

2005 FIRE CHRONOLOGY

JANUARY

MONTH:

Lightning – 1

Human Caused – 1

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 2

Total Acres – 0.26

Weather: This is the third consecutive dry month. Some Oregon ski areas were forced to shut down due to lack of snow. Water supply folks were anxious; inland valleys have had a very foggy winter.

Real-time Weather: In 2004, the department upgraded several of its remote automated weather stations to meet new standards for fire danger data collection and reporting. The upgraded stations provide satellite telemetry of weather data, key information used by Fire Program meteorologists to calculate fire danger throughout Oregon and support fire analysis work. The weather station upgrades will be completed in 2005.

FEBRUARY

MONTH:

Lightning – 1

Human Caused – 8

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 9

Total Acres – 4.58

Weather: It just keeps getting drier and drier! Most of Oregon reported less than 50% of normal monthly precipitation for February, and the statewide seasonal total is hovering around 60% of normal. This will be one of the driest winter's ever in Oregon.

Fire Camp Computer Systems: Under the leadership of Bill Lafferty, fire protection program director, two completely portable computer systems were purchased and built by the agency's information technology program. Each system has 15 notebook computers, a file server, and a combination printer/fax machine. These systems were built using wireless technologies so they can be set up in any location. One of these systems was successfully deployed on the Bland Mountain Fire in Douglas County in 2004. Because of the remote location of some fire camps, the computer systems can operate independently or, when available, can be hooked to the regular ODF computer network and operated just like any other computer.

MARCH

MONTH:

Lightning – 1

Human Caused – 55

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires - 56

Total Acres – 260.89

Weather: The first half of March was a continuation of the very dry, mild conditions we experienced in previous months. And then along came a major change in air circulation patterns, a succession of storms, and lots of rain and mountain snow. Most of Oregon received a month's

worth of precipitation in the past two weeks of the month, and most of the state ended the month near or above normal.

Keep Oregon Green Association advises that those who live within the ‘Wildland Urban Interface’ or those areas where houses are intermixed with trees, should begin removing the dead and dying material that may have accumulated around the home. Warmer weather has brought usually dry conditions to Oregon this year. Dry conditions lead to tinder-dry, fire-ripe vegetation. And that means that homeowners need to take immediate action to protect their lives, homes, and property.

Jim Ziobro, Fire Aviation Specialist, has been selected to represent the National Association of State Foresters on the newly formed National Interagency Aviation Council. Jim will be one of two state representatives on the group and will represent the 17 western states. The formation of “NIAC” is a first step by NFAEB (National Fire Aviation Executive Board) toward more inclusive involvement of the states in national interagency fire aviation policy.

Bog Fire burned 5 acres in the Astoria District on the 13th. Cause of the fire was debris burning.

Upper Simpson Creek Fire began on the 11th, burning 52 acres of slash piles and re-prod in the South Cascade District, Springfield Unit. The fire occurred 16 miles SE of Oakridge. Cause of the fire was debris burning.

Bone Mountain Fire began on the 12th in Coos Forest Protection District. The fire burned 63 acres of slash and second growth, 11 miles east of Powers. The cause of the fire was debris burning.

Paragon Road Fire began on the 13th in Coos Forest Protection District. The fire burned 10 acres of Douglas fir and mixed oak, 4 miles SE of Carpenterville. The land is owned by BLM and the cause was debris burning.

Eden Valley Fire burned 35 acres in the Coos Forest Protection District on the 14th, ten miles southeast of Powers. The fire burned grass and some old slash. The fire was caused by a recreationist.

APRIL

MONTH:

Lightning – 2

Human Caused – 69

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 71

Total Acres – 294.50

Weather: April precipitation was above normal throughout the state, enabling seasonal percentages of normal to increase slightly, and greatly assisting in an easing of water supply worries. With additional wet conditions expected in May, and many of Oregon’s larger reservoirs filling significantly, things are looking much better. A number of central and eastern Oregon counties remain in drought status.

