



Umatilla National Forest
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NEWS RELEASE

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Public Use Restrictions reduced to Phase A on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests

BAKER CITY and PENDLETON, Ore. (Sept. 16, 2021) – Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest officials will reduce Public Use Restrictions (PURS) to PHASE A as of 12:01 a.m. on Friday, Sept. 17, 2021.

Phase A is the first level of restrictions, generally implemented when the fire danger is moderate to high. PURS are phased in collectively, as conditions warrant, and may differ from Forest to Forest. Restrictions under Phase A include:

- Chainsaws may be operated only between the hours of 8 p.m. and 1 p.m. local time. A one-hour fire watch is required after saw operations cease. Saw operators are required to have an axe (minimum 2 lb. head, 26" length), shovel (8" wide, 26" length), and fire extinguisher (minimum ABC 8 oz.) in their possession. **Chainsaw operation associated with commercial and personal use firewood permits are regulated under the conditions of the permit and are not impacted by this public use restriction.
- Smoking is allowed only in enclosed vehicles, buildings or cleared areas.
- No off-road/off-trail vehicle travel or travel on roads not cleared of standing grass or other flammable material; no vehicle travel on those Forest Service roads where access has been impeded or blocked by earthen berm, logs, boulders, barrier, barricade or gate, or as otherwise identified in the Fire Order.

The public is also encouraged to practice safe campfire principles when recreating in dispersed and developed campsites. Forest officials recommend the following campfire safety precautions:

- Campfires should be in fire pits surrounded by dirt, rock, or commercial rings and in areas not conducive to rapid fire spread. All flammable material shall be cleared within a 3-foot radius from the edge of the pit and free of overhanging material. Use existing pits wherever possible. (Note: within the Grande Ronde Scenic Waterway, campfires must be contained in a fireproof container (i.e., "fire pan") with sides of a height sufficient to contain all ash and debris, and all ashes and debris must be removed from the river corridor. Do not use or construct fire pits or rock fire rings within the Scenic Waterway.)

- Campfires must be attended at all times, and completely extinguished prior to leaving.
- Persons with campfires should carry a tool that can serve as a shovel and one gallon of water in their possession. The intent of this recommendation is to ensure individuals with a campfire to have the tools necessary to completely extinguish their campfire.

The public's awareness of the fire danger and cooperation is essential to a safe fire season. Recreationists, firewood cutters, hunters, and other forest users can all help by closely adhering to restrictions, operating safely and cautiously, and keeping up to date on the latest orders and regulations.

Public Use Restrictions may differ on the Malheur National Forest and the public should contact a local National Forest office directly for complete information on current conditions and restrictions.

Regulated closures may be in effect on State and private lands protected by Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) in northeast and central Oregon. Please check with your local Oregon Department of Forestry office for PURs on lands protected by ODF.

Additional information regarding conditions and restrictions is also available by visiting one of the interagency dispatch centers' webpages:

- Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch webpage: www.bmidc.org
- John Day Interagency Dispatch webpage: <http://bicc-jdidc.org/index.shtml>

Similar restrictions may also be in effect on State and private lands protected by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA-DNR). More information can be found on the WA-DNR website at: <http://www.dnr.wa.gov/>.

Please remember that it is everyone's responsibility to know what restrictions are in place when visiting public lands. For more information regarding restrictions on the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forests, please contact:

Umatilla National Forest:

Information Hotline: Toll-Free (877) 958-9663

www.facebook.com/UmatillaNF

Twitter: @UmatillaNF

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest:

Information Hotlines: Baker City (541) 523-6391; La Grande (541) 962-8500; Joseph (541) 426-5546

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