



**Douglas A. Ducey**  
Governor

# Office of the State Forester

## Arizona State Forestry



**Jeff Whitney**  
State Forester

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According to Arizona State Forester Jeff Whitney, this year's wildfire season has the potential to be severe. "Compared to the first quarter of last year, 2016 is already shaping up to be a significant year for wildland fire activity," said State Forester Jeff Whitney. "If the hot and dry conditions persist, significant wildland fires will become more likely."

According to the Department of Forestry and Fire Management, in the first quarter of 2015 147 fires burned 453 acres of Arizona land. In the first quarter of 2016 we have had 293 fires that have burned 21,383 acres.

In an average year Arizona experiences about 2,100 wildland fires that burn just over 300,000 acres. In 2014 and 2015 the state experienced relatively mild fire seasons with just over 158,493 acres burned in 2015. Mild fire seasons combined with above average monsoon rainfall have left Arizona with an abundance of fuels in the state's forests, woodlands, and deserts and a tremendous potential for wildland fires.

Arizona's fire season usually runs from late May through the onset of the monsoon season. This year, hot and dry weather in February and March will likely mean an early start to this year's wildland fire season.

According to State Forester Whitney, "our federally owned forests and woodlands are in desperate need of thinning and restoration work; that fact, coupled with our normal Arizona weather, is a recipe for wildland fire."

The State Forester is the Director of the former Arizona Forestry Division, now known as the Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management (DFFM)-the state agency responsible for wildfire suppression on 10.2 million acres of State Trust land and 12 million acres of private property in unincorporated areas of the state. In addition to its own professional firefighting staff, DFFM:

- employs 12 Department of Corrections Wildfire Crews,
- partners with the Department of Public Safety to provide air support for fire suppression efforts,
- engages in cooperative agreements with local fire districts giving DFFM access to 2,600 local firefighters and their equipment, and
- has access to substantial national resources.

"The Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management along with our local, county, tribal, and federal partners are prepared to protect the citizens and communities of Arizona from wildland fire," said State Forester Whitney. "Our agency's core values are duty, respect, and integrity and that is how we intend to serve the people of Arizona and Governor Ducey."