

Remember safe campfire practices this weekend

Sitting around a campfire is one of the special times we all enjoy, but campfires are also a major cause of wildfires. May is Wildfire Awareness Month, and Keep Oregon Green, the Oregon State Fire Marshal, and the Oregon Department of Forestry urge Oregonians to follow these basic outdoor safety tips:

• **Know before you go.** Call your local forestry or fire district to learn if there are any current campfire restrictions at your recreation destination.

An interactive map of Oregon's fire restrictions is available at www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Restrictions.

aspx.

Tom Fields, ODF's fire prevention coordinator, says the map continues to improve and is "an excellent tool for folks to use from home or from their mobile device."

• **Kick the campfire habit this summer.** Portable camp stoves are a safer option to campfires at any time of year.

Areas that prohibit campfires outside maintained campgrounds with established fire pits often allow camp stoves.

• **Select the right spot.** Where campfires are allowed, avoid building the fire near your tent, structures, vehicles, shrubs or trees, and be aware of low-

hanging branches overhead.

Clear the site down to mineral soil, at least five feet on all sides, and circle it with rocks.

Store unused firewood a good distance from the fire.

• **Keep your campfire small.** A campfire is less likely to escape control if it is kept small. A large fire may cast hot embers long distances.

Add firewood in small amounts as existing material is consumed.

• **Attend your campfire at all times.** A campfire left unattended for even a few minutes can grow into a costly, damaging wildfire.

Stay with your campfire

from start to finish until it is dead out.

That ensures any escaped sparks or embers can be extinguished quickly, and it is required by state law.

• **Never use gasoline or other accelerants.** Don't use flammable or combustible liquids, such as gasoline, propane or lighter fluid, to start or increase your campfire.

Once the fire starts, wait until the match is cold and then discard it in the fire.

• **Have water and fire tools on site.** Have a shovel and a bucket of water nearby to extinguish any escaped embers.

Before you leave, *drown* all

embers with water, *stir* the coals, and *drown* again.

Repeat until the fire is *dead out*. If it is too hot to touch, it is too hot to leave.

• **Burn only wood.** State regulations prohibit the open burning of any material that creates dense, toxic smoke or noxious odors.

Burning paper and cardboard can also easily fly up to start new fires.

Escaped campfires can be costly.

Oregon law requires the proper clearing, building, attending and extinguishing of open fires at any time of year.

A first-time citation carries a

\$110 fine. But by far the biggest potential cost is liability for firefighting costs if your campfire spreads out of control.

These can range from a few hundred to tens of thousands of dollars or more.

During Wildfire Awareness Month visit the Keep Oregon Green website, www.KeepOregonGreen.org for other wildfire prevention tips.

Contact Kristin Babbs, president Keep Oregon Green Association, at 503-945-7499 or email Kristin.a.babbs@oregon.gov for more information.

Current levels of waterways call for extra caution while boating

Motorboats, kayaks, canoes, rafts, pontoon, drift, stand up paddleboards, sailboats, personal watercraft — there's a boat out there that can connect you to the water and a rental facility ready to help you get your feet wet if you're new to boating.

The Oregon State Marine Board invites boaters to explore the interactive Boating Oregon Map, where you can find a boat ramp near you, or plan for a weekend escape to places less-frequented.

"This season is going to be a fantastic year for water recreation with abundant water," says Ashley Massey, Public Information Officer for the Marine Board.

"Just be sure to plan ahead by checking the weather, water

levels, reported obstructions, and having all of the right gear, says Massey. "Boaters can check the Marine Board's website for everything a boater needs to know to start planning a trip."

Massey emphasizes paying attention to your surroundings, continually scanning port to starboard and keeping a close eye on what's dead-ahead.

"2016 saw an increase in accidents, largely from collisions," says Massey. "Familiarize yourself with the rules-of-the-road, and start out slow because of debris in the water from this past winter."

"With the extraordinary high water levels, many wing dams (also known as pile dikes) on rivers and bays are just below the surface, so boaters need to

keep their distance from the shoreline up to several hundred feet out from shore."

Boaters are encouraged to learn where the wing dams are located based on the waterbody where they're boating from www.charts.noaa.gov, for free, downloadable navigation charts.

