



NEWS

November 2, 2006

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
SOUTHWEST OREGON DISTRICT
5286 Table Rock RD
Central Point, OR 97502

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SOUTHWEST OREGON NEWS MEDIA

Contact: Greg Alexander, Medford Unit Forester, (541) 664-3328
Rick Dryer, Grants Pass Unit Forester, (541) 474-3152

FIRE SEASON ENDS ON ODF-PROTECTED LANDS

The Oregon Department of Forestry's Southwest Oregon District declared an end to the 2006 fire season today. This declaration affects state, private, county and Bureau of Land Management forestlands in Jackson and Josephine counties. Current and predicted rainfall is sufficient to lower the public-use fire danger level to "Low." All public-use restrictions and fire season-related closures on industrial operations are removed as of 7:00 a.m. today.

Debris pile and barrel burning is now allowed on ODF-protected lands. However, open burning is regulated for air quality in all of Jackson County, and in the Rogue Basin Open Burn Control Area in Josephine County. Before starting a burn, call the open burning advisory number for your county:

- Jackson County, 776-7007
- Josephine County, 476-9663

Some city fire departments and rural fire protection districts have additional restrictions, or may require a burning permit. Call your local structural fire service provider before burning.

Fire season on the Southwest Oregon District began May 24. As of Oct. 29, 220 fires occurred on ODF-protected lands, burning nearly 156 acres – significantly fewer than the 10-year average of

5,170 acres. Sixty-nine of the district's fires this year were caused by equipment, a category that includes vehicles, power lines, mowers, chain saws and other power-driven devices. Additionally, lightning caused 48 fires and debris burning caused 24 fires.

The Medford Airtanker Base also was home to one of the Oregon Department of Forestry's two airtankers during the 2006 fire season. Airtanker 62, a DC-7 contracted from Butler Aviation, was used statewide on 21 fires, on which it dropped 170,633 gallons of retardant. Locally, Airtanker 62 was credited with keeping the 10-acre Barnett Road Fire from damaging several homes, slowing the 8-acre Vestal Butte Fire until firefighters could drive into the remote fire scene, and keeping the 2-acre Milepost 58 Fire (adjacent to Interstate 5) from racing up a grass- and oak-covered hillside to where homes were located.

Southwest Oregon District fire season statistics and open burning information are posted on the World Wide Web at <http://oregon.gov/ODF/FIELD/SWO/SWOfire.shtml>

Information is also available at the Southwest Oregon District office in your area:

- Medford Unit, 5286 Table Rock Rd., Central Point. Phone: (541) 664-3328
- Grants Pass Unit, 5375 Monument Drive, Grants Pass. Phone: (541) 474-3152

###