



Idaho Department of Fish and Game NEWS RELEASE

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Fire restrictions and closures lifting, but hunters should stay informed

Cooler weather and precipitation, including snowstorms in the Central Idaho mountains, have slowed fire activity and allowed land agencies to lift some restrictions, and the Forest Service expects to lift more by the weekend.

But all lands have not reopened and hunters should check before heading to their hunting spots.

Hunters should also note that there are two basic actions taking place by land management agencies. First, fire restrictions are being lifted, which apply to campfires, barbecues, gas engines and other flame-producing devices. Cooler weather has allowed land management agencies to lift most fire restrictions, but hunters should double check if they are camping and want a campfire.

The second action is lifting land closures, and agencies are allowing people to return to many areas adjacent to fires while keeping the areas near the fires closed to public access.

Hunters can see fire activity and get information about access closures and campfire restrictions at <http://fishandgame.idaho.gov/fire>. Fire closure maps will be updated as new information arrives, but there may be some lag time while maps are redrawn.

Some of the most significant reductions in area closures are in the Forest Service's Coeur d'Alene River and St. Joe Ranger Districts.

“The weather has finally brought some rain and cooler temperatures, which means fires are less likely to spread aggressively,” said Mary Farnsworth, Forest Supervisor. “Under these conditions

fires are more manageable and we are able to reduce the size of emergency closure areas while still providing an adequate buffer for public safety.”

Nez Perce/Clearwater National Forest has also lifted some area closures in the Red River area. A closure associated with the Red River Complex south and east of Red River was lifted and replaced with a smaller closure south and east of Red River. The closure is roughly bounded by the Magruder Road 468 on the north and the Salmon River on the south.

Areas north and east of Riggins and south of Grangeville are closed due to the Teepee Fire, as well as several key roads into the area.

With area closures lifting, hunters should have access to most areas. But hunters who bought elk tags in five zones have until Sept. 11 to decide if they want to keep their tags, exchange them for a different elk tag, or turn in their tags for a receipt they can redeem for another tag later this year. Tags can only be exchanged at regional offices, but hunters choosing the receipt option can redeem it for a tag this year only at any Fish and Game license vendor at no cost.

Elk tags eligible are:

- Panhandle Zone A and B tags.
- Lolo Zone A tags
- Dworshak Zone A and B tags
- Elk City Zone A and B tags.
- McCall Zone A tag.

All other elk hunters have the option of exchanging controlled-hunt tags or general season tags, but it must be done before the season for that tag begins. All exchanges must be done at Fish and Game regional offices.