



UNION COUNTY

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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Union County Implements County Wide Burn Ban Effective Immediately

Union County Board of Commissioners voted today to implement the County Wide Burn Ban/Regulated Use restrictions at the recommendation of the Union County Fire Defense Board. As specified in County Ordinance 2018-01, the commissioners may ban all fires outside incorporated cities within Union County. No fires of any kind are allowed except regulated agricultural field burning and gas or pellet barbeques.

Fire Defense Board Chief Larry Wooldridge stated that the possibility of wildfire is at a dangerous level due to the prolonged period of hot and dry conditions. Firefighting resources are limited from partnering agencies such as Oregon Department of Forestry and the US Forest Service due to numerous wildfires in the region. He also stated fuel moistures in the area are very low, and the Haines Index is at medium to high levels for the foreseeable future which can be an indicator of explosive fire growth. Chief Wooldridge indicated that the Fire Defense Board will continue to monitor the conditions.

In addition to Union County fire restrictions, forest officials have increased public use restrictions on lands protected by Oregon Department of Forestry and the Umatilla and Wallowa Whitman National Forests due to high fire danger, the potential for human caused fires, and concern for public safety. The increased restrictions pertain to the use of campfires, smoking, chainsaws, internal combustion engines, and generators. Additional information regarding the forest restrictions can be found at www.bmidc.org.

Concern over continuing high temperatures, lack of moisture, the availability of dry fuels and a concern for a potential lack of available firefighting resources justified the implementation of the Burn Ban/Regulated Use of the Burn Ordinance. The ordinance may be read in its entirety on the county website at www.union-county.org.

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