

NEWS RELEASE

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Website:

<http://www.maricopacountyparks.net/>

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ANNUAL FIRE BAN TO BE IMPLEMENTED

County Parks set May 8 as start date for annual fire ban

(Maricopa County) – The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department will initiate its annual fire ban on **Monday, May 8**. “We typically try to wait until after Memorial Day weekend to implement our fire ban. However, this winter the parks received an abundance of rain which produced a super bloom of wildflowers, thick brush, and ground coverage. This vegetation has now dried out, and conditions are ideal for wildfire ignition as seen by the Cactus Fire which occurred in close proximity to Utery Mountain Regional Park. To ensure park visitor and park resource safety, we believe the decision to implement sooner rather than later is the responsible thing to do,” said R.J. Cardin, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Director.

A fire ban is initiated to limit the possibility of starting a brush fire, which could cause serious damage to the parks. The fire ban includes the use of campfires, fire pits and charcoal grills; however, it is still acceptable to use gas/propane grills in designated areas such as the ramada areas, semi-developed and developed camping sites, and along the shoreline at Lake Pleasant Regional Park. Violation of this park rule, Rule 113, may result in a citation.

It is also important to note that during this time of year, the National Weather Service often issues red flag warnings across central Arizona to alert land management agencies that conditions are ideal for wildfire ignition. Should this occur before the fire ban goes into effect, park supervisors have been authorized to issue a park specific temporary fire ban to ensure public safety and protect the parks resources. When temporary fire bans are issued, information will be posted on the website, and park visitors will be notified as they enter the park. The parks will also stop selling firewood during this time.

Smoking in the parks is still permissible, but all park users are strongly encouraged to be responsible in their use and ensure that all cigarettes are properly extinguished and placed in trash receptacles. A date to lift the fire ban has not been identified and will be determined by the amount of rain Maricopa County receives during the monsoon season.

The following Maricopa County parks are affected by the fire ban: Adobe Dam Regional Park, Buckeye Hills Regional Park, Cave Creek Regional Park, Estrella Mountain Regional Park (excludes turf area), Hassayampa River Preserve, Lake Pleasant Regional Park, McDowell Mountain Regional Park, San Tan Mountain Regional Park, Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area, Utery Mountain Regional Park, and White Tank Mountain Regional Park. If you have any questions regarding the fire ban, call the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department at (602) 506-2930, or visit <http://www.maricopacountyparks.net/>.



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