In recognition of successes by the **Protection Contract Services** unit in monitoring compliance who the specifications regulating the conduct of fire crews, the Oregon Department of Administrative Services recently recognized the Unit as a 2004 “Purchasing Hero” award winner. The award honors agency procurement sections that have had a positive impact on purchasing processes, including improvement in the quality and performance of services contracted by the state. Protection from Fire Programs’ Contract Services includes Don Moritz, Unit Manager; Steve Johnson, Compliance Officer; Patricia Morgan, Contract Officer; Cindy Beck, Support Specialist.

Paul Bell has been appointed director of the Private and Community Forests Program and ODF. Prior to accepting his new position, Bell was a North Cascade District Forester, Cascade District Forester and Eastern Lane/Linn District Forester for the Department. Bell has worked as an ODF policy analyst for the Forest Practices Program, which included working on issues related to the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. Bell’s experience also includes working on alternatives to slash burning and more efficient methods for burning as an ODF Smoke Management Fuels Specialist.

Greg Cline is the new North Cascade District Forester. He began his career with the department in 1979. Previous department jobs include: Assistant to the Director of the Eastern Oregon Area, South Fork Forest Camp Manager and Private & Community Forests Program Director.

Lena Tucker is the new South Cascade District Forester. She began her career with the department in 1989. Previous department jobs include: Assistant to the Director of the Eastern Oregon Area, Unit Forester in Southwest Oregon District and Operations Forester in the Astoria District.

MAY

MONTH:

Lightning – 18

Human Caused – 83

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 101

Total Acres – 298.20

Weather: After the very dry winter, March was wet. . . April was better . . . and May was the wettest! Throughout Oregon, precipitation was well above normal. In fact, not a single NOAA Cooperative station reported below-normal precipitation for the month, while some exceeded 400% of normal.

Lisa DeBruyckere was selected as the new State Forests Director for the Department. She will be responsible for overseeing management operations, technical services, asset management, policy and planning, and integrated information systems. ODF is implementing forest plans that call for active management on state lands to generate revenue for counties, local taxing districts and schools – both locally and for the statewide Common School Fund. Harvesting also is used to promote diverse stands of trees that provide habitat for wildlife, especially threatened or endangered species that rely on larger trees. She brings 16 years of experience managing forest, fish, and wildlife issues and public affairs programs. An 11 year employee of the Missouri Department of Conservation, she supervised and coordinated the management of private and public lands, oversaw the department’s nature centers and led statewide conservation

Governor Ted Kulongoski announced **Wildfire Awareness Week, May 9th to 15th**. Gov. Kulongoski said, “Two-thirds of wildfires in Oregon are human caused, are therefore preventable, and a need exists to reduce the number of such fires through information and education.” Backyard debris fires that escape control are a major cause of wildfire in the state. Over the past five years, debris-burning fires burned nearly 14,000 acres and cost \$7.7 million to put out. Campfires and warming fires also trigger numerous wildfires each year. In the same time period, these escaped recreational fires burned more than 1,100 acres and cost \$1.6 million to put out. Juvenile caused fires that were set over the last five years total 239 fires with 540 acres burned and cost \$966,543 to suppress on state and private lands in Oregon. That’s approximately \$4,044 per fire. Severe weather can also ignite wildfires and hasten their spread. ‘Dry lightning,’ a phenomenon that occurs when a thunderstorm produces little or no precipitation, can ignite hundreds of wildfires in only a few hours’ time. Gusty winds accompany these dry lightning storms, causing the resulting fires to spread quickly. For this reason, the National Weather Service has declared May 9-12 Severe Weather and Wildland Fire Awareness Week in coordination with the fire agencies.

JUNE

MONTH:

Lightning – 34

Human Caused – 132

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 166

Total Acres – 378.04

Weather:

The Oregon Department of Forestry and the Oregon Forestry Education Program of Oregon State University announced the first recipient of the **Mary Rellergert Forestry Education Award** to Tim Lichen of Oregon City. The award was named to honor Oregon Department of Forestry’s former Tillamook State Forest Education Coordinator, Mary Rellergert, who passed away in 2004 following an extended battle with breast cancer. Rellergert was a founder of the Tillamook State Forest Education Program, which provides high quality forest learning experiences for K-12 students in the Tillamook State Forest.

