

**THE-MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release:

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**PARK POLICE REMIND PARK PATRONS ABOUT BAN ON OPEN AIR BURNING
AND CHARCOAL GRILLS**

SILVER SPRING, MD – Due to the dry weather, the Maryland-National Capital Park Police remind park patrons that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) enacted a statutory statewide open-air burning ban, effective in all Maryland counties except Garrett County. The ban is in effect throughout the park system and Commission facilities in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

Burning leaves, lighting campfires and using charcoal grills is strictly prohibited as is lighting any fire where any material is burned in the open or in a receptacle, even on private property. Propane grills are excluded from the ban.

Park patrons are asked to comply with the ban and report any violations. Under current conditions even a discarded cigarette can ignite a brush fire. The Park Police have documented over 25 non-arson brush fires in Montgomery County alone since January 1, 2006.

The ban will remain in effect until the Maryland Forest Service determines sufficient precipitation has fallen to reduce the threat of wildfires statewide. Current conditions have led to nearly triple the average number of wildfires statewide for March. Since March 1, the Maryland Forest Service has responded to more than 360 wildfires, nearly triple the 20-year average of 130 wildfires for the month. March was the driest month on record since 1910.

The Park Police will seek voluntary compliance; however, the following fines are applicable: citation is \$125. Maximum first offense is \$500; second offense is \$1,000 and/or one year in jail.

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