



News Release



Contra Costa County Fire Protection District and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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SERIAL ARSONIST ARREST

JOINT INVESTIGATION BETWEEN

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District (CCCFPD) and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

Today as part of a Joint Task Force of CCCFPD and CAL FIRE and with the assistance and support of the Contra Costa County Sheriff, Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office have arrested **James William Wilson**, age 29, on suspicion of violating California Penal Code Section 451(c): "...willfully and maliciously setting fire to forest land...". Wilson was taken into custody in Bay Point this morning without incident. Wilson was booked at the Contra Costa County Jail in Martinez on eight counts of arson with bail set at \$1 million. Bail in this case was enhanced due to the nature of the activity during the Governor's Emergency Declaration.

Starting in early April of 2015, CCCFPD fire investigators noticed a pattern of vegetation fires occurring in the Bay Point Area of northeastern part of Contra Costa County. By late spring, the pattern of fire activity spread to other areas of the County. Investigators from CCCFPD and CAL FIRE established a joint investigation which has led to the arrest today. Wilson's activities are attributed to more than 30 fires along State Route 4, State Route 24 and Marsh Creek Road. The communities of Orinda, Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Concord, Martinez, Pittsburg, Clayton and Brentwood have all been affected by this activity which includes threat to lives and loss of property.

Although Mr. Wilson has been arrested, the investigation into these fires continues. Anyone familiar with this suspect or who may have any information pertaining to related fires in this series is asked to call the CCCFPD Arson Tip Line at (866) 50ARSON (866-502-7766).

CCCFPD and CAL FIRE continue to ask everyone to be careful in the outdoors. Residents should be vigilant in their preparedness and aware of suspicious persons when a fire does start. Suspicious activity should be reported including the time, individual's physical description, and a vehicle description, including the license plate number. Always contact law enforcement, never approach a suspicious person.

More than 10,000 firefighters are on the line today fighting fires in California. And the forecasts continue to show there is no relief coming anytime soon. One less Spark prevents a possible wildfire. More information on how you can be prepared for wildfires is available at www.readyforwildfire.org

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