Marvin Brown, state forester of Oregon and president-elect of the Society of American Forester, talks with Forest Certification Watch on a range of issues as part of the organization’s ongoing series of interviews with forestry leaders. Topics included: including forest sustainability, lessons he learned in the private sector, the importance of the National Association of State Foresters, his personal leadership style, the public ‘image’ of foresters, and the value of SAF’s Certified Forester program.

Klamath-Lake District, Walker Range Forest Protection District, and the Prineville and Sisters Units of the Central Oregon Forest Protection Districts entered fire season on the 1st. **Douglas Forest Protection District and Southwest Oregon Forest Protection District** entered fire season on the 27th.

Fire School for Firefighters was held in June in Jewell and Sweet Home, Oregon. Firefighters attended courses in basic fire behavior and techniques and strategies used to fight wildfires. They

received hands-on training in the use of engines, portable pumps, chainsaws and hand tools, and they will gain experience constructing fireline and mopping up a real fire. Intermediate firefighters learned about fighting fire in the wildland-urban interface. During fire season, these firefighters will be responsible for fire suppression in their districts in Oregon, and they may travel to other parts of Oregon to work on large fires.

Reehers Camp campground opened June 25th in the Tillamook State Forest. The campground has 10 equestrian sites. The campground also has six regular campsites and a day-use trailhead facility. To get to Reehers Camp from Highway 26, turn south at Timber Road (near milepost 38), go 3 miles to Cochran Road and turn west for about 2 ½ miles. From Highway 6, turn north at Timber Road (near milepost 39) and go about 2 ½ miles to the turn at Cochran Road. Call the ODF Forest Grove District Office for more information, 503-359-7464.

Croghan Mills Fire burned ten acres on the 23rd. The fire was five miles north of Elgin in the Northeast Oregon District. Initial attack included nine fire engines (6 ODF; 3 USFS), one helicopter (USFS). Four 10-person inmate crews from Powder River Correctional Facility performed mop-up on the fire. This was a railroad caused fire.

Big Creek Fire began on the 29th, burning 50 acres of heavy slash in private forestlands in the Western Lane District, 26 miles west of Cottage Grove. The fire was caused by lightning.

JULY

MONTH:

Lightning –77

Human Caused – 283

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 360

Total Acres – 6,001.72

Weather: June’s cool, cloudy weather prevailed during the first half of July, but summer began in earnest by mid-month. The second half of July was sunny, warm and dry in most of Oregon.

The Dalles and John Day Units of the Central Oregon Forest Protection District, and Coos Forest Protection District entered fire season on the 1st. **Western Lane Forest Protection District** and **South Cascade District** entered fire season on the 5th. **Northeast Oregon Forest Protection District** entered fire season on the 6th. **Northwest Oregon Forest Protection District** and **West Oregon Forest Protection District** entered fire season on the 13th. **North Cascade District** entered fire season on the 18th.

Keep Oregon Green was cautioning Oregonians to use extreme caution when visiting the forests over the 4th of July weekend. Many Oregonians love the great outdoors, and no matter what the recreational activity, sitting around a campfire is one of the special times we all enjoy. In the last five years, however, 527 campfires built on state and private lands burned 1,115 acres and cost \$1,593,375 to suppress. Camp and warming fires are the number two cause of human-caused wildfires in Oregon. Please remember that wildfire prevention is everyone’s responsibility. Be alert to weather conditions, especially wind; and always be careful with fire. Leave your fireworks home – they don’t belong in the forests. Be responsible, we can all Keep Oregon Green and have a safe 4th of July weekend.

Elliott State Forest celebrated its diamond and golden anniversaries this month. Seventy-five years ago, the forest a few miles northeast of Coos Bay became Oregon's first state forest. And it was 50 years ago when the Oregon Department of Forestry began formal management of the forest, the result of legislation in 1955. To commemorate the anniversaries, ODF organized a "historical" tour of the Elliott on the 21st. The 93,000-acre forest got its name from the first state forester, Francis Elliott, who worked for 18 years with the federal government to trade scattered tracts of land for one solid block of land that could be effectively managed.

