

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Board of County Commissioners

October 31, 2023



Okaloosa County Enacts Burn Ban

Okaloosa County, Florida – The Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners passed a local State of Emergency on Tuesday, Oct. 31, 2023, giving it the authority to enact a burn ban for Okaloosa County, effective immediately.

After coordination with the Florida Forest Service, Commissioners agreed that the danger posed by the existing and forecast weather conditions that include low humidity, increased wind, and a lack of precipitation, justify an appropriate response in the best interest and safety of Okaloosa County residents.

“The safety of our residents is a top priority for the County,” said Okaloosa County Board Chairman Trey Goodwin. “Enacting a burn ban is a tool for us to avoid any potential harms that may come from our current weather situation and is the appropriate action to take to prevent human-caused wildfires.”

The burn ban will be in place for 7 days and may be extended as necessary in 7-day increments.

This ban prohibits outdoor burning in Okaloosa County, including:

- All outdoor burning of any combustible material
- Bonfires
- Campfires
- Warming fires
- Outdoor fire places
- Chimney
- Cooking fire, unless it is exclusively within a contained, attended and monitored gas or charcoal grill

Anyone found guilty of violating the burn ban can be charged with a second-degree misdemeanor. Upon notification of suspected burning, firefighters will respond to the scene and take immediate measures to contain and/or extinguish the fire.

Exception to the burn ban may be granted by the Florida Forest Service after a request for such exception is submitted by the individual concerned and an onsite inspection is made and is determined by the Florida Forest Service representative that such burning can be safely accomplished.

Additionally, the National Weather Service has issued a Fire Weather Watch for Okaloosa and surrounding counties. A Fire Weather Watch means that critical fire weather conditions are forecast to occur. Stay current on weather conditions at <https://www.weather.gov/mob/>.

For tips on how to be wildfire ready and for more information about the Florida Forest Service go to <https://www.fdacs.gov/Forest-Wildfire/Wildland-Fire/Fire-Prevention/Be-Wildfire-Ready>.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER NICK TOMECEK AT 850.651.7321

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RESOLUTION NO. 2023 - 180

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY RELATIVE TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS; MITIGATING THE PUBLIC SAFETY HAZARD POSED BY WILDFIRES DURING THE CURRENT DRY WEATHER CONDITIONS; CURTAILING THE PRACTICE OF OUTDOOR BURNING; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, due to the dry, parched, drought and windy conditions and the resultant threat of wildfires in Okaloosa County, emergency measures are required to protect the health, safety, welfare and property of Okaloosa County residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners (“Board”) hereby finds that the circumstances present in Okaloosa County create a public safety hazard that would be exacerbated by outdoor burning; and

WHEREAS, the Okaloosa County Department of Public Safety and the Florida Forest Service have conferred and support the banning of open burning; and

WHEREAS, Okaloosa County is a political subdivision of the State of Florida, and pursuant to Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, “State of Florida Emergency Management Act” and Article III, section 9-42 of the Okaloosa County Code of Ordinances, is authorized to find and declare a “Local State of Emergency” in Okaloosa County and exercise those powers conferred by Chapter 252; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Chapter 252, Florida Statutes, and section 9-42 of the Okaloosa County Code, in the absence of a decision made by a quorum of the Board, the Chairman is empowered to declare a local state of emergency and extend same.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA:

1. Recitals.
 - a. The above recitals are true and correct and are hereby incorporated.
2. Local State of Emergency.
 - a. A local state of emergency is hereby declared pursuant to section 252.38(3), Florida Statutes.
3. Actions Prohibited.
 - a. During the local state of emergency, the following activities shall be prohibited:
 - i. all outdoor burning of any combustible material,
 - ii. bonfires,

- iii. campfires,
- iv. warming fires,
- v. outdoor fire places,
- vi. chimneys, and
- vii. cooking fires *unless* it is exclusively within a contained, attended and monitored gas or charcoal grill.

4. Exceptions.

- a. Firefighter training.
- b. Burn operations approved by the Florida Forest Service.

5. Enforcement.

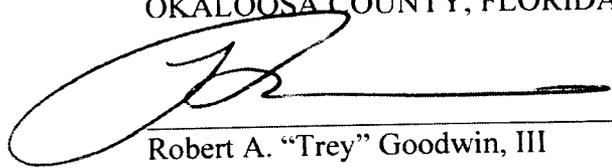
- a. Pursuant to section 252.50, Florida Statutes, any person violating this Resolution is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree.
- b. Upon notification of suspected outdoor burning, the Fire District of such jurisdiction shall respond to the scene and take immediate measures to contain and/or extinguish the fire.

6. Effective Date.

- a. This Resolution shall become effective upon adoption.
- b. This declared "Local State of Emergency" shall continue to be in effect for seven (7) days and may be extended as necessary in 7-day increments.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA, THIS 31st DAY OF October, 2023.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
OKALOOSA COUNTY, FLORIDA



Robert A. "Trey" Goodwin, III
CHAIRMAN



ATTEST:



Digitally signed by
JD Peacock II
Date: 2023.10.31
12:51:50 -05'00'

J.D. Peacock, II
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

