

Dry conditions bring burn ban back

Virginia Barreda
Salem Statesman Journal
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Thanks to warm temperatures, little rain and dry conditions, an outdoor burn ban has been issued for Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties.

The burn ban starts Wednesday and will last until Sunday, according to a release from Silverton Fire District.

The Marion County Fire Defense Board has restricted:

- Backyard burning (yard debris, etc.)
- Agricultural burning, regulated through Department of Agriculture
- Land clearing or slash burning
- BBQ grills and recreational fires are allowed with precautions.

It also restricts those with permits issued for open burning until further notice.

Those who violate the requirements during the burn ban could be liable for the cost of putting out the fire and for any property damage.

Rural area residents are asked to keep flammable materials away from structures and make sure firefighters can get to residents.

Here are a list of tips from the Silverton Fire District:

- Know fire risks and obey fire restrictions, such as campfire bans.
- Avoid parking or driving on dry grass as hot vehicles can start a wildfire.
- Vehicles are required to have a shovel and fire extinguisher or at least a gallon of water in many areas.
- Do not use candles, fireworks, tiki torches, or other open flames in wildland areas.
- Remember that sky lanterns are illegal in Oregon airspace.
- Dispose of smoking material in deep, sturdy ashtrays.
- Make sure butts and ashes are extinguished with water.
- Never discard butts on the ground or in vegetation.

Check with your local fire district for more information.

For the most current information, residents can call the Burn Information Line at 877-982-0011

For wildfire prevention information and restrictions visit Keep Oregon Green.

Virginia Barreda is the Breaking News Reporter with the Statesman Journal. She can be reached at 503-399-6657.



Thanks to warm temperatures, little rain and dry conditions, an outdoor burn ban has been issued in Marion County. SILVERTON FIRE DISTRICT

Rescue

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“We’re getting close to a time when some places couldn’t afford to do a rescue,” said John Bishop, executive director of the Oregon State Sheriff’s Association. “In a lot of ways, search and rescue is an unfunded mandate.”

A bill in the Oregon legislature is seeking to begin addressing the problem.

Senate Bill 448, which passed out of committee last month, would establish a fund to support search and rescue by selling an “Oregon outdoor recreation search and rescue card.”

The card would cost \$10 per individual or \$25 for a family, according to the bill. The card is purely symbolic — it

won’t get you rescued any faster — but it’s a step in the right direction, said sheriff Matt English with Hood River County.

“Basically, the card is just a way for people to show support for search and rescue,” he said. “The plan is to develop partnerships with retailers who offer discounts to people with the card as a way of adding some incentive.”

Early in the legislative session there was discussion about leveraging a fee or general fund dollars to pay for search and rescue.

“We decided that before we ask for a new fee, we would see how far we can get with a voluntary donation system,” said Cailin O’Brien-Feeney, director of the Office of Outdoor Recreation.

Businesses would also have a way to contribute money directly to the fund, which would be distributed to sheriff’s

offices through the Office of Emergency Management.

English and Bishop said that while this solution was unlikely to solve all the problems with funding search and rescue, it was a step in the right direction.

“This is a foot in the door,” Bishop said. “Hopefully we start to get some funding through this system and start helping the smaller counties that are really running out of funding for search and rescue. The last thing we want is to say, ‘Sorry, we can’t respond.’”

“At this point, anything is better than nothing.”

Although many search and rescue teams are composed of volunteers, the cost of equipment for snow, water and mountain rescue can cost a single sheriff’s office from \$100,000 to \$500,000 per year.

“We have great volunteers, but it’s

the equipment like four-wheelers, snowmobiles, and whitewater dive equipment that gets really expensive really fast,” Bishop said. “There’s also feeding and equipping people to stay out for up to seven days on a longer search, and the fact that we have to cover them under workman’s compensation laws.”

The bill passed the Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources last month and will now be taken up by the Ways and Means Committee.

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Salmon River

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peatedly as it eyes the current. Suddenly it plunges in and I watch as it walks upstream, completely submerged. It resurfaces with a beakful of aquatic insect nymphs and flies to the opposite shore to enjoy its meal. I move on.

