

Fire Season has now started in northwest Oregon; forest restrictions enforced

Fire Season in Northwest Oregon went into effect, officially, on Thursday, June 26, as declared by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). The status applies to private, state,

county and federal (Bureau of Land Management) forest lands protected by ODF in Washington, Multnomah, Tillamook, Yamhill, Columbia and Clatsop counties.

season is predicted to be from average to above average this year.

"It largely depends on what mother nature hands us throughout the summer and fall. So far, June has been relatively dry and we're going on 40 days since any significant rainfall of a half-inch or more. High fire danger can develop quickly with any hot spells and we don't want to be caught off guard," Simek said. In the northwest corner of the state, fire danger typically builds to a peak in late summer with spikes to higher fire danger during dry east wind periods in the fall. Fire officials urge everyone to use good fire prevention practices whether working or playing in areas of flammable vegetation. As fire danger conditions increase, there will be further fire prevention regulations.

According to Mitch Taylor, Protection Unit Forester at Forest Grove, woods workers are required to have fire prevention and fire fighting equipment at their operation sites and provide a watchman on each operation after equipment is shut down. Fire season rules also prohibit smoking while in, or traveling through, any "operation area," and prohibit the use of fuse and caps for blasting on forest land. In addition, open burning has been banned in most counties. These bans on open burning are implemented in cooperation with local fire defense boards and will remain in effect until significant rains begin in the fall.

Information about state forest lands and public fire restrictions is available by calling the Forest Grove District public information recording at 503-359-7401. For industrial fire restrictions, call 503-359-7400. Both recordings are available 24 hours a day.

As fire season begins, officials alert landowners to check areas where burning has been conducted recently, especially any heavy accumulations of piled woody debris. Old burn areas are known to hold hot spots that can come to life under warm and windy conditions.

For other information, call the Oregon Department of Forestry, Columbia City Office, at 503-397-2636.

Mike Simek, protection unit forester with the Department of Forestry, says the local fire

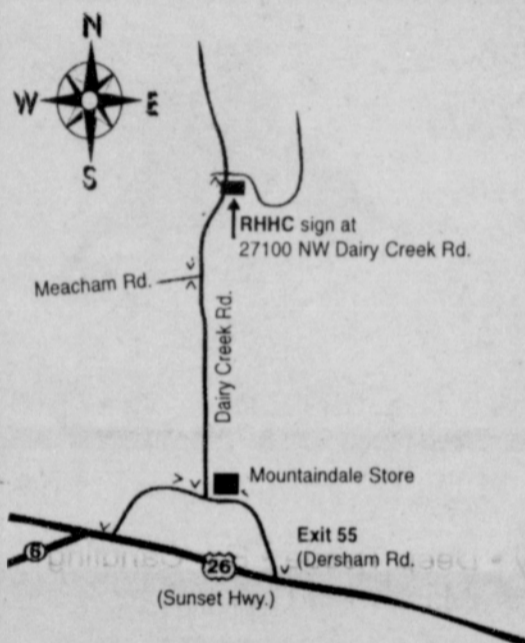
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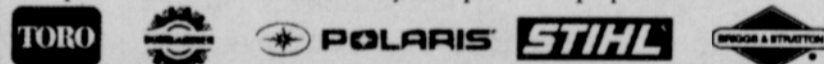
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