



NEWS

May 30, 2008

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Kevin Benton, Oregon Department of Forestry, Prineville 541-447-5658
Christy Donham, Oregon Department of Forestry, Prineville 541-280-7323

FIRE SEASON DECLARED ON PRIVATE and NON-FEDERAL LANDS

Within Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties

Starting at 6:00 a.m. on Sunday morning June 1st, the lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry's Prineville/Sisters Unit will go into fire season. This includes Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties.

What this means to the landowner/resident and visitor to private lands within Department of Forestry protection:

- ✓ Burning permits are required on all private and state forestlands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry within Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson Counties. The Oregon Department of Forestry will generally not issue permits within rural fire districts where burn bans are in effect.
- ✓ Fire tools, water supply and a watchman service are required on commercial forest operations occurring on private lands protected by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Information on industrial fire prevention requirements may be obtained from your local Oregon Department of Forestry office.

If you did burn any yard debris or slash last fall or this spring, please check your piles for residual heat. Backyard and other debris burn piles can hold fire for weeks and even months; they may appear to be out however landowners should check the piles for heat. If a holdover fire escapes, the responsible party could be held liable for firefighting costs. Remember... you must have a permit if burning is allowed in your area.

- ✓ Campfires on private forestlands are allowed with landowner permission only.

- more -

“No matter how much moisture we receive throughout the winter, Central Oregon always experiences a wildfire season,” stated Ben Duda, Assistant Unit Forester with the Department of Forestry in Sisters. “One successful method of fire prevention is to coordinate with our partnering structural agencies and limit, if not ban, any residential burning; helping to eliminate the possibility of escaped fires.”

So far this year the Prineville / Sisters Unit has responded to ten human-caused fires burning over five acres.

“This spring *has* brought unusual weather to Central Oregon; however, even with the rain and snow, fine fuels such as pine needles and dry grasses can dry out quickly,” said Kevin Benton, Unit Forester with the Oregon Department of Forestry in Prineville. “After a few days of higher temperatures and no moisture, it can take as little as ten hours of sun and heat to dry out fine fuels, which can spread fire quickly, and that’s what we’re trying to prevent.”

Restrictions do vary from private forestland, to public lands, and cities across Central Oregon, for example Deschutes County will enter a debris burn ban June 1, 2008, so please remember to call your local fire department or land management agency and find out what restrictions are in place before striking that match.

#