

Public encouraged to take action to prevent wildfires

Press release

Natural England calls for members of the public to take action to prevent wildfires in the Yorkshire area



Devastated peat and trees damaged from wildfires at Hatfield Moors, South Yorkshire, in 2020

- Natural England calls for members of the public to take action to prevent wildfires in the Yorkshire area
- People should follow the Countryside Code, avoid using barbecues and extinguish cigarettes responsibly
- Humberhead Peatlands, England's largest raised bog wilderness, is particularly vulnerable to wildfires

Natural England is partnering with Fire and Rescue Services in Yorkshire to raise awareness of wildfires ahead of the spring and summer period, where higher temperatures and dry weather increases the risks.

Wildfires have a devastating impact on local landscapes, wildlife and air quality, and with the Easter holidays just around the corner the risk to nature reserves like the Humberhead Peatlands and Marsden Moors will increase unless careful steps are followed to protect the environment.

In 2020, Hatfield Moors in South Yorkshire was devastated by a visitor-related wildfire that injured wildlife and cost emergency services hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Paul Duncan, Yorkshire Area Director for Natural England said:

We want people to enjoy their time responsibly when out on our beautiful moors by taking steps to protect our precious wildlife.

By following the Countryside Code, we can all do our bit to protect nature and prevent fires. Do not light fires, avoid using barbecues on moorland and dispose of cigarettes and bottles carefully – glass can cause sun rays to reflect on dry grass and start a fire.

If you see flames, retreat to a safe place and dial 999.

By following these simple rules we can ensure that our moorlands, including the ancient bogs of Thorne and Hatfield Moors, are protected.

West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service Wildfire Lead Officer, Richard Hawley, said:

As the days get longer and we all get to enjoy some long-awaited sunshine, we want to stress the seriousness and importance of the public spaces protection orders (PSPOs) in place in rural districts across the region which include a ban on any type of fire on moorland fire, BBQs or fireworks.

When our crews are called to these incidents, there is not only a high financial cost, but they are taken away from protecting our communities in other areas.

Working with the National Trust and other partners, our #BeMoorAware campaign was launched last year to try and prevent dangerous fires in our beautiful countryside. If you see a fire or naked flame of any kind, including someone using a BBQ on moorland – call 999 and ask for FIRE.

A spokesperson for the Humberside and South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Services said:

Wildfires are a risk to life and property while causing extensive environmental damage and diverting Fire and Rescue Service resources away from where they are most needed – protecting and serving the community.

If visiting the countryside, people should [follow the Countryside Code](#).

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