

April 16, 2023

WHITEFIELD FIRE & RESCUE

Monthly Report for March 2023

Dear Residents of Whitefield

The WFR report for March is abbreviated because of difficulties with the run data recording system. These should be corrected in time for the April report.

All I can say by way of run data is that in March WFR had four fire calls and 15 medical calls. Medical calls are regularly around half or more of the town's monthly emergency calls; a figure which illustrates the importance of having qualified medical first responders in the town. Currently, Whitefield has four first responders, of which two work outside town and cannot always be available.

We have all noticed and enjoyed the advent of warmer weather but it also means that we are entering one of the most dangerous times of the year for woods and brush fires. The snow is essentially now gone – except perhaps for some sheltered pockets deep in the woods. Meanwhile, the spring sun is high and hot and in the absence of foliage on trees its rays quickly dry out the duff – accumulated leaf and brush cover on the ground. This condition persists until trees fully leaf out, usually sometime in May. Periods of scanty rainfall, which we seem to be experiencing more frequently lately, naturally aggravate the situation.

At times like these, please be extra careful with any outside burning or other heat source such as grilling, use of motorized machinery, or smoking. Once the leaves on the ground have dried out even a small spark can set off a fire which can quickly spread if not noticed, especially in times of high wind. We recently participated in a mutual aid call to a woods fire apparently started during a wood cutting operation. Responding firefighters quickly knocked the fire down but not before it had approached to within a few feet of a house on two sides.

Outside open fires require a burn permit. These can be obtained on-line at the Maine Forest Service's website (below), which also has information about the daily fire danger status.

<https://apps1.web.maine.gov/burnpermit/public/index.html>

Same day burn permits can also be obtained by contacting the Town Office (207-549-5175) during regular office hours. If you wish to obtain a permit after hours or for the following day you may contact the following:

WFR Chief Jesse Barton 557-0744

Deputy Chief Bryan Ross 215-4768

Assistant Chief Ben Caron 523-0856