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## 901 Wanted

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## LETTERS

Continued from page 2

The following day I returned to the Forest Service and asked a very simple question: When the forests are bone dry, the temps are in the 90s, the wind is blowing hard and the campgrounds are packed full of people, why do we still allow campfires? The surprising answer was that there has never been a wildfire caused by a “designated” campfire, so they see no reason to change policy.

Last Friday I looked at the weather report. There is a Fire Weather Watch stating possible thunderstorms coupled with high winds and almost zero precipitation.

Wondering what the fire department’s regulations are around burning, I called the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District. Turns out theirs are very similar to those of the USFS. Fires are still allowed in designated areas if they are a certain size and distance from structures. Apparently these types of fires have also never gotten out of control.

I fully appreciate the agencies that protect us from many dangers, sometimes putting their very lives on the line. But I don’t agree with their assumptions that people are always going to make good choices about something as risky and unpredictable as fire. Human error has historically proven to be at the root of many disasters. So far we have been very lucky in Central Oregon.

Why not use a similar approach to designated fires, as with prescribed fires, and say “No Fires” unless “precise weather conditions allow.”

This policy leaves no room for misinterpretation, poor judgment or insufficient monitoring. It would most certainly include July and August, our hottest months — a small price to pay for avoiding (as best we can) the very real possibility of even more massively destructive wildfires.

With all that is at stake now, in the era of catastrophic fires we cannot afford to still be at the “it won’t happen here cause it never has” stage. Better safe than sorry!

Susan Prince

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## Fair success...



PHOTO BY PAM MITCHELL

Graduating seniors of the Cloverdale Livestock Club Noah Keeton, Sam Mitchell, Ethan Kennedy, Serena Salisbury, Ashley Hunt and Sydney Salomone have all been long-time participants in the Deschutes County Fair. All are moving on to post-graduation endeavors with the experience of responsibility and dedication.

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