DL Phipps Forest Nursery announced that after a long, wet spring, they were able to get all 4.5 million seedlings transplanted. This was one of the longest and largest spring plantings on record. Although the wet spring delayed transplanting, mild spring weather has paid off allowing the seedlings to have the ideal conditions to thrive and grow.

Oregon Department of Forestry does not go it alone when it comes to fighting fire. The many rural fire departments throughout the state play a crucial role in suppressing wildfires, as do forest landowners large and small. The U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and other federal resource agencies are key players as well in the coordinated, statewide firefighting effort. As summer wears on and forest fuels dry out, larger wildfires will become more likely. ODF has a combination of firefighting forces at hand to deal with big blazes: **Seasonal firefighters** are stationed throughout the state in locations with a historically high incidence of wildfires. Approximately 688 seasonal firefighters; they serve chiefly on engine crews as first responders to reports of fire. **Private contract fire crews** consist of 200 20-person private fire crews are on call. Under contract to the fire agencies of Oregon and Washington, these crews can be dispatched to fires anywhere in the two states. **Inmate fire crews** are an important firefighting force in the prison inmate fire and camp crews. Every year, carefully screened inmates from Oregon Department of Corrections facilities around the state are trained for fire duty. This season, 33 10-person inmate fire crews are on call to fight fire. In addition, six camp crews can be deployed on a moment's notice to staff the mobile kitchens set up at large fires to feed firefighters. **Air tankers** are intrinsic to the Department of Forestry's firefighting strategy, which aims to minimize losses to the forest resource. Two contract heavy air tankers came on line earlier in July. These prop planes are ready to carry their 3,000-gallon payloads of liquid fire retardant to wildfires statewide. In case the fire season becomes severe, an agreement with the State of Alaska can bring down additional tankers. **Helicopters** – Douglas Forest Protective Association and the department's Klamath-Lake District each have state-contracted helicopters to bolster their firefighting efforts. **National aircraft resources** – some national resources will be available to Oregon as well. Federal fire agencies have designated aircraft to fight fire in the state. With thunderstorms predicted toward the end of this week, the agencies have also placed an immediate request for three air tankers and some heavy helicopters to be deployed in high-risk fire areas. **National Guard** – in years when fire activity threatens to overwhelm firefighting forces, a declaration of emergency by the governor has activated the Oregon National Guard to assist. This season, the Guard has pledged up to four Blackhawk helicopters and flight crews to carry water buckets on wildfires. In the event there are few large fires this summer, all of the preparation and planning for large fires may turn out merely to be a rehearsal. But whatever comes, Oregon's mainline firefighters in the local districts can expect to keep busy putting out the hundreds of small fires that never make the evening news.

Wasson Fire began on the 26th in the Southwest Oregon District, 15 miles east of Eagle Point on BLM land. The fire was caused by a vehicle accident. The fire burned 1,510 acres; two air tankers and multiple helicopters were on the scene for fire suppression. The fire was in steep terrain, difficult to safely operate in, with heavy fuels. Gusty winds helped push this wildfire toward an exotic animal sanctuary. The fire jumped a fire line and burned into the night through rugged terrain east of Lake Creek. A firebreak had been established around 85 percent of the blaze, but crews were not able to contain flames being pushed toward the Oregon Tiger Sanctuary. Firefighters worked to keep the compound protected from the flames, which were burning less than a half mile away. The sanctuary opened in 1991 and is home to dozens of tigers, lions, leopards and primates that were previously abused or neglected. Swirling winds kept flames from aggressively making their way toward the sanctuary. Several tigers were temporarily moved away from the property's west side as they were feeling the anxiety of the smoke and the fire trucks.

Blossom Complex began on the 21st in the Grants Pass Unit of the Southwest Oregon District, burning 14,921 acres of rough terrain. Private land around Paradise Lodge on the Rogue River was threatened. The lightning caused Blossom Complex consisted of the Blossom Fire, Huggins Fire, and the Solitude Fire, burning 25 miles northeast of Gold Beach. Evacuation of Rogue River Ranch and Marial Lodge along the Rogue River occurred on August 12th. ODF's Incident Management Team Two was mobilized to the fire on August 10th. Cause of the fire was lightning. Although the fire was declared contained by fire managers on Aug. 23rd, the fire continued to burn for many more weeks.

