

VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Fire Season Burn Ban Now in Effect

By Robert Schattschneider

It's Fire Season once again, and like in years past, we've entered into the season of the dreaded "Burn Ban." One frustrating thing about Fire Season is that the Industrial Fire Precaution Levels (IFPL) can change back and forth every few days or so. So, what's allowed today, not so much tomorrow, and then back again.

Each year we get flooded with questions about burning, campfires, fire pits, BBQ grills, gas, propane, charcoal briquettes, and much, much more. So, we thought we would try to clear some of this up for you.

The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal, and the different Rural Fire Protection Districts, such as: The Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District, work together, following Oregon Laws, to protect our State Forests and communities from wildfires.

The Oregon Department of Forestry's Mission:

- To serve the people of Oregon by protecting, managing, and promoting stewardship of Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic, and community sustainability.

Oregon's largest fire department, ODF's Fire Protection program protects 16 million acres of forest, a \$60 billion asset. These lands consist of privately owned forests as well as some public lands, including state-owned forests and, by contract, US Bureau of Land Management forests in western Oregon.

ODF is also part of an extensive

fire protection network that includes landowner resources, contract crews and aircraft, inmate crews, and agreements with public agencies across Oregon, the U.S. and British Columbia.

ODF's firefighting policy is straightforward: Put out fires quickly at the smallest possible size. Most of the lands protected by the agency are working forests that produce revenue and support jobs. It is crucial to prevent fire damage to the timber resource that is an essential element of Oregon's



economy. This aggressive approach to firefighting also safeguards ecosystem values such as fish and wildlife habitats.

For these reasons, strict Oregon State Laws are enforced to protect our forests, wildlife, and personal property.

When our State Forester, Peter Daugherty, declares that we are under an IFPL, it's after several factors have been considered, such as moisture content, weather forecasts, temperature, humidity, just to name of few.

For a complete list and description of each of the different levels, go to: <http://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Restrictions.aspx> and click on Industrial Fire Precaution Levels.

We were recently under IFPL Level 3, which means "No Burning," including campfires. You could have used your propane or natural gas grills, your above ground gas or propane fire pits, but no charcoal briquettes or firewood.

The reason for this is because a burning ember can travel up to a quarter of a mile under certain conditions, so having water and tools readily available will not prevent an ember from traveling to a fuel source and igniting a wildfire.

ORS 478.960 covers the burning of certain materials permitted only with the permission of the Fire Chief. In summary, this statute basically states that the fire chief, with help from the DEQ and Oregon State Fire Marshal, sets the regulations on burning in the fire district. It also states that the person starting the fire has ultimate responsibility for the fire.

If the fire gets out of control and damages another's property, the person that started the fire could be charged with second degree arson.

ORS 477.510 and ORS 477.512 cover acts prohibited during Fire Season and within 1/8 mile of a forest protection district. These acts include: smoking while working in or traveling through any operation area, the use of fuse and caps for blasting, unless approval is granted by the forester, the use of sky lanterns, the use of tracer ammunition, and the use of exploding targets.

ORS 477.515 covers burning without a permit. This statute states it's unlawful to set or cause an open fire within 1/8 mile of a forest protection



district without first securing a written permit from the forester and complying with the conditions of the permit. The provisions of this section do not apply to campfires. However, when the State Forester has declared an IFPL Level 3, campfires are not permitted at any time, with or without a permit.

In summary, all of these laws have been put in place to protect Oregon's natural resources and personal property, both state owned and private lands.

All violations of these Oregon Revised Statutes are subject to fines. We strongly urge you to know your rights and responsibilities along with the rules and regulations (Oregon State Statutes) that are in place for the protection of everyone.

Obtain your burn permit from the officials that cover your area. If you live within the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District, you can pick up your burn permit at the fire station which is located at 555 E. Bridge Street in Vernonia. When you pick up your burn permit, you will be given a list of the regulations that you will be required to adhere to.

Thank you for understanding and for your cooperation.

A Lifetime of Service: John Cahill

By Robert Schattschneider

I think everyone would agree that the time period we live in has greatly changed from that of our parents and grandparents. I have found that finding people who have dedicated their lives to serving others isn't always as easy as it used to be.

I would like to dedicate this article to John Cahill, because in my opinion, John has dedicated his life to serving others.

John began his lifetime of service in 1962, when he joined the U.S. Marine Corps. John dedicated the next 20 years of his life to the Marines, retiring in 1982 at the rank of 1st Sergeant.

In the United States Marine Corps, first sergeant (abbreviated 1stSgt) is one rank above gunnery sergeant and one pay grade below sergeant major and master gunnery sergeant. It is equal in grade to master sergeant (E8), although the two ranks have different responsibilities.

A first sergeant has command leadership responsibilities and serves as the senior enlisted adviser to the commander at the company, battery or detachment level, while master sergeants have technical responsibilities within their respective occupational fields, and serve important leadership roles within various company or battery sections.

After his retirement from the U.S. Marine Corps, John worked for the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office as a Corrections Deputy for 16 years. While



serving as a Corrections Deputy, John also pastored at the First Baptist Church, retiring in 2012.

When John was asked why he was never promoted beyond the rank of Deputy, he stated, "I would have to change shifts that would interfere with being a pastor, so I turned them down."

During the 30 plus years of serving as a pastor, John also served as Chaplain

for the Vernonia Police Department and the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District.

John currently holds the position of Chaplain for the Vernonia Rural Fire Protection District. As our

Chaplain, John responds to calls to assist the medics and volunteer fire fighters, by carrying items needed for treatment of the victim, and anywhere else as needed.

John is also there to help anyone else who might need some help. Some incidents are very stressful for the victims, the victim's family members, and sometimes the fire fighters and medics.

Additionally, John is willing and able

to help the victim's family members with things like transportation to the hospital, waiting with them while they await news from the doctors who are treating their family member, and any other way that is within John's means.

From time to time the medics and fire fighters hold a "Post Incident Debriefing" where they discuss the facts of the incident, and the medics and fire fighters are allowed to ask questions and discuss their feelings about what took place.

John has been very instrumental in the emotional wellbeing of the first responders at VRFPD.

If you call 911 for an emergency, John Cahill may be one of the first responders showing up in your time of need. We want you to know that John is there to help us, and you, should you need his help.

Calls responded to July 1-31

Fire	2
Emergency Medical Service	55
Hazardous Condition	0
Service Call	9
Good Intent	9
Severe Weather & Natural Disaster	0
Special Incident	0
No Emergency Found	0
False Alarm	2
Total	77