Keep it safe this summer

It hasn't been much of a spring, but most of us are willing to take the miserable weather in exchange for what's happening in other parts of the country.

Yes, we've seen a few touch-downs of tornadoes here in Iron County and there's even been a few flood watches over the years. Basically, we here have been blessed with weather that we can just gripe and complain about. We haven't had to evacuate our homes en masse to safeguard our lives.

But, as we are all aware, we live in the middle of some of the most beautiful scenic areas found on this planet and that, of course, includes the great Northwoods that surrounds us.

As we've seen on television and the Internet, wild fires have all the deadly force of any other natural disaster… floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, cyclones, dust storms, etc.

As we get organized for another "summer" season here at home and in the U.P., we need to be reminded that our outdoor living space needs the same careful consideration as we would take with our indoor living space.

Whether we're out camping for a quick overnight stay, or setting up camp for the summer, we need to make sure camp fires are out and will stay out long after we've left the area.

Mother Nature doesn't need any competition from any us when it comes to a wildfire. She's has a lot of fire power at her disposal any time there's a lightning strike.

The great outdoors is one of the major reasons people love living here. The abundance of lakes, rivers and streams close at hand makes living here a vacation spot.

The recent rains have kept our wooded areas moist and the danger low from wildfires, but when that dry season hits, and we know that it will, we need to make sure we're doing all we can to keep our forests, and the creatures that call them home, as safe as we would want our own homes to be.

--Allyce Westphal