

# Braving Florida's Raging Infernos

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picnic areas and trees surrounding the soccer fields suffered the most. Luckily, the soccer field itself escaped serious damage.

Back in Daytona Beach, Nicholson was also having a problem with irrigation water. Although the football field is next to the water re-use plant, all available water HAD TO BE be channeled to putting out these fires - lives as well as property were at stake.

Chris McCarthy, Parks Supervisor, City of Sebastian, said that the closest actual fire to them was about 10 miles to the north in a wildlife refuge area

but that the combination of heat (temperatures remain in the upper 90s even now), smoke and the smell of the actual fires made it difficult to be outside for any more than a couple hours at a time.



Picnic area at Ormond Beach Recreation Complex

The heat, smoke and ash throughout the region were a big factor in cancellations of sporting events in many parts of Florida. Exposure, especially during the exertion of practice and competition, were a physical risk. Crew time in that environment needed to be monitored closely.

Masks were provided to McCarthy's crew and it was up to the discretion of each individual to wear them or not. Breaks after about 2 hours were mandatory.

We hear as we get ready to go to press that the rains have begun again and the fires have died down and are under control. Our sports turf managers, and everyone else in the area, can begin anew. Our prayers are with you guys - keep us informed of your progress

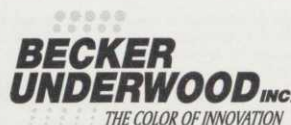
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