

FIRE DANGER: Warm temperatures will dry out fuels

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the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Several factors are used to determine the end of fire season, including weather and fuel moisture. Ignoring the regulations in place could be very dangerous.

Sisters Fire Chief Johnson said, “We are still in fire season and weather forecasts are calling for a couple weeks of warm and dry conditions.”

Late summer and early fall can be dangerous wild-fire seasons in Sisters Country. On September 9, 2012, the Pole Creek Fire started just west of Sisters. The fire eventually burned over 26,000 acres and filled Sisters with dense smoke for most of September.

In recent years, the Central Oregon Fire Chief’s Association has announced the end of fire season and the start of residential open debris burning around November 1. The typical season runs about six months and concludes generally around Central Oregon’s scheduled Fire Free Days. Fire Free is an annual local program where residents can take their yard debris to local landfill stations for free drop-off.

ODF notes that, as part of a regulated-use closure, campfires are not allowed on lands protected by ODF unless in a designated location. With archery season beginning Saturday, hunters should know the current restrictions before heading to their favorite hunting spot.

Hunters should be prepared for cool nighttime conditions and remember that warming fires are prohibited.

Activities below are restricted. Additional restrictions can be accessed at www.Oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Restrictions.aspx.

- Possession of the following firefighting equipment is required while traveling in a motorized vehicle, except on federal and state highways, county roads and driveways: one shovel and one gallon of water or one operational 2-1/2-pound or larger fire extinguisher, except all-terrain vehicles and motorcycles which must be equipped with an approved spark arrestor in good working condition.

- Smoking is prohibited while traveling, except in vehicles on improved roads.

- Open fires are prohibited, including campfires, charcoal fires, cooking fires and warming fires, except in designated areas.

- Mowing dried grass with power-driven equipment is prohibited between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m., except for the commercial culture/harvest of agricultural crops.

- Use of motor vehicles, including motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles, is prohibited, except on improved roads and except for vehicle use by a landowner and employees of the landowner upon their own land while conducting activities associated with their livelihood.

- The use of tracer ammunition or exploding targets is illegal within the District during fire season. As of January 1, 2017, sky lanterns and other luminaries are prohibited in Oregon.

Local residents can access online burn permit system

Sisters Country residents who want to prepare now for the start of open-debris burning in Sisters can get signed up for an outdoor burn permit. Last season, the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District piloted a new burn permit system.

Chief Johnson said, “We are extremely pleased to offer the community a more user-friendly, free, online permitting system enabling users to obtain important information and services online while allowing District staff to track outdoor burns more effectively and disseminate important fire safety information.”

A Public Fire Safety cell phone app has also been in development since the launch last season to work in conjunction with this new online burn permit system.

Permits must be obtained online by visiting the District’s website: <https://www.sistersfire.com>. To register for a permit, your name, street address and phone number are required. Those who do not have Internet access can go to the main fire station at 301 S. Elm St. in Sisters and use a public-access computer to apply, or have District staff sign them up.

This new online system is user-friendly after initial setup. From the Fire District’s standpoint, safety during open burn season,

which typically runs from November 1 to May 31 each year, is of the utmost importance. The online reporting system allows Fire District staff the ability to see who is burning on a daily basis, immediately notify users of changing conditions, message important fire safety information and ensure that those planning to burn are aware of the City of Sisters outdoor burn ban, and that the right jurisdiction is being notified of the planned burn.

You will be required to check in each day you wish to burn and specify that you are burning for the day. Open burning can only be conducted with a permit issued by the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District. The requirement to check in each day is based on changing atmospheric and weather conditions such as wind or air dryness. The Fire District’s on-duty shift commanders will make a determination before 8 a.m. each day whether burning will be



allowed within the District.

The Public Fire Safety app, developed locally, should be available mid-September, prior to the burn season opening. The app will allow users to sign in once on their phone and schedule burn days, and will hopefully offer an even easier experience than what the website will be capable of. The District will announce when that is available for download.

For more information about burn permits, visit the Fire District’s website at <https://www.sistersfire.com> or call the Administration office at 541-549-0771.

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