



DEP NEWS RELEASE

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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NEW JERSEY FOREST FIRE SERVICE TO CELEBRATE 75TH BIRTHDAY OF SMOKEY BEAR WITH BIG BASH AT LIBERTY STATE PARK IN JERSEY CITY

(19/P57) TRENTON – The New Jersey Forest Fire Service will fete the nation’s most famous bear on Saturday, Aug. 10, with a daylong celebration to teach children and remind the public of the many ways they can help prevent wildfires, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe announced.



This year marks the 75th birthday of Smokey Bear, whose motto “Only YOU Can Prevent Wildfires,” resonates strongly in New Jersey. The Forest Fire Service has a day of family oriented celebratory activities planned, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., rain or shine at Liberty State Park in Jersey City, Hudson County. A parking fee of \$7 per carload will be charged. Children’s activities are free.

“New Jersey is recognized as a global leader on many fronts, including wildfire prevention,” Commissioner McCabe said. “As our Forest Fire Service works year round to keep our communities safe, it also is important for the public to recognize their role in helping to prevent wildfires. Celebrating Smokey Bear and his message is a great way for the public to work with us and be good stewards in protecting our environment.”

Smokey Bear will arrive by helicopter to join his celebration, which will feature marching bands, a disc jockey, petting zoo and multiple bounce houses for children, and various fire apparatus such as fire trucks, plows and more. His official birthday is Friday, Aug. 9.

“The New Jersey Forest Fire Service has a great day planned for the public and I encourage everyone to come out and have a fun day,” Parks and Forestry Director Olivia Glenn said. “Children can do age-appropriate activities that simulate the training process of our wildland firefighters, interact with Smokey and enjoy a scavenger hunt in one of the state’s most beautiful and scenic parks.”



Some indoor activities will be offered at the Central Railroad Terminal Building at the park, including a display of vintage Smokey Bear posters. In addition, Smokey Bear public service announcements dating from the 1950s will play in a theater at the terminal building, as well as the Forest Fire Service’s video entry for the nationwide “Smokey Bear Challenge,” in which states have challenged one another to come up with the best promotion of Smokey Bear’s milestone birthday. Look for an assist in New Jersey’s video from the Statue of Liberty, which is part of the stunning views from Liberty State Park.

Some activities will move to the terminal in case of inclement weather.

“Nearly all wildfires are caused by people, through accidents, carelessness, negligence and even arson,” said Forest Fire Service Chief Gregory S. McLaughlin. “This event is an opportunity to combine education and a fun day outdoors to help the public appreciate that a wildfire can happen in moments, putting lives and homes at risk, while also teaching children the importance of fire safety.”

Smokey Bear and his catchphrase is the longest-running public service campaign in U.S. history. Created in 1944, Smokey Bear has educated generations of Americans about their role in preventing fires. The campaign is run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service, the National Association of State Foresters and the Ad Council.

Smokey Bear’s public awareness campaign has evolved over 75 years to focus on the prevention of forest fires to prevention of wildfires, due in part to significant outbreaks of wildfires in natural areas other than forests. The current message also clarifies the difference between

prevention of unwanted and unplanned outdoor fires versus prescribed burns, which are intentionally set by firefighters to burn away materials that could accelerate a wildfire.

Wildfires can have a great impact in New Jersey where many people live in or near forests, grasslands and other natural areas. Accordingly, the New Jersey Forest Fire Service works to prevent wildfires year-round through public outreach and education efforts, maintenance of fire breaks and prescribed burning.

For more information about Smokey Bear and the “Only YOU Can Prevent Wildfires” campaign, visit www.smokeybear.com.

To participate in an ongoing Smokey Bear 75th Anniversary GeoTour (GT92), visit www.geocaching.com/blog/2019/07/happy-birthday-and-happy-geotour-smokey-bear/.

To learn more about wildfires in New Jersey, steps to protect property and other resources, visit www.njwildfire.org.

To find your local Forest Fire Service office, visit www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/fire/contactus.html.

Like the New Jersey Forest Fire Service on Facebook and follow us to learn more about the event, at www.facebook.com/NJForestFireService/.

Learn more about Liberty State Park at www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/parks/liberty.html.

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