

Upgrades Coming for Fire Rings on Southern California Beaches

DIAMOND BAR, CA — Most of us have gone to the beach or to a campground and are familiar with fire rings. Sitting around fire rings with friends, perhaps



Mike Van Buren.



A few of the fire rings presently on southern California beaches.



A California tradition, fire rings have been enjoyed by multitudes of people over the years.

cooking marshmallows or hot dogs, is often part of the beach or camping experience.

Wood-burning fire rings come in a variety of shapes and sizes; some are constructed of concrete and some of steel, and some even have grills covering all or part of them. One thing they all do have in common is that the combustion of wood, often not well-seasoned or wet, is technically best characterized as uncontrolled biomass combustion and produces substantial amounts of air pollutants.

In more populated areas that may have air quality problems due to numerous reasons, such as southern California, the added pollutants produced by fire rings is significant, particularly to nearby residents.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is a regional air quality agency with jurisdiction over air quality in California's South Coast Air Basin ("The LA area") that has a population of 17 million. Over 760 beach fire rings are known to be in use on the South Coast Air Basin beaches.

The SCAQMD released a Request for Proposals July 12, 2013 for the demonstration of low-emission, non-wood devices for new beach-type fire rings and/or low-emission non-wood-burning retrofit equipment and devices for existing outdoor public beach-type fire rings. The SCAQMD made two awards of \$300,000 each. One went to Earth's Flame of Corona, California, the other to Blazing Design of Essex Junction, Vermont.

Earth's Flame will develop and test two systems. One will be a natural gas-fueled retrofit device designed to be installed into existing concrete fire rings. The other will be a portable propane-fueled system.

Blazing Design will demonstrate low-emission fire rings consisting of a poured masonry pad and a rebar reinforced concrete ring. The systems will comply with ANSI Z21.97 safety requirements.

Both Earth's Flame and Blazing Design will demonstrate up to 15 units at selected beach sites for a 12-month period.

— James E. Houck

“Earth's Flame is excited to have received grant funding from the South Coast Air Quality Management District to develop clean-burning firepits on the southern California beaches. Like wood-burning fireplaces, firepits are an American tradition that we want to ensure continues for generations to come.

“Our design for firepits will be similar to our patented technology for wood-burning fireplaces. This Hybrid clean-burn system will be designed for gas, and future developments will include wood. Being a part of new concepts for beach firepits that focus on improving air quality is an opportunity to make a difference to the environment.”

— Lisa Leighton



Lisa Leighton.



Earth's Flame retrofit device.



Earth's Flame portable beach fire ring.