Simpson Fire began on the 28th burning six miles north of Klamath Falls. The fire burned a total of 2,225 acres. Steep, rocky terrain, poor access, resulted in retardant drops by air tankers, assisted by helicopter water drops, cooled the fire and prevented it from escaping established perimeter. This was a miscellaneous caused fire. Cooperators on the fire included Klamath Fire Dist. #1, Klamath County Sheriff's Dept., Oregon Dept. of Corrections, Oregon Institute of Technology, Winema National Forest, BLM, Meadow Lake Inc., and Jeld-Wen.

Hell N Gone Fire began on the 31st, 18 miles northeast of Burns. The wind-driven fire burned 167 acres of timber. ODF air tankers were instrumental in stopping the spread of the fire. This was a lightning caused fire.

Burnt River Complex , comprised of seven fires, is 13 miles south of Sumpter. Bald Eagle nesting sites, fish habitat and range improvement were threatened. The 1,000 acre complex was managed as a unified command between the U.S. Forest Service and the Oregon Dept. of Forestry. This was a lightning caused fire.

AUGUST

MONTH:

Lightning – 123

Human Caused – 494

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 617

Total Acres – 10,347

Weather: The second half of July was sunny, warm and dry in most of Oregon. That trend continued throughout most of August, except along the coast. Coastal temperatures were below

normal, while inland temperatures were above normal. However, the entire state was drier than normal.

Camas Creek fire began on the 2nd burning 179 acres in the Coos Forest Protective Association land, six miles east of the Bridge Unit. The fire burned on private and BLM lands. Fuel type was a logging slash. Air tankers were used to stop the spread of the fire dropping 15 loads of retardant. This fire was caused by equipment use.

Marlow Creek fire also began on the 2nd burning 44 acres from a logging slash. The fire was ten miles northeast of Coos Bay in the Coos Forest Protective Association lands. This fire was caused by equipment use.

Rhinehart Road Fire began on the 7th, burning 680 acres in the Northeast Oregon Protection District. Conditions were for an explosive fire, temperatures hovered near 100 degrees. Imbler Rural Fire Protection District asked for assistance in fighting this wildfire in the Clark Creek/Indian Creek wildland urban interface area, about three miles east of Imbler. The fire burned in grass, brush and timber. Aerial resources included three air tankers and three helicopters. Air tankers dropped fourteen loads of retardant on the fire to keep it from spreading to the nearby homes and private industrial timber property. Other rural fire departments from the county (Elgin, Cove, LaGrande, and Union) provided structure protection and five dozers and several crews provided line construction. Cause of the fire was arson.

Hidaway Fire began on the 8th, burning 150 acres eleven miles east of Ukiah in NE Oregon. Approximately 99% of the fire burned on forestland managed by the U.S. Forest Service; however, ODF assisted with the fire. The fire burned through open pine and pine reprod, as well as perennial/annual grasses that have become very dry. The fire was caused by a recreationist.

Tryon Complex Fire began on the 8th. The fire was a lightning caused fire, burning 755 state protected acres; total 6,000 acres. The complex consisted of the Tryon, Cherry Creek and Haas Fires, burning in the Wallowa Unit of the NE Oregon District. The terrain was unforgiving with steep slopes and bluffy rock faces. Private lands and ranch buildings that are used year-round were threatened. Resources used on the fire were a severity helicopter, Type II helicopters and two heavy air tankers. The complex had incidents which stretch over an area from the Snake River. Blue Mountain Interagency Team took over management of the complex; cause of the fire was lightning.

Wills Canyon Fire began on the 21st burning 895 acres on unprotected lands along the Central Oregon District boundary nine miles southwest of Spray. Cause of the fire was lightning. Grass, sage, juniper and scattered timber were the fuel. Resources on the fire included water tends, hand crews, bulldozers, fire engines, and aircraft.