The trail pulls me deeper into the woods. Fallen lungwort lichens litter the forest floor. They look like lettuce leaves plucked from a garden. Recent winds have blown them from loose attachments in the green canopy overhead. Named for their slight resemblance to lung tissue, these leafy growths are a critical link in the nitrogen cycle of the forest. Nitrogen is as essential as oxygen to all living things. Unlike most organisms, these lichens can absorb nitrogen directly from the air. When they fall from the trees and begin to disintegrate on the ground, rainwater washes their store of nitrogen into the soil. Some of the nitrogen is used by plants to grow and the rest is slowly released back into the atmosphere, starting the cycle over.

The trail descends a small hill. Turkey tail mushrooms sprout from a trail-side log. A primary agent of decomposition, this fan-shaped fungus will hasten the log’s transition from rotting tree to fertile soil. Nothing is wasted in nature.

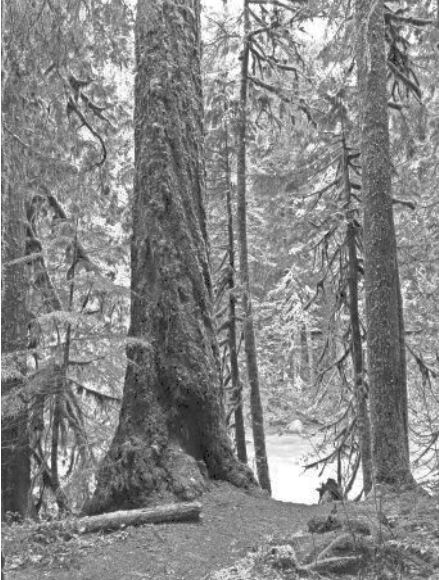


Turkey tail fungi along the Old Salmon River Trail.

I climb a gentle rise and stop dead in my tracks. A group of mammoth western red-cedars surrounds the trail. I slowly circle the buttressed base of each tree, touching the thin fibrous bark as I go. One massive trunk is at least 10 feet wide. My hiking poles look like toothpicks leaning against its enormous girth. These imposing ancients are liv-

ing links to the primeval past. They have thrived here for several centuries in the wet soil near the river. Leaving the grove of silent elders, I hike on.

The path brings me to a creek. It swells with spring run-off and is too deep to cross. I turn and follow it until it spills into the Salmon River. Standing by this shining stream, I think about its ties



An old growth Douglas-fir is seen along the Old Salmon River Trail.
 PHOTOS BY BOBBIE SNEAD/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL

to moss and rain, dippers and insects, lichens and trees. Once again, I find meaning in the river’s perpetual flow.

Bobbie Snead is a local naturalist and nature educator who leads more than 50 hikes each year for all ages. She can be reached at naturalist.column@gmail.com .

Miller

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bath,” Kay will say.

“Yea, looks like a hamburger bun ... no, wait; it’s a hot dog bun,” I’ll reply. “There’s a two-inch piece of wiener sticking out of it.”

Further autopsy results reveal that it probably was a polish sausage, and upon even further examination may have been a Chicago dog because I also hosed a chunk of tomato out.

“Washing” may be an incorrect description for the way that the crows abuse the birdbath.

In a lot of cases, it looks as though they’re dunking and dropping assorted goodies into the virtual stew to soften them up for consumption.

A doughnut, saltine or slice of white bread is an easy-peasy dip and done.

Pizza crust?

Come back in 15 minutes ... if another crow doesn’t steal it first.

Or we don’t hose it out.

“C’mon, guys. Show a little respect. Other birds bathe in that.”

Then there are the more intriguing puzzles of forensic flushings.

“I think it’s orange chicken.”

“How do you know?”

“Because of the color and the coating, and there’s also a bunch of rice floating in there, too.”

EWWWWWW!

Some of the stuff is hideous, such as week-old night crawlers or chunks of road kill well past the best-by date.

But admittedly sometimes crow dining habits can be amusing, too.

The past summer I looked out of the front window because of a wet, smacking sound, like someone throwing a sopping wash cloth over a towel rack.

It was a crow slapping about half a tortilla in the water trying to make it come apart.

Looked kind of like a pizza chef working the dough.

Excuse me while I turn on the hose.

I wrote too soon: Fees increased beginning May 1 for parking at Silverton Marine Park at Silverton Reservoir.

Per-vehicle day-use parking is \$5 for vehicles including those with trailers and for buses.

Annual passes are \$30 for Silverton residents, \$25 for Silverton seniors (over 60), \$40 for non-residents, and \$35 for senior non-residents.

I had the posted pre-May 1 rates in the April 27 column about visiting Silverton Reservoir.

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