

Hot, dry conditions increase risk of wildfires in Texas

By Shelby Shank
TFB Field Editor

High temperatures and dry conditions persist throughout the Lone Star State, increasing the risk of wildfire danger.

As of mid-August, 105 counties were under a burn ban.

Gov. Greg Abbott deployed state firefighting resources across Texas as wildfire threats increase throughout the state.

“Texas stands ready to support local officials and communities throughout our great state as the threat of wildfire activity increases in the coming days,” Abbott said.

“Texas is deploying more than 200 personnel including firefighters and support staff, as well as tactical resources like fire engines, all-terrain vehicles and bulldozers to provide on-the-ground assistance.”

The Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) activated various state firefighting resources to support wildfire response operations. These include Texas A&M Forest Service, Texas National Guard and Texas Department of State Health Services’ Texas Emergency Medical Task Force.

According to the Texas A&M Forest Service, wildfire activity is expected to increase in the northern and western regions of the state due to dry vegetation and multiple days of triple digit temperatures.

“Due to dry vegetation and high temperatures, Texans are urged to limit any activities that may cause a spark and to take all necessary precautions to keep their families and their loved ones safe,” Abbott said.

In recent weeks, more than 35 wildfires have burned over 3,000 acres across the state.

Texans are encouraged to exercise caution and limit any activities that cause sparks, follow instructions from local officials, make an emergency plan and keep emergency

supplies readily available.

Homeowners are advised to keep a well-maintained landscape free of debris and keep fire extinguishers available.

Farmers and ranchers are carefully monitoring their crops and livestock as dry weather and high temperatures continue.

They can create and maintain fireguards around pastures and fields in preparation of wildfire danger. The Texas A&M Forest Service recommends keeping barns and other structures free of trash and combustible materials.

Other prevention tips include parking in designated spaces and avoid driving or parking on dry grass where the heat from a vehicle can spark a fire.

For more information on wildfire tips and safety, Texans can visit TexasReady.gov and tfsweb.tamu.edu.

View the list of counties under a burn ban at tfsweb.tamu.edu/TexasBurnBans.

Texas Harvest mobile app gets a new name

On Aug. 15, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department launched an updated version of the official mobile app used by hunters and anglers across the state for harvest reporting, electronic onsite registration, digital license display, and more.

Formerly named My Texas Hunt Harvest, the mobile app has an updated look and a new name, Texas Hunt & Fish, but will have all the same great features users are familiar with from the previous version of the app.

With the Texas Hunt & Fish mobile app hunters and anglers can satisfy mandatory reporting requirements for wild turkey, white-tailed deer and alligator gar harvest, as well as complete electronic on-site registration for most public hunting sites accessed when using the Annual Public Hunt (APH) Permit. Fully

digital license holders must use the Texas Hunt & Fish app to execute digital tags for deer, turkey, oversized red drum and spotted seatrout.

One of the newest features, launched during the 2023-24 hunting season, is the app’s ability to show Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) zones relative to the hunter’s location if they have the location services turned on.

A full list of features includes: Online and offline functionality – use the app regardless of data service once it has been installed and your account is connected.

Connect and display your hunting and fishing license (note that paper license holders must still carry physical tags when pursuing tagged species)

Perform mandatory hunt harvest reporting for wild turkey, white-tailed deer, and alligator gar

Digitally tag harvested game and fish (requires purchase of an appropriate digital hunting and/or fishing license)

Track and view your harvest history

Perform electronic onsite registration (eOSR) for many public hunt areas

Download maps of many public hunt areas for use with or without data service

View CWD Zone boundaries and, with location service enabled, determine your position in relation to the nearest zone

Reportar su cosecha en español o en inglés — report your harvest in English or Spanish

Users not wishing to use the app can complete mandatory harvest reporting online.

Users that already have the old version of the app downloaded on their devices will need to update to the new version to get all the latest features and to ensure proper app functionality.

Get the free Texas Hunt & Fish app in Apple and Google

Play stores (links to download also available at tpwd.texas.gov/huntandfish).

He wanted to be a cowboy

By Jeff Tietz

[Editor’s Note: This article was originally published in October 2009 for Texas Co-op Power.]

