

Natural Resource News

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Fremont-Winema National Forests
Lakeview District BLM
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USDA's Fremont-Winema National Forests
(Includes Bly, Chemult, Chiloquin, Klamath, Lakeview, Paisley, and Silver Lake Ranger Districts)
USDI's Bureau of Land Management, Lakeview District
(Includes Klamath Falls and Lakeview Resource Areas)

For Immediate Release

2003 Matsutake Mushroom Season Wrap-up

Season Ends –The 2003 Matsutake mushroom season officially ended on November 14th. Total permit sales from the Fremont-Winema, Deschutes, Umpqua and Willamette National Forests was \$144,050 for 1,527 permits. This was slightly lower than the 2002 season when 1,873 permits were sold for \$170,910. The 1997 season remains the record year when permit sales topped \$365,000.

Prices paid for mushrooms ranged from \$2 - \$14 for #1 and #2 graded mushrooms throughout the 2003 season. This was lower than last year when prices rose into the high \$20's and low \$30's near the end of the season for #1's and #2's.

Communication and Interpreter - Once again, Koy Chounlabout, language interpreter, worked for the Chemult Ranger District assisting with educational programs provided to harvesters. Her skills in language interpretation are extremely valuable to the Forest Service when explaining permit guidelines and proper picking techniques to the Asian community that follows the mushroom crop from Canada to California each year. Koy also worked as an interpreter when different media representatives came to learn about the program, and report on the season. This was Koy's sixth season working at Chemult.

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Law Enforcement - There were numerous citations issued throughout the season for picking without a permit, or harvesting in a closed area. Litter and illegal picking in non-harvest areas continued to be a problem.

There were five Search and Rescue efforts during the season. All the lost pickers were found safely with the exception of one who died from a heart attack.

Average Media Season – Reporters from the Herald and News, and KDKF TV, spent a day observing the permit issuing process, touring the harvest areas, and visiting an industrial mushroom camp. They had the opportunity to learn how the valuable mushroom is found in the forest, and the correct method of removal. They also toured the camp near Crescent Lake Junction to see the make-shift community that is set up by the pickers each year. In addition, a freelance writer and photographer from New York spent a few days gathering pictures and information for a story to be published at a later date.

For more information about the Matsutake mushroom program contact the Chemult Ranger District at 541-365-7001 or the Crescent Ranger District at 541-433-3200.

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