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Mount Charleston Residents on Edge Over Fire Danger

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The long holiday weekend has many heading to Mount Charleston to escape the heat and that has mountain residents and fire crews concerned about possible wildfires.

A walk in the cool weather among the big trees is a simple joy for the Whitaker family and many others who like to spend time on Mount Charleston. The Whitaker family understands the dangers that can come with being careless.

"It's a shame to come up here and be careless and destroy all of this beautiful scenery," said Ronald Whitaker, camper.

To keep the risk low, the fire danger has been set to extreme and that means strict rules are being enforced. The U.S. Forest Service and firefighters hope everyone will pay attention to keep the mountain safe.

"Our fire restrictions as far as use means that you can only have a fire or a charcoal in U.S. Forest Service approved sites, and we are asking that people smoke only with in their vehicles," said Capt. Damien Gusmerotti, Nevada Division of Forestry.

Although the residents on the mountain are familiar with the rules, they fear visitors may not be and it could result in a fire. Several years ago there was a fire on the mountain that posed a serious threat to residents.

"We know it could happen to us and it is a concern," said Walter Zwijac, resident.

To help set minds at ease, the Nevada Fire Safe Council is working to make homes on the mountain more safe from fires.

"People are making sure they have the underside of their decks in closed that they have pine needles removed from their gutters or off of their roof line," said Kim Otero, Nevada Fire Safe Council.

Many Mount Charleston residents keep water hoses handy for firefighters on their porches. Some have also removed trees close to their homes hoping it will earn them a better view of a forest that's not as susceptible to a fire no matter who visits.

Fire officials want to remind visitors to the mountain there is a \$275 fine for an illegal campfire.



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