

The public is asked to use caution during these hot, dry times. Just because a burn permit is issued does not mean it can be used—if a “red flag warning” is issued, a burn permit becomes void.

By Jan Rahn

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Hot, dry weather patterns across the area for the past several weeks are a concern to farmers, ranchers and fire department personnel.

Devastating grassland fires are a daily threat. The National Weather Service issued another “red flag warning” on Monday when the temperature was predicted to be 102 degrees.

Tuesday’s high was expected to be 106 degrees.

According to Grant Fire Chief Don Softley, so far, there have been between 40-50 red flag warnings issued this year. Warnings during a typical year could number between 20-30, and that would be clear through the month of July, he said.

In February alone, there were up to 20 issued.

The public can do their part to prevent wild-fires—be careful and stay alert. Softley points out that even though a burn permit might be issued, if the National Weather Service issues a “red flag warning” on the day of intended burn, the permit becomes void.

A 10 mph wind is the maximum allowed for burning in this area, said Softley, even though the state allows 15 mph. Anything higher than that negates a permit. But, again, if a “red flag warning” is issued, any permit is invalid.

Red Flag Warning

A red flag warning issued by the National Weather Service means, “Critical fire weather conditions are either occurring now or will shortly. Strong winds, low relative humidity and warm temperatures will create explosive fire growth potential.”