

# What to keep in mind as fire season begins in Northeast Oregon

By JACK PARRY  
Wallowa County Chieftain

ENTERPRISE — The Oregon Department of Forestry announced that fire season began July 1 in the Northeast Oregon District as the vegetation is drying after a rainy last few months.

The Willowcreek Fire spans over 42,000 acres northeast of Vale this week before the season officially started.

Matt Howard, the district

forester for the Northeastern Oregon District, remembers the extremely hot and dry conditions during fire season last year, and doesn't believe the period will be as long this year.

"Last summer, we were in a severe drought; it quit raining in March," Howard said. "With the rainfall we've received in April and May and the first half of June, it's really moistened up our fuels."

This amount of precipitation wasn't just unex-

pected for the spring, it was record-breaking, helping to provide firmer snowcaps on the mountains to melt down.

"For May, and the first half of June, it was the wettest six weeks for Northeast Oregon," Howard said.

However, the Willowcreek Fire is burning. Even though the fire is technically out of the Wallowa County district and has been over 75% contained, according to U.S. Bureau of Land Management Vale District, fire

safety is always relevant as fire season begins throughout the state.

During the season, debris-pile burning and barrel burning can only be done by permit, which is a fairly simple process. Call the local Oregon Department of Forestry office and request a permit. A fire warden will come out and inspect the burn site, and if the site is up to standard, issue a permit.

The use of exploding bullets is prohibited, and all

lodging must meet requirements for fire prevention. Something else that can be dangerous, especially around Independence Day, are fireworks. This is why Howard wants people in his district to be mindful because every year fires happen when fireworks go off in unsafe places.

"The fireworks that shoot up in the air don't always go where they're intended," he said.

Common sense goes a long way in preventing fire.

"Make sure they have a safe campfire, be wary of driving in tall, dry grass, be fire-conscious and be aware," Howard said.

He also said people should report a fire when they see it; that way the authorities can learn about it as quickly as possible in order to minimize resources and cost.

"Don't assume the next person has reported it," Howard said. "We want to get there quickly and knock that fire down."

## Allergies impact both people and their pets

By ANN BLOOM  
For the Wallowa County Chieftain

The sneezing, the itching, watering eyes and running nose. Seasonal allergies are miserable, aren't they?

With spring and summer, the allergen that appears to be the biggest culprit now is pollen. Flowers, grasses, trees, and bushes are in full bloom and shooting yellow pollen into the air to be inhaled by unsuspecting allergy sufferers.

Allergies can run the gamut from foods to medicines to topical irritants (i.e., clothing, lotions, and soaps) to insects and things in the environment. During the spring and summer months, it is mainly the airborne allergens that give people the most problem.

Airborne allergens can include pet dander, pollen, dust, mold and things like dust mites.

"Everyone is unique, and it depends on how sensitive you are to things," said Sarah Peterson, Family Nurse Practitioner, of Hillcock Family Medicine, as to what will trigger an allergy.

She said a person can go to an allergist and go through testing to find out what they are allergic. She added that allergens can be anything from pollen to things that cause anaphylaxis (such as bee stings or allergies to certain foods).

Peterson explained that

an allergy is the body's immune system seeing the allergen as harmful and that causes a reaction (i.e., sneezing). Allergies are a "big, big topic. And allergists can treat allergies for sure," she said.

Over-the-counter medications can help with seasonal allergies, as can nonsteroidal saline nasal solutions. Peter-

son advises against steroidal nasal medications for long-term use. She also recommends humidifiers at night.

**"WE TYPICALLY SEE DOGS MORE FREQUENTLY THAN CATS FOR ALLERGIES, BUT BOTH ARE SUSCEPTIBLE."**

— Dr. Brooke Greenshields, veterinarian at Double Arrow Veterinary Clinic

"If membranes are really dry, try Vaseline. But avoid antibiotic creams. Warm salt-water gargles are good for postnasal drainage, and then follow up with your primary care provider as needed," she said.

A person with seasonal allergies can also consult with a pharmacist on an over-the-counter medication that is right for them. Peterson said it is important to know your blood pressure and pulse numbers. She said a lot of allergy medications can spike blood pressure. A pharmacist can always advise what is best for your type of situation.

Eye drops for red, itchy

and watering eyes can help as can a decongestant. Shots can also help, but are typically administered by an allergist. Peterson said it is possible to outgrow some allergies.

Also remember humans are not the only ones to suffer from allergies. Pets are susceptible to allergens as well.

Dr. Brooke Greenshields, a veterinarian at Double Arrow Veterinary Clinic, said dogs and cats are susceptible to environmental and food allergies the same as people. She said that with pets, the environmental allergies can be caused by stimulants such as grasses and pollen.

"We typically see dogs more frequently than cats for allergies, but both are susceptible," she said.

Signs of allergies in pets include, itching face or belly, licking (their) paws, hot spots — like a rash, and in cats, difficulty breathing.

Pets also experience allergies to foods as well as environmental triggers.

"Food allergies are common in dogs," she said. To determine if dogs have

food allergies, a strict diet trial is recommended with a hypoallergenic food. Blood work can be sent to a lab to determine what environmental allergies an animal has, but has been found to be less accurate when diagnosing food allergies.

"Animals can get allergy injections to help improve symptoms," Greenshields said.

There are different medications available to relieve symptoms for both environmental and food allergies. Schedule a visit with your veterinarian to establish a diagnostic and treatment plan that is best for your pet.

Whether you are a person who suffers from allergies, or someone who has a pet that suffers, there is help available, as close as your nearest primary care provider or veterinarian.

## Commissioners may ban psilocybin

Chieftain staff

ENTERPRISE — A resolution and an ordinance to permanently prohibit the establishment of psilocybin facilities in Wallowa County will be on the agenda Wednesday, July 6, when the Board of Commissioners meets.

The commissioners meet at 9 a.m. at the courthouse.

According to the Oregon Health Authority website, Oregon Psilocybin Services is a new section housed within the OHA Public Health Division's Center for Health Protection. The section will implement Ballot Measure 109, which was passed in November 2020 and directs the OHA to license and regulate the manufacturing, transportation, delivery, sale and purchase of psilocybin products and the provision of psilocybin services.

The section will begin accepting applications for licensure Jan. 2. Until then, the section is in a develop-

ment period, working to build the nation's first regulatory framework for psilocybin services.

The resolution and ordinance being considered by the commissioners would prohibit such facilities within the county.

Also on the agenda Wednesday, the commissioners:

- Will hear a presentation by Larisa Bogadus of the Vale office of the federal Bureau of


Land Management.

- Initiate a grant from the Wildhorse Foundation for K9 therapy with Community Corrections.

- Take several employee actions, including the hiring of Gavin Collier as a juvenile tracker with the Department of Youth Services and the separation from service of Brooke Langerman as a 911 dispatcher and William Moore as a custodian.

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