

Subject: Smoke Condition - Health Advisory / Wildfire Risk Update

All,

As I am sure you are aware, there is an ongoing smoke condition in the County. At this time it appears that all reported smoke/ash/soot conditions are related to the Quebec Wildfires. There are no ongoing structure or brush fires in Cayuga County that would be contributing to these conditions. Sharing the information below with you all as you respond to potential inquiries from the Public or reports of “Smoke in the area”.

Current reports indicate that over 175,000 hectares (roughly 425,000 acres) are currently involved or burned with over 10,000 people being evacuated from two separate regions in Quebec.

Given the nature of smoke and its impact on health, the Health Department has released the attached Air Quality Alert related to best practices during these types of conditions. That would include staying indoors and avoiding prolonged or strenuous activities outdoors. Exposure to this kind of pollution can cause inflammation and weaken the immune system, particularly when lungs are penetrated and particles enter the bloodstream. There may be adverse effects and increased risk of asthma, lung cancer or other chronic lung diseases, particularly in vulnerable groups like older people, pregnant people, infants and children.

Be mindful of the effects it may have on your volunteers when working extended incidents.

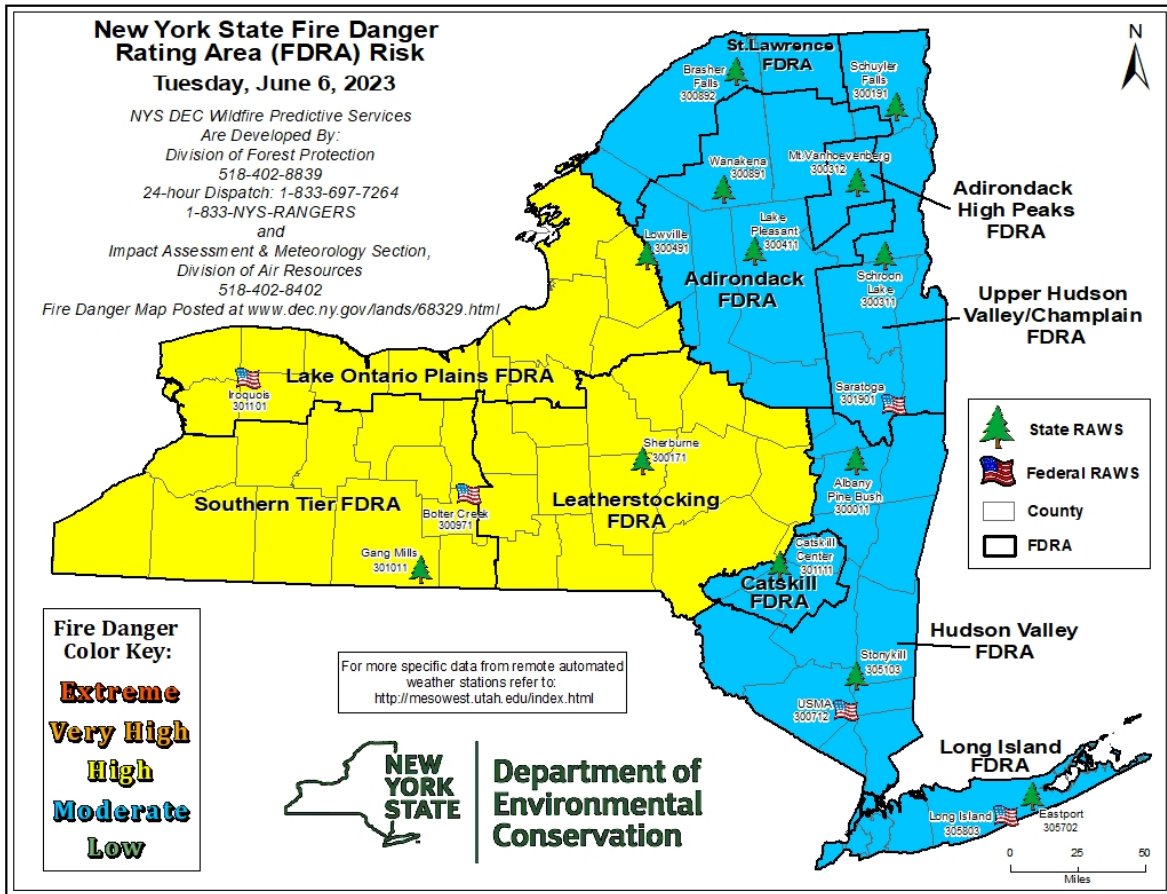
Consistent monitoring, with hourly updates, can be located on the NYS DEC Website.

https://www.dec.ny.gov/cfmx/extapps/aqi/aqi_forecast.cfm?CFID=50026980&CFTOKEN=83920273&jsessionid=F8A9A377CB8ACBE629A6A85EFF18FC9D.+p20

The National Weather Service – Buffalo Office has advised that tomorrow the smoke conditions will be substantially worse as a cold front arrives. This weather will bring the smoke down in elevation making it more apparent and visible, as well as noticeable in smell. Northwest winds will continue Wednesday-Thursday-Friday), then direction will flip from west to even south-southwest over the weekend along with increasing chances for rain Sunday-Monday which should abate things. That said, as long as the Quebec fires are burning, northerly winds could cause smoke to revisit in the future.

While a lesser concern of fire spread from ash over the area, all should note that the region is currently at a “HIGH” fire danger rating with lack of recent rainfall.

Fire Danger Map



When in a High rating, All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from most causes. Unattended brush and campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. High-intensity burning may develop on slopes or in concentrations of fine fuels. Fires may become serious and their control difficult unless they are attacked successfully while small.

Please bear this in mind when responding to potential brush fires in your districts.

The Office of Emergency Services will continue to monitor the situation and work in conjunction with the Health Department in future alerts.

Thank you,

Riley Shurtleff

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