Fly Fire began on the 23rd burning 838 acres in the Northeast Oregon District (610 were USFS and 228 were ODF). The fire burned grass, brush and ponderosa pine, down lodge pole; ten private cabins were threatened. Cause of the fire was lightning.

Two Mile Canyon Fire burned 207 acres in grass and juniper on the 24th. Cause of the fire was a private plane crash located about eight miles north and east of Monument in the Northeast Oregon District.

Deer Creek Fire began on the 25th burning over 1,548 acres the first day in the Grants Pass Unit of the Southern Oregon District, two miles west of Selma and eight miles north of Cave Junction. Team 1's second deployment of the season, fire managers faced the added complexity of protecting wildland-urban interface. The charging fire burned grass, brush and timber, five homes were destroyed and several others were damaged. Fire Incident Management Team #1 was dispatched to the fire. A joint command between the State Fire Marshal's office and ODF was established. The fire was declared contained on the 30th. Cause of the fire was equipment use.

Park Fire was reported on the 27th burning 227 acres of Ponderosa Pine seven miles north of LaPine in the Sisters Unit of the Central Oregon District in the LaPine State Park. The fire spread quickly, jumping the Deschutes River. Mandatory evacuation occurred with approximately 200 residences evacuated. A Red Cross shelter had been established at the LaPine Middle School. The Deschutes River was closed to river traffic for a short time. At one point, four tankers and two helicopters swarmed over the blaze, while hand crews fought it on the ground. This was a miscellaneous caused of the fire. No structures were destroyed, considering the flames came within 40 feet of some homes.

Awbrey Saddle Fire began on the 30th burning 129 acres in the Prinevill Unit of the Central Oregon District, nine miles from Prineville. A column of smoke was seen as an interior section of the fire blew up and caused spotting a quarter to half miles across the fire line. Firefighters lined all the spot fires. Resources on the fire were ten engines, four dozers, two water tenders, three helicopters, ten 20-person crews. The fire burned on private land. Cause of the fire was a recreationist.

SEPTEMBER

MONTH:

Lightning – 128

Human Caused – 617

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 745

Total Acres – 11,254.05

Weather: It was a delightfully mild and dry month with below-average temperatures and precipitation. The only really significant storm occurred on the last day of the month, and it was a big one. Northwestern Oregon picked up 1 to 2 inches of rain.

National Preparedness Month is a nationwide effort to encourage Americans to prepare for emergencies in their homes, businesses and communities during the month of September. The goal is to increase public awareness about the importance of preparing for emergencies. There are simple steps that people can take in advance of a disaster. These steps include: making a family emergency plan, getting an emergency supply kit, being informed about the different threats likely to hit their region and getting involved in preparing their communities. To learn more about National Preparedness Month go to <http://www.ready.gov/npm/index.htm>.

Turner Creek Fire began on the 14th, burning 1,419 acres nine miles south of Imnaha in the Wallowa Unit of the Northeast Oregon District, burning in the Imnaha Canyon. The fire burned in steep terrain with grass and timber stringers, some of which was inaccessible. Cause of the fire was debris burning. On the 18th, gusty winds and poor humidity recovery began to cause flare-ups that lasted into the night. Active fire behavior set the stage for increased fire spread on the 19th causing acreage to grow to 1,800 acres. Heavy airtankers made several drops on the fire and two hotshot crews conducted burnout operations. Erratic canyon winds determined the direction of the fire for the next few days. The fire was transferred to the Blue Mountain Team. The Oregon National Guard Medivac Helicopter and Crew were dispatched and stationed in Pendleton on stand-by.

Klamath Hills Fire began on the 21st, burning 662 acres nine miles south of Klamath Falls in the Klamath-Lake District. The fire burned in grass, brush and juniper. Resources assigned to the fire was 3 air tankers, 3 helicopters, 2 tenders, 4 dozers, 8 engines, 2 hand crews. Cause of the fire was debris burning.

