

Fire safety on USFS land being stressed

Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is expecting a busy Memorial Day weekend.

With its 6.3 million acres, the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is the largest national forest in the lower 48 states. Most forest recreation sites have opened for the season, with the remainder expected to open later in the summer as the snow in higher elevations melt. Visitors should also be aware that even if a recreation site is accessible, all amenities may not be available yet.

The Forest Service is asking equestrians to stay off higher elevation trails until conditions become dryer.

Despite snowy and muddy conditions at higher elevations, it is extremely dry at lower elevations. Forest officials are asking the public to be cautious with activities that could start a wildfire.

Despite recent rains, overall fire danger remains elevated due to extended drought.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest is encouraging visitors to follow several fire safety tips:

- Do not leave campfires unattended.
- Clear vegetation and dry debris down to bare soil within 10 feet around campfire.
- Be sure to completely put out campfires, leaving the site cold to the touch.
- Make sure lighting and heating devices are cool before refueling.

- Ensure cigarettes, cigars and tobacco pipes are fully extinguished when not in use.
- Use caution when operating vehicles in close proximity to vegetation.
- Spark arresting devices must be properly installed and maintained on all internal combustion engines.

Forest users also are reminded to avoid driving on snowy, wet or muddy roads. If an area is saturated, on or off-road vehicles will cause significant damage such as rutting, erosion, potholes and mud bogs.