



CONTACT:
Dawna Taylor
Public Information Officer
Office: (602) 506-9504
Cell: (480) 694-0394
Email: dawna.taylor@maricopa.gov

41835 N. Castle Hot Springs Rd.
Morristown, AZ 85342
Phone: (602) 506-2930
www.maricopa.gov/parks

PRESS RELEASE

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FIRE RESTRICTIONS INCREASED IN MARICOPA COUNTY'S REGIONAL PARKS

Maricopa County parks include smoking restrictions as part of fire ban

Recently, small brush fires have started popping up around the valley. On June 27, a five-acre brush fire exploded into a 2,500-acre wildfire in a matter of hours. This wildfire, now known as the Diamond Fire, borders McDowell Mountain Regional Park, which is managed by Maricopa County.



"On June 27, working closely with Scottsdale Fire Department, we evacuated and closed McDowell Mountain Regional Park to protect visitors and staff," said Maricopa County Supervisor Thomas Galvin, who represents District 2, where the park is located. "Unfortunately, some fire damage did occur, though so far, it has been minimal. Since the majority of the County's regional parks now border housing communities, I have asked our Parks Department if there are additional measures we can take to minimize the chance of a wildfire igniting in one of our parks. Fortunately, there are, and we are taking action."

"For the past month, my team has been monitoring the moisture in the air and the vegetation in the parks," said R.J. Cardin, Maricopa County Parks and Recreation director. "We have also been strategically clearing brush in areas to create fire breaks and defensible spaces. This spring, we had an abundance of vegetation growth, which now serves as fuel to help spread wildfires. Given what we're seeing at McDowell Mountain Regional Park, we have decided to heighten our fire restrictions to include smoking. This decision is not a knee-jerk reaction to the current situation, but rather a preventative measure to keep park visitors, the natural resources, and communities that surround the parks safe."

Effective Thursday, June 29, smoking in Maricopa County's regional parks will be prohibited, except within enclosed vehicles and campers. Individuals who smoke are asked to ensure that all materials are fully extinguished and disposed of properly. The Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department initiated its annual fire ban on May 1.

The department's decision to increase fire restrictions aligns with the [Bureau of Land Management, Tonto National Forest](#), and [Arizona State Park's](#) current fire restrictions.

The usual restrictions, which include banning the use of all campfires, fire pits, and charcoal in grills or any other manner, are still in effect; however, it is acceptable to use gas/propane grills in designated areas. Violation of Park Rule R-113 may result in a citation. A date to lift the fire ban has not been established.

Eleven Maricopa County regional parks have been affected by the fire ban: Lake Pleasant Regional Park, White Tank Mountain Regional Park, Adobe Dam Regional Park, Buckeye Hills Regional Park, Estrella Mountain Regional Park, Hassayampa River Preserve, San Tan Mountain Regional Park, Utery Mountain Regional Park, McDowell Mountain Regional Park, Cave Creek Regional Park, and Spur Cross Ranch Conservation Area.

If you have any questions regarding the fire ban, contact the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department at (602) 506-2930, or visit www.maricopa.gov/parks.

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