Think about taking a "dispersion excursion" to lesser-known waterbodies, especially for people new to paddlesports or seeking more solitude.

There are 96 waterways where motors are prohibited and 50 designated as electric motor only waterways. Visit the Marine Board's "Experience Oregon" boating handbook for more information about these areas.

The Marine Board also rec-

ommends boaters play it safe by:

• **Abstaining from marijuana, drugs or alcohol.** Instead, take along a variety of non-alcoholic beverages and plenty of water. Impairment can lead to a BUII arrest.

Drugs and alcohol impair a boater's judgement and coordination. Swift currents, changing weather and debris require boat operators to be focused and skilled to avoid an accident.

• **If you are feeling fatigued,** take a break on land and return to the water when you are re-energized and alert. Wind, glare, dehydration and wave motion contribute to fatigue.

Continually monitor the weather because it changes quickly.

• **Operators and passengers** should wear properly fitting life jackets. Learn more about life jacket types, styles and legal requirements. Anyone rafting on Class III Whitewater Rivers is required to wear a life jacket, and all children 12 and under when a boat is underway.

The water temperature for most waterways is below 50 degrees and wearing a life jacket is the most important piece of equipment for surviving the first few seconds of cold water immersion.

• **Never boat alone** — especially when paddling. Always let others know where you are going and when you'll return.

• **Be courteous to other boaters** and share the waterway. Congestion is a given in many popular locations, especially

with nice weather.

Paddlers need to stay in calmer water near the shore and allow motorized boats to operate in deeper water.

Motorized boaters should be given priority when launching, as many boat ramps are designed for heavier trailered boats to access the water.

• **In Oregon, all boaters** must take a boating safety course and carry a boater education card when operating a powerboat greater than 10 horsepower. The Marine Board also offers a free, online Paddling Course for boaters new to the activity.

For more information about safe boating in Oregon, visit www.boatorgon.com.

WESTERN SNOWY PLOVER CHICKS REPORTED ON NORTH COAST BEACHES

After more than 50 years, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) wildlife biologists have learned that at least one western snowy plover chick has hatched on a beach at Nehalem Bay State Park.

This is the first verified hatchling in the area since the 1960s, and follows three years

of increased sightings and species activity, including nesting attempts.

Western snowy plovers are a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act, and are protected in all west coast states. Collaborative efforts like OPRD's Habitat Conservation Plan, developed

in coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), is showing results with the expansion of snowy plovers northward.

The population is growing along parts of the southern Oregon coast, where areas with signs and nest designations are part of everyday beachgoing in

the spring and summer.

Yet, species recovery is much more likely to continue if populations can establish themselves along the entire coast. OPRD asks that visitors keep a cautious eye out.

Plovers nest in dry sand, in tiny, shallow scrapes that are almost invisible.

Not only are nests easy to miss, or step on, but the bird will abandon its eggs if repeatedly disturbed.

Plover chicks are mobile almost immediately after hatching. They freeze in place and hide in small depressions — like footprints — when they perceive danger.

The Nehalem nesting area, like all nesting sites, is clearly designated with signs, and they remain off limits until the nesting season ends.

Maps and more information can be found at bit.ly/wsplover.

www.TheSiuslawNews.com

OPRD offers overnight for novice campers

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) welcomes beginning campers to join in an overnight guided camping experience this summer at an Oregon state park.

Registrations are now being accepted for the "Let's Go Camping Program."

Events will be held at nine different parks.

For \$30 per family, OPRD provides tents, sleeping bags and other gear. Volunteers will help campers set up tents, build campfires, prepare meals in the campsite and more. Activities could include ranger-led hikes, owl prowls, bat chats and plenty of

s'mores.

Register for one of the following events by calling 800-551-6949. Most events are limited to 35 people and spots are filling quickly:

- June 16-18: L.L.Stub Stewart Park
- June 30-July 2: Deschutes River
- July 7-9: Cascadia
- July 14-16: Willamette Mission
- July 21-23: Silver Falls
- July 21-23: Prineville Reservoir
- July 28-30: Ainsworth
- Aug. 11-13: Milo McIver
- Aug. 25-27: Champoeg
- Sept. 8-10: Memaloose



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