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SMOKEY BEAR CELEBRATING 65TH BIRTHDAY WITH FISHER CATS
Birthday Party Scheduled for this Sunday, August 9, at Merchantsauto.com Stadium

Manchester, NH– The **New Hampshire Fisher Cats**, Double-A affiliate of the Toronto Blue Jays, along with the **NH Division of Forests and Lands**, Forest Protection Bureau, today announced that they will be teaming up to celebrate **Smokey Bear's 65th birthday** and the centennial anniversary of the NH Division of Forests and Lands this **Sunday, August 9**, at Merchantsauto.com Stadium when the Fisher Cats host the Altoona Curve at 1:05pm. Bring the family and enjoy an action-packed day in celebration of Smokey Bear's birthday, and honor the NH Division of Forests and Land's century of stewardship for New Hampshire's forests.

Since his "birth" on August 9, 1944, Smokey Bear has become a recognized symbol of conservation and protection for America's forest resources. His message about wildfire prevention has helped to reduce the number of acres burned annually by wildfires, from about 22 million in 1944 to an average of 7 million today. However, wildfire prevention remains one of the most critical environmental issues affecting our country.

"We are pleased that an American icon such as Smokey Bear has chosen to celebrate his momentous 65th birthday with us this Sunday, and we join the NH Division of Forest and Lands in spreading the important message of forest fire prevention," said **Rick Brenner**, President/General Manager, New Hampshire Fisher Cats.

Smokey Bear is the center of the longest-running public service advertising (PSA) campaign in U.S. history. Since 1944, he has been communicating his well-known message, "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires." In 2001, the term 'Wildfires' was introduced to the campaign to include all unwanted, unplanned fires occurring in natural areas such as grass or brush fires. The Smokey Bear campaign remains a critical tool to educate both children and adults about the importance of being responsible with fire. While many Americans believe that lightning starts most wildfires, on average, 9 out of 10 wildfires nationwide are caused by people. A principle cause is the careless use of fire and failure to comply with laws and rules enacted to protect our forests and homes located in the wildland urban interface.

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“Smokey Bear is the nation’s symbol for wildfire prevention and his important message has been communicated to generations of Americans during the past 65 years,” said **Helene Cleveland**, Fire Prevention Program Manager, U.S. Forest Service. “Smokey’s enduring message is as critical today as it was when he was introduced in 1944, and I am confident that the national campaign and the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands efforts on the ground will continue to raise awareness about wildfire prevention issues.”

“Wildfire prevention is everyone’s responsibility,” said **Doug Miner**, a Forest Ranger with the NH Division of Forests and Lands. “He encourages everyone to be careful with the use of fire and to contact your local fire department or Forest Fire Warden regarding laws, rules and permitting requirements. Help Smokey and New Hampshire’s Forest Rangers prevent Wildfires.”

The New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands is part of the Department of Resources and Economic Development and promotes the values provided by trees and forests. To learn more about the Division of Forests and Lands, visit www.nhdf.org or call **(603) 271-2214**.

The Fisher Cats open a four-game series tonight at Merchantsauto.com Stadium against the New Britain Rock Cats at 7:05pm. Fans can play **USA Subs Baseball Bingo**, and it will be the **Celebration of the Negro Leagues**, with former Boston Red Sox pitcher Dennis “Oil Can” Boyd, courtesy of the **Ted Williams Museum**, and award-winning author Larry Tye signing autographs and discussing Tye’s new book *Satchel* in the **Samuel Adams Bar & Grill** from 5:00pm-6:00pm. For tickets, visit www.nhfishercats.com or call **(603) 641-2005**.

-Fisher Cats-