“Dad tried to make a cowboy outta me, but I never had the natural talent it took,” legendary Western writer Elmer Kelton told me recently at his home in San Angelo. “I just wasn’t as good at it as I oughta been. I wanted to be a cowboy, but it just wasn’t there. One thing was I was nearsighted and it took a long time to figure that out, so I’d go out and couldn’t see the men on either side of me and fall behind and mess up the drive.”

Kelton’s father, Buck Kelton, was the foreman of the McElroy Ranch, a 230-square-mile spread overlapping Upton and Crane counties in West Texas. When it came to cowboying, Buck sometimes said his son was “as slow as the seven-year itch.”

“That gave me an inferiority complex, for sure,” Kelton said. “I was always out there trying, with the cowboys who were so adept at what they did, and my younger brothers coming along—they were all better hands than me. I always felt a little out of place wherever I was. When I was with the cowboys I wasn’t at their level, and in town I was regarded as a cowboy, not a town boy.”

Soon after he discovered he was nearsighted, tuberculosis confined Kelton to bed for almost a year. He’d always been a “bookish kid”—“Very often I beat the girls at spelling bees,” he said—but while ill, his bookishness flourished.

“That inferiority complex pushed me further toward the creative work,” he says. He read and drew and made up stories and sketched mock-ups of newspapers on notebook paper, crafting news columns and

headlines about ranch affairs.

He returned to ranch work after he got well, but “the die had already been cast to some degree,” he says. “There was just a natural weaning process that went on.” He would become a cowboy writer, he realized, and not a cowboy. “But writing seemed kind of a sissy thing,” he said, “so I didn’t boast about it.”

Kelton lives with his wife, Ann, an Austrian whom he met in Ebensee, Austria, while serving in World War II in the U.S. Army, in a brick, ranch-style home on a quiet street near the groomed campus of Angelo State University. They have supplied their thick-carpeted living room with prints of Western scenes, bronze statuettes of cowboys on horseback and porcelain Austrian villagers in holiday costume.

“It’s like a museum,” Kelton said, “and we’re gettin’ to be museum pieces.”

Elmer Kelton is 83 and quiet-looking. He is neither tall nor wide. He wears glasses with large, round lenses and favors plain, snap-button shirts. His conversation is relaxed.

Kelton has almost finished his 51st novel, Other Men’s Horses, which is scheduled for publication this fall. Several of his books, including the novels The Time It Never Rained and The Day the Cowboys Quit, are considered classics of the genre and notable works in American fiction.

Kelton has won just about every Western writing award there is, including seven Spur Awards from the Western Writers of America, which in 1995 named him the greatest Western author of all time. The annual Spur Award represents the finest in literature about the American West. Four of Kelton’s books have won the Western Heritage Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame.

In his life and work, Kelton has stayed close to his original vision of himself, to the particular cowboy lifestyle into which he was born but not fully bred.

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ENTERPRISE Serving Coke County (325) 462-4800 (ISSN 0756-192X) Vol. 132, No. 27 Friday, January 10, 2020

Coke County Water Supply Corporation awarded grant
The Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) has awarded a grant to the Coke County Water Supply Corporation to help fund the construction of a new water treatment plant. The grant is for \$500,000 and will be used to purchase equipment and materials for the plant. The plant is expected to be completed in late 2020.

SPECIAL OIL & GAS SECTION
Mesa Coke County covers over 928 square miles on the Edwards Plateau in west central Texas. The county was founded in 1889 and named for Richard Coke, the 17th governor of Texas. As of the 2010 census, its population was 3,326.

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Saluting the Robert Lee High School Class of 2020
Recent graduates of the Robert Lee High School Class of 2020 are: [List of names and photos]

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Supplement to THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE November 6, 2020

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Recent graduates of the Blackwell High School Class of 2020 are: [List of names and photos]

Santa Letters Inside
We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy & Prosperous New Year!
WEEK AT A GLANCE: [Calendar grid for the week of Dec 21-27, 2019]

Confirmed Cases of Covid-19 in Texas
[Map of Texas showing confirmed cases of Covid-19 by county]