



Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group

For Immediate Release

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Responsible target shooting keeps public lands accessible and safe from wildfire

PORTLAND, Ore. — Target shooting can start wildfires under the extremely hot and dry weather conditions the region has been experiencing this summer. Fire agencies have responded to reports of smoke and fire as a result of target shooters using stumps, logs and trees as targets, particularly when surrounded by flammable vegetation. The heat of a bullet passing through decaying wood can start a fire. So can hot bullet fragments that land in dry grass.

In order to help prevent wildfires, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has temporarily banned all target shooting on 3 million acres of DNR-managed lands. This includes state forests, WDFW-managed lands, community forests, and forested state lands. The ban went into effect on Aug. 4, 2018.

“I know this is an inconvenience to our recreational shooters, but current conditions require us to take reasonable steps to reduce wildfire risk,” said Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz. “Resources are stretched and we must all do our part to protect our communities and our firefighters.”

Protect your favorite places to play. Knowing the basics helps prevent wildfire on public lands and ensures everyone’s ability to safely access and enjoy their favorite target shooting areas well into the future.

Follow regulations, be respectful, and use good judgement:

- Seek permission from the landowner where you plan to shoot. They can provide a safe designated shooting area.
- Check the rules and regulations in the area you are visiting.
- Gun ranges or designated areas with shooting lanes are the safest options. Always know what is behind the backstop. Make sure you are at least 150 yards from a residence, building, campsite, developed recreation area or occupied area.
- During fire season, voluntarily stop shooting after 1 p.m. on hot days.
- Use legitimate targets. Do not use trees or other natural objects as targets. Use targets made of:
 - Cardboard, paper
 - Or manufactured thrown-type clay (clay pigeons)
 - Wooden backing on targets is not allowed.
- Always place targets against a non-flammable backstop of mineral soil and clear of flammable debris for 20 feet on all sides. Avoid shooting against rocks, which can set off sparks.
- Never use incendiary ammunition or exploding targets, which are prohibited on public lands.

- ❑ Avoid both steel-core ammunition as well as steel targets, as they can present fire risks.
- ❑ Always bring a fire extinguisher, water and a shovel, and place them near target areas to help immediately extinguish any fires. After shooting, stay on site for at least an hour afterward to ensure no fires have started. Check the target area for any signs of smoke, heat or fire.
- ❑ Do not shoot household appliances or other objects dumped in shooting areas. Pack out all target trash including shotgun shells, fragmented clay pigeons, or any targets. Trash left at shooting sites gives a negative impression of shooters.

Since January 2017, Oregon has suppressed 18 fires related to firearms, exploding targets, and other ammunition-caused fires. On average, Washington DNR responds to 22 wildfires on their managed lands each year caused by shooting; that also includes illegal explosive targets and target practice.

Please check with your local wildland fire protection agency or rural fire district for target shooting restrictions specific to your area. In addition, visit the links below for additional fire prevention information, including public fire restrictions.

Oregon Department of Forestry: www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/Pages/Restrictions.aspx

Keep Oregon Green (KOG): www.keeporegongreen.org

Pacific Northwest Fire Adapted Communities: www.PNWFAC.org

Washington Department of Natural Resources: www.dnr.wa.gov/WildfirePrevention

Oregon State Fire Marshal: www.oregon.gov/osp/sfm/pages/index.aspx

The Pacific Northwest Wildfire Coordinating Group is established to provide a coordinated interagency approach to wildfire management in Oregon and Washington. PNWCG provides leadership in interface and wildland fire management for local, tribal, state and federal agencies and their constituents to enhance firefighter safety and protection of life, property, and natural resources.

PNWCG is comprised of USDA-Forest Service; USDI-Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service; Oregon Department of Forestry; Washington Department of Natural Resources; Washington Association of Fire Chiefs; The Oregon Fire Chiefs Association; The Oregon State Fire Marshal and the Washington State Fire Marshal.