Blalock 2 Fire burned 75 acres on the 24th in the Northeast Oregon District, Pendleton Unit. The fire was ten miles SE of Milton Freewater. The fire was caused by equipment use.

OCTOBER

MONTH:

Lightning – 128

Human Caused – 694

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 822

Total Acres – 11,460.39

Weather: The 2006 Water Year began with generally mild temperatures (most stations reported above-normal values) and wet conditions (mostly above-normal precipitations). It was a very pleasant autumn month.

Pathonya Flats Fire began on the 2nd in the Pendleton Unit of the Northeast Oregon District. The fire burned 72 acres of grass, open pine and mixed conifer. The fire was caused by a recreationist.

Sprague Fire began on the 14th burning 30 acres of sagebrush and juniper in the Klamath Unit of the Klamath-Lake District. Cause of the fire was juveniles. Rural engines were on the scene to protect structures.

NOVEMBER:

MONTH:

Lightning – 128

Human Caused - 697

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires - 825

Total Acres – 11,463

Weather: November was a generally cooler than average month. Despite a week-long dry spell caused by a ridge of high pressure, most stations reported near-or-above normal precipitation. The last several Novembers have seen cold snaps in early November, and this year it happened again, at the beginning of the second week of the month. Below-freezing conditions extended all the way to the coast, while some eastern Oregon locations dropped into single digits.

NWO Operator of the Year: Davidson Industries, Inc., located in Mapleton has been selected as **2005 Operator of the Year**. They were nominated by Jim Hall out of Florence for their innovation on constructing a hazard mitigation project which would make possible the landowner's/operator's harvest objectives. This never been seen before project entailed construction of a rock berm that would deflect a potential landslide. Construction efforts were geared toward public safety and protection of a fish bearing stream that runs under the berm in addition to meeting the landowners' objectives. **Jerry Markee with Fallon Logging**, from Tillamook, will receive a **merit award**. He was nominated by John Tillotson from Astoria for a challenging State Forests timber sale. Complexity included multiple move-in's and tower setting changes, working around BPA and Pacific Power high voltage lines, working around NW Natural Gas pipeline, working around City of Astoria water supply pipelines, utilization of slash accumulations in skid roads and protection of fish bearing and seasonal streams. Jerry had to pre plan most activities to ensure necessary protection measures. **Nygaard Logging** from Warrenton will receive a **merit award**. They were nominated by Ty Williams from Astoria for a large, complex State Forests timber sale. Complexity included protection of a NSO core area and the Buster Creek Salmon Anchor Habitat Area. The sale took 2.5 years and required several additional miles of road use and maintenance by the operator to protect the above resources in addition to other fish bearing and seasonal streams. They had to do a fair amount of pre planning to take hauling restrictions into play. **Mike Falleur with F & B Logging** in Astoria will receive a **merit award**. He was nominated by Ashley Lertora of Astoria for a challenging clear cut operation. Challenges on this unit included type F, D and N streams, other wetlands, concerned neighbors living on property line of sale, and installation of a temporary crossing. Mike worked with Ashley from the start and put a large effort into achieving the best protection of these resources while meeting the landowners objectives.

Gordon Foster of Central Oregon District has been appointed Rangeland Fire Coordinator for the Oregon Department of Forestry's Eastern Oregon Area. He brings 40 years of professional experience with the U.S. Forest Service and ODF to the job, which will seek to improve protection of rangelands. Oregon is recognized nationally as a leader in wildfire protection. This new position aims to expand firefighting coverage to currently under-protected areas east of the Cascades.

DECEMBER

MONTH:

Lightning – 128

Human Caused – 702

YEAR-TO-DATE:

Total Fires – 830

Total Acres – 11,610.65

Weather: December started out wet, but quickly turned dry. A nearly two-week dry spell caused a stirring of “water worries.” But just after mid-month, the rains came. And came. And came. But the very wet end of December enabled nearly every station in the state to exceed the monthly normal.

