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A few words of gratitude to the essential firefighters and support members



The Bureau of Land Management Oregon & Washington

A First for Wildfire Training

BLM runs first-ever wildfire boot camp for women in eastern Oregon

Twenty aspiring firefighters attended the Women in Wildland Fire Boot Camp this fall in eastern Oregon. The camp was a first for the BLM in the Pacific Northwest.

The women came from across the region and country for basic wildland fire training.

The paid opportunity was over the last two weekends of October and fulfilled several key training requirements for seasonal wildfire jobs within the federal government.

Cassandra Fleckenstein, a fire manager for the BLM in Vale, said she wanted to offer the training because some people can get lost within the larger fire schools.

“I decided to start a camp here where women can learn together in smaller groups of about 20 people,” said Fleckenstein during training.

Women studied and practiced firefighting techniques in the field.

“I was amazed at how much I loved fire,” said one woman. “It was an all-around amazing experience.”

2018 Fire Season Recap

More than 1.3 million acres in the Northwest were impacted by wildfires

Across the Pacific Northwest, 3,686 fires affected 1.34 million acres—901,613 acres in Oregon and 438,868 acres in Washington.

Southwest Oregon was once again an epicenter of activity, after a July 15 thunderstorm ignited nearly 200 new fires. The largest fire in Oregon was the 175,258-acre Klondike Fire, which burned primarily on the Kalmiopsis Wilderness. The fire was managed by an incident management team until Nov. 3.

Central Oregon experienced 12 fires that impacted lands across multiple jurisdictions, requiring significant support from Central Oregon Fire Management Services, a consortium of BLM and Forest Service resources. Of the 355,344 acres burned, 64,702 acres were on BLM-managed lands.

Rangeland Fire Protection Associations again played a significant role in initial attack and suppression efforts on 105 incidents in central and eastern Oregon.

In Washington, fire season was a little slower to start but ramped up with mostly human-caused fires. Of the 1,732 fires in the state, 84 percent were human caused.

The largest fire was the Grass Valley Fire, which burned 75,573 acres.

Washington also had 160,472 acres of sage grouse habitat impacted, whereas Oregon only had 10,402 acres affected.

Unmanned Aerial Systems, or drones, were frequently used on fires this year, for everything from scouting line and detecting spot fires, to aerial ignitions and mapping.

Wildfire Strategy

Working together to make a difference on cohesive strategy

The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy has three goals: resilient landscapes, fire adapted communities, and safe and effective wildfire response.

The National Cohesive Strategy is a commitment to the mindset that as stakeholders we all share responsibility for managing our public lands, protecting natural resources and creating safe communities.

“It is not just a fire program thing,” said recently retired Dayne Barron, who worked in southwest Oregon on collaborative efforts. “The strategy must be fully

integrated into our resource management program.”

The presence of larger and longer-duration wildfires, many of which cross multiple jurisdictions, demands that land managers work together across agency boundaries and on a larger scale. The strategy summons us to enhance preparedness where risks are the highest, prioritizing community protection.

Success is contingent upon strategic alignment, collaborative engagement and programmatic integration.

Together, we can make a difference.



Fact:
In 2018, about 1,340,481 reported acres were affected by wildfire in the Pacific Northwest.

Fact:
In Oregon, 65 percent of fires were human-caused and 35 percent were lightning-started.



Fact:
In Washington, 84 percent of fires were human-caused and 16 percent were lightning-started.

Fact:
Incident management teams from the Northwest mobilized 59 times.



Fact:
A total of 45,203 lightning strikes were recorded, with 8,272 strikes recorded on June 20.

Rangeland Fire Protection Associations

The RFPA model is based on the motto “neighbors helping neighbors”

Fact:

In Oregon, the largest fire was the Klondike at 175,258 acres.

Fact:

In Washington, the largest fire was the Grass Valley at 75,573 acres.

Fact:

In Oregon, fires affected 10,402 acres of sage grouse habitat.

Fact:

In Washington, fires affected 160,472 acres of sage grouse habitat.

In 1964, the first Rangeland Fire Protection Association (RFPA) was formed in northern Malheur County.

RFPAs are a volunteer nonprofit comprised of ranchers and farmers in remote areas, often where there may be no state, federal, or local fire department.

The RFPA model is based on the motto “neighbors helping neighbors.”

Volunteers are sometimes the first responders to a fire and fight alongside BLM firefighters. In addition, they bring local knowledge of road access to remote areas, and a passionate motivation to protect the land.

Oregon has a robust network of 23 RFPAs covering over 16 million acres of rangeland.

Brent Meisinger is the BLM coordinator for RFPAs on the east side of the state. In this role, he serves as a liaison to the RFPAs during large fires, fosters partnerships, coordinates meetings, and maintains a network of communication between ranchers and the BLM.

“Ranchers are more likely to understand why the BLM fights fire the way that they do, and the BLM is more aware of the issues happening within the ranching community,” said Meisinger of the importance of collaboration.

“RFPAs have successfully created a platform for partnership and trust that increases regional adaptive capacity,” he added.

Thank You, BLM Fire Team!

A few words of gratitude to the essential firefighters and support members

To you who dug line, moved hose lines, erected fire camps, coordinated logistics and a thousand other jobs required to manage wildland fires, we offer our heartfelt gratitude.

As a leader in managing wildland fire, the BLM carries out a broad range of actions to protect the public, natural landscapes, wildlife habitat, recreational areas, and other values and resources.

The BLM’s Fire and Aviation Program, which focuses on public and firefighter safety as

its top priority, consists of fire suppression, preparedness, predictive services, vegetative fuels management, prescribed fire, community assistance and fire prevention through education.

To meet its wildland fire-related challenges, the BLM is committed to managing fire in the safest, most effective and efficient ways possible.

Firefighters and those who support them, please take a bow!



Facts at Your

Fingertips

BLM Oregon
1220 SW 3rd
Portland, OR
97227

blm.gov

Facebook/BLMOregon
Flickr/BLMOregon
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