 feet from your home, where the objective is to reduce the intensity of the fire through landscaping or "hardscaping."

- Create breaks in vegetation with driveways, walkways/paths, and patios. When using concrete, stone, gravel, or other non-combustible materials, this is known as "hardscaping."
- Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks.
- Keep lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches.
- Remove ladder fuels (vegetation under trees) so a surface fire cannot reach the crowns. Prune trees up to six to ten feet from the ground; for shorter trees do not exceed 1/3 of the overall tree height.
- Space trees to have a minimum of 18 feet between crowns with the distance increasing with the percentage of slope.
- Tree placement should be planned to ensure the mature canopy is no closer than ten feet to the edge of a structure.

- Tree and shrubs in this zone should be limited to small clusters of a few each to break up the continuity of the vegetation across the landscape.

Preventing ignitions that can lead to wildfires is as important as improving your Home Ignition Zone. Chainsaws, mowers, and other equipment can overheat or spark. Using fire to clear acequias or burn debris can be risky in the wrong weather conditions. To prevent causing a fire:

- Ensure your equipment is in good working order.
- Check the weather before beginning work. Go to www.weather.gov or watch your local news weather report to find out if there is a [Red Flag Warning](#) forecasted that indicates critical fire conditions exist.
- Have the proper tools such as a shovel, fire extinguisher, and water readily available.
- Ensure you have a burn permit, when required, and stay until the fire is out.

Finally, if you are not prepared or the weather conditions will be windy and dry, consider doing the work when the weather poses less of a fire risk. For instance, choose a time of day such as the early morning when temperatures are lower, humidity is higher, and winds are calmer.

The [Forestry Division](#) is working with the Santa Fe, Cibola and Carson National Forests, Forest Stewards Guild, Fire Adapted NM, and Bureau of Land Management to build a 2021 wildfire preparedness calendar to share the message across multiple platforms, including social media, webinars, and community events. Bookmark the wildfire preparedness webpage to follow the campaign throughout the year. If you have missed the tips and messages before this month, you can get caught up by going to the [Wildfire Preparedness Is Year-Round](#) site at FACNM.org.

A graphic titled "Wildfire Preparedness Is Year-Round" and "Don't Be Fooled". It features a purple circle on the left with a photo of a wildfire. The main text explains the Intermediate Zone (5 to 30 feet from home) and lists four preparation tips, each with a checkmark icon.

Wildfire Preparedness Is Year-Round

Don't Be Fooled

The Intermediate Zone is the landscaped portion of your property that is approximately 5 to 30 feet from your home.

- ✓ Create breaks in vegetation with driveways, walkways/paths, and patios.
- ✓ Clear vegetation from under large stationary propane tanks.
- ✓ Remove vegetation under trees. Space trees out to have a minimum of 18 feet between the tops.
- ✓ Limit shrubs to small clusters to break up the continuity of the vegetation across the landscape.



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The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.

<http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us>