



OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SHASTA

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Serial Arsonist Enters Pleas in Connection with 2013 Fires

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Zane Peterson Facing Lengthy Prison Sentence After Pleading to 22 Felony Counts

Today, Zane Wallace Peterson, 31, pled guilty to 22 felony counts stemming from a series of arson fires he ignited between September and November of 2013. As a result of his pleas, Peterson will be sentenced to state prison for a minimum of 35 years, 8 months and a maximum of 44 years.

The plea agreement, which was accepted by The Honorable Cara Beatty, involved Peterson pleading to charges related to all of the fires which he is accused of starting.

In connection with the September 6, 2013, "Panda" fire, Peterson pled to one count of arson of forest land. This fire consumed approximately ¼ acre of vegetation.

In connection with the September 8, 2013, "Happy" fire, Peterson pled to one count of arson of forest land. This fire consumed approximately 1/5 acre of vegetation.

The most serious and damaging fire set by Peterson was the September 9, 2013, "Clover" fire. This fire, which involved two separate ignitions by Peterson, burned over 8,000 acres and destroyed more than 60 homes. This fire also resulted in the death of Brian Henry. In the plea agreement related to this incident, Peterson admitted to 15 counts of arson (for the fire itself) and one count of voluntary manslaughter (for the death of Mr. Henry).

Following the Clover Fire, Peterson continued to set arson fires. On October 8, 2013, he set the "Gulch" fire. In connection with that incident, Peterson pled to one count of arson of forest land.

On October 9, 2013, Peterson set the "Forty" fire, for which he pled to one count of arson of forest land.

On October 11, 2013, Peterson set the "Logan" fire, which resulted in his plea to one count of arson of forest land.

Finally, on November 30, 2013, Peterson set the "Hawthorne 2" fire. In connection to that fire, Peterson pled to one count of arson of forest land.

Peterson was arrested in December 2013 following a lengthy and exhaustive investigation by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire).

Peterson remains in custody in the Shasta County Jail, where he has been held since his arrest. Peterson will return to Department 2 of the superior court on October 18, 2016, at 8:30 am. On that date, the court will receive a written sentencing recommendation from the probation department and a formal sentencing hearing will be set. At the sentencing hearing, the court will determine the total state prison sentence following the presentation of evidence by the prosecution and defense.

Because his pleas are to crimes which are considered violent felonies under California law, Peterson will be required to serve at least 85 percent of any prison sentence imposed.

As part of his sentence, Peterson will also be required to register as an arson offender for his lifetime.

Peterson will also be required to compensate victims for any financial losses suffered as a result of his crimes. Victims of his crimes have a right to be heard at sentencing. The Shasta County District Attorney encourages any interested victims to contact the Crime Victims' Assistance Center at 530-225-5220 if they wish to provide a victim impact statement to the court or request restitution at sentencing.