

**REGULATIONS RE: COOKING OR WARMING FIRES
ON THE RUSSIAN RIVER BEACHES
FITCH MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION
Updated version Sept 2017**

- **Del Rio Woods beach:**

The on-site sign reads: **“NO FIRES – Fitch Mountain is an Extreme Fire Danger Area.”**
So, **NO FIRES. NONE. PERIOD. IN NO FORM. NOWHERE, not even in the picnic-table area. NO BBQs, Webers, etc., either**

The beach area owned by the Sonoma County Regional Park comprises ca. 8.5 acres, running approximately 1,000 feet, from #2781 S. Fitch Mountain Rd (property just to the left of the entrance to the beach parking lot) downstream past #2538 S. Fitch Mountain Road and ending just beyond the Big Rock Curve [with the fire hydrant]. The property owned by the County does NOT include the river access at the north end of Redwood Drive, so that piece is NOT legally part of the County beach, and not subject to the Park regulations.

- **On the Russian River beaches in the unincorporated (County) areas:**

All the beach areas upstream and downstream of the Del Rio Woods beach.

A cooking or warming fire is allowed by Sonoma County regulations. It must be less than 3 feet in diameter and the flames must not exceed 2 feet in height. No fire is allowed on private property without the owner's permission.

“Warming and cooking fires shall be constantly attended until the fire is extinguished. A minimum of one portable fire extinguisher with a minimum 4-A rating or other *approved* on-site fire-extinguishing equipment, shall be available for immediate utilization.” - (Ref 2013 CFC Sec. 307)

Please note that if someone has a fire on the beach, County regulations require them to have a fire extinguisher. **No extinguisher = no legally-allowed fire! Weber-type BBQs** would seem to be allowed, but only along with a fire extinguisher.

BUT, local fire departments have very strongly recommended that NO FIRES WHATSOEVER be on the Russian River beach in the vicinity of Fitch Mountain, since the beach is the “toe area” of a heavily wooded, very flammable, and extremely dangerous mountain slope. They recommended signs that say something to the effect of: ***FITCH MOUNTAIN IS AN EXTREME FIRE-DANGER AREA! NO FIRES, PLEASE.*** Anyone may post an appropriate sign with this wording.

AND, the SC Sheriff's Dept recommends that when we see “rock rings” on the beach that have been used for fires that we “**scatter & destroy**,” to discourage re-use in the future.

Related question: *Who owns the beach?* Legal research (carried out in 2015 by the County) clearly confirms that **the public does indeed have a right to access the beaches along the Russian River, and that these rights are protected at the state and federal levels. The public enjoys unhindered access to beaches along the river up as far as the “Ordinary High Water Mark” (OHWM; in practice, for this stretch of the RR, the entire beach extending to the far banks). However, these beaches must be accessed by way of public easements and access points, and cannot be reached by trespassing through private property.**

Therefore, if property owners post No Trespassing signs on the portion of their property that is riverfront beach those signs have no legal force, and the State may order them removed. (For more info on this matter, contact FMA President.)