



Press Release

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Learn Before You Burn

Grand Traverse County, MI (July 12, 2017) - For many residents and visitors, summer in Northern Michigan is their favorite time of the year. The season smells like grass clippings, bug spray, sunscreen, and campfire and provides the perfect backdrop for adventure enthusiasts to hike, fish, camp, and roast a golden s'more.

Before you build that bonfire, however, the Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) of Northwest Lower Michigan reminds residents and visitors of Grand Traverse County that state and local laws prohibit open burning of many materials.

Open burning is the burning of materials or debris by which smoke and emissions are released directly into the air, rather than through a chimney and/or the combustion of solid waste is not adequately controlled. State law does not allow the open burning of household trash that contains plastic, rubber, foam, chemically treated wood, textiles, electronics, chemicals or hazardous materials. Additionally, commercial and construction waste, pressure-treated lumber, structures slated for demolition, unwanted furniture, old appliances and scrap tires are not allowed to be openly burned in Michigan.

Open burning pollutes the air and nearby soil and water, aggravates respiratory health conditions, and releases extremely toxic chemicals (such as arsenic) directly into the environment. Repeated burning results in future exposures for wildlife, potentially increased cancer risk in humans, and health and safety risks to neighbors within a few hundred feet of an open burn.

The burning of trees, logs, brush, and stumps may be allowed by first obtaining a burn permit. Many burn permits simply require a short phone call with a DNR or local municipality representative. Visit www.michigan.gov/burnpermit for more information and to determine who and when a burn permit is needed.

For assistance learning how to recycle or properly dispose of unwanted items, call the RecycleSmart hotline 231-941-9555 or use the Take-it-Back Directory on the recyclesmart.info website.

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