Weather Summary for 2005: The year 2005 was not in any way “average,” but it sure was interesting. The year began dry and cool, and ended with November and December being dry and cool. Rains began in mid-March and it didn't let up until July. Farmers, gardeners, and baseball players were disappointed, but the good news was: we avoided a drought! Lakes filled, ground

water was recharged, water supplies were adequate – and none of that looked possible in February. Summer was a little warmer than average, especially during the hottest time of year – mid-July through mid-August. There were 18 days with temperatures in the 90's. September was very pleasant and rather dry. Then came fall, October was on the dry side but both beginning and ending were wet. November had a lengthy dry spell in the middle of the month. December was very wet the first week and then dry and quite cold for two weeks. In the last 13 days of the month we received more than an entire month's worth of rain.

Tillamook Forest Center is set to open April 2006. The new visitor and educational facility sits on the Wilson River Highway in the heart of the former "Tillamook Burn," which is today's Tillamook State Forest. A 40-foot tall replica of a fire lookout tower has already become a local landmark, as has a dramatic 250-foot long pedestrian suspension bridge, which leads from the building across the Wilson River to the nearby Jones Creek Campground. The bridge and lookout tower frame the 13,500 square foot Center, which will be filled with exhibits that invite visitors to learn about the Tillamook State Forests. The Center, located 50 miles west of Portland, also features a classroom facility, a theater, restrooms and a forest archive. Outdoors, interpretive trails lead from the building through the woods to breathtaking river and forest views. Rustic benches dot these trails – hand hewn from trees removed to make way for the building. A grand opening celebration is scheduled for Oregon Arbor Week, April 1-8. Today's Tillamook State Forest, still recovering from a series of devastating wildfires in the 1930's and 1940's, is regarded as one of the largest forest planting efforts ever undertaken. Following the fires, thousands of Oregonians, many of them schoolchildren and volunteers, helped plant more than 72 million Douglas-fir seedlings across the blackened landscape.

2005 Hurricane Response: The 2005 hurricane season was record-breaking in the United States, both in terms of the number of hurricane events and the destructive force they exhibited. It is widely understood that federal firefighting and emergency response teams participate in the recovery efforts following hurricanes and other natural disasters. It is less well known that state and local government personnel also contributed significantly to disaster recovery. In 2005, state wildland fire protection agencies provided the equivalent of 65,000 person days in response to Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma at a cost of close to \$36 million. This equates to approximately 20 percent of the total response provided by wildland fire professionals during the 2005 season.

On August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina, a Category 4 event, made landfall on the Gulf Coast of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, bringing with it 140 mph winds. On September 24th, Category 3 Hurricane Rite made landfall on the Texas-Louisiana coast with winds of 120 mph winds. Only one month later, Category 3 Hurricane Wilma, with sustained winds of 120 mph and a significant storm surge, cut across South Florida from west to east, impacting both coasts. The 2005 hurricane season totaled more than 27 named storms, eclipsing the previous record set in 1933. Hurricane Katrina proved to be the most destructive hurricane in the United States in several decades. In response to such overwhelming devastation, local, state and federal wildland firefighters mobilized their resources to aid in the disaster recovery.

In total, the interagency wildland fire community provided 12,896 individual personnel for overhead or leadership assignments, 247 twenty-person work crews, 36 fire fighting engines, and 129 Incident Management Teams (IMT's). This effort represents a commitment of over 23,000 people. With an average assignment of 14 days, this equates to more than 334,000 person days.

On a given day during the peak response period, as many as 5,500 wildland fire personnel, including 28 IMT's were on hurricane assignments.

The National Response Plan (NRP) offers a mechanism for state and local wildland fire agencies to contribute personnel, via cooperative agreements with the USDA Forest Service, to federal response efforts. Using the NRP, states, along with their local partners, contributed significantly to the overall federal hurricane response, providing personnel to Area Command Teams, Incident Management Teams (IMT's), Logistics Management Teams (LMT's), Buying Teams and firefighting and work crews. In addition, state personnel were dispatched in support of initial and extended attack on wildfires that resulted from storm damage.

Oregon sent 55 people out of state on fires and Katrina relief.

The overall response by state wildland fire protection agencies represents a commitment of approximately 65,000 person-days at a cost of close to \$36 million, not including the time and costs to train and equip the personnel who responded.