

It had been 6 or 7 years since Safety has had our fire district assess our park for wildfire danger. The Park has changed quite a bit since then. Previous report from 2017 is in our website under Safety resources and this one will be added.

Tour and Comments by Fire Investigator, John McKenzie - May 31, 2024

Fire Investigator, John McKenzie and Battalion Chief, Chris Turner, who specializes in risk reduction, toured the Park. Their overall impression is that our Park and individual Sites are well defended from the prospect of fires but John did have some tips for the Club about ways that we can be vigilant and aware of potential fire dangers.

Comments from Walk Around the Nature Trail

- Pine needles on sheds at the top of the Park should be removed.
- The grass pile adjacent to the wood pile could be a fire danger as it dries out. One spark in the pile could smolder for up to 3 weeks before the pile could catch on fire.
- There were no other concerns noted in the Nature Trail

Comments from Tour Through the Streets and Meadow

- The design of the Park is well laid out and low-risk in terms of defensible space.
- Leaseholders should evaluate their personal lot space around their houses to assure that they have defensible space with no flammable material close to the house, under the eaves, or underneath if not skirted. Blowing embers can blow underneath and ignite potential fuel sources.

Other Comments and Advice to Club Members

- John wanted to stress that the types of wildfires we see at this time in the Pacific Northwest are very different from the fast burning and “crowning” types of fires experienced in California and other states in the Southwest. The fires here tend to burn slower and generally don’t “ladder” up trees and then burn across the top. In general the fires here burn closer to the ground. Extinguishing them can be laborious and time consuming as firefighters have to dig into the bases of trees to extinguish embers.
- If you have an old propane tank, you might consider trading it out for a new one with more improved safety features.
- Regarding fire extinguishers -
 - If the gauge is completely down on your fire extinguisher it is no longer usable and should be disposed of.

- If you need to purchase a fire extinguisher, one that is five pounds with a metal handle and hose would be best. Be aware of what type(s) of fires you may use your extinguisher on. Most now are rated A, B, and C
 - Type A - ordinary combustibles (eg. paper, wood, cloth, rubber, plastics)
 - Type B - liquids such as gasoline, grease, oil
 - Type C - electrical fires
- When putting out a fire, first stop, breathe and think. For a contained fire, cover it with a lid, towel, pillow - anything that can deprive it of air. Then use an extinguisher if needed. Turn off the flame under a pan on fire or slide it off the stove if possible. Turn off the electricity or propane to your house if there is a fire that cannot be contained and call 911.
- Be aware that items that have been in contact with any kind of oil (cooking, fragrant oils, car oils), even after they have been washed, can be ignited by the heat in a dryer.
- In the event of a fire in your house, close doors and windows to deprive it of oxygen and prevent further spread. John recommends sleeping with your bedroom door closed in the event that a fire starts somewhere else in the house. He estimates that because almost everything in our houses is highly flammable, there is only a very small window of time in which to escape if our houses catch on fire.
- Our propane tanks are generally safe. If you are aware of a leak in your tank or hose, turn off the propane if you can safely, then get away from it and call for help.
- 10% of structure fires are caused by lithium ion batteries catching fire or exploding. Those are batteries such as those used in e-bikes, scooters, power tools, vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, etc. You are advised to not charge anything except phones and computers unless you are at home and awake. Never charge batteries in entryways or exit paths of structures. They tend to burn more when they are charging. Beware of off brands. If possible, buy ones that are approved by UL (Underwriter's Lab). Lithium ion batteries cannot take heat. If they heat up they may catch fire and possibly explode. If you have a lithium ion battery that is damaged, dispose of it in a metal box. Damaged batteries can start fires weeks, months, years, after they are damaged. An important reminder is that these batteries charge in four hours and lose less than 10% of their charge in a month. They do not need to stay on the charger for long periods of time. He recommends we check how long we charge the batteries for our power tools in the shop.
- Smoke Alarms - They now last about ten years but some may malfunction earlier. Keep them away from ignition sources. Explosive gas meters such as our

propane detectors should be placed low in houses. Carbon monoxide detectors can be placed low or high in a room.

- Extension cords should only be used temporarily and not for high current appliances or machines. Power strips also. Standard power strips can only service 14-15 amps and shouldn't be used for anything that draws a lot of current such as heaters, electric blankets, etc.
- One reason Clallam County serves our park rather than Jefferson County is that Clallam responds with medics and can provide a higher level of care than Jefferson County. We get engines from Blynn and Station 5 at Diamond Point.

This and other resources listed under Safety on our DBR website should give us some confidence that we are 'Ember Aware' outside and knowledgeable about creating defensible space on our lots and informed on smart use of rechargeable batteries and our electricity inside.