

Gorham man charged with violating burning ban

Both Ontario and Wayne counties have outlawed outdoor fires — with the exception of contained cooking fires — until the dry spell ends.

By **HILARY SMITH**

Messenger Post Staff

Brush fires continued Thursday despite a ban in Ontario and Wayne counties on

outdoor open burning that went into effect on Tuesday, in response to dry conditions and more than 40 brush and grass fires in a span of five days.

Firefighters responded to seven brush fires Wednesday and six Thursday in fire districts across Ontario County.

Yesterday, a Gorham man — James L. Haight, 66, of 3902 County Road 17 — was charged with open burning after he allegedly started an uncontained fire on his property. The charge is a misdemeanor with a maximum penalty of up to

90 days in jail or a \$500 fine. The ban limits outdoor fires to those used for cooking, and requires them to be contained in a fireplace, enclosed grill or cooking pit. Fire extinguishers, water barrels, sand or garden hoses must be on hand as well.

Wayne County issued a similar ban this week.

Ontario County Board of Supervisors Chairman Ted Fafinski, who issued the ban in Ontario County, said it will expire Sunday but could be canceled if it rains or extended if dry conditions continue.

The brush fire epidemic has been a first-hand education for conservation students at Finger Lakes Community College. Aptly timed, tonight marks the start of the college conservation department's two-weekend wildland fire-suppression certification course. Students will tackle such time-relevant topics as how wildfires start, how they spread and how to fight them.

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