

Oregon Wildfire Season Update: 400+ from Oregon National Guard Trained and Ready!

As part of the State's coordinated and comprehensive wildfire suppression efforts, and thanks to funds allocated by the federal government, more than 400 citizen-soldiers and citizen-aimen from the Oregon National Guard (Guard) have been trained as wildland firefighters in advance of the 2020 Oregon wildfire season.

More than 175 members of the Guard completed their wildland firefighter refresher course on July 11, and 12, 2020. More than 250 Guard members, who have not been previously trained for wildland firefighting, attended the class from July 13 and will complete the week-long program this afternoon (July 17, 2020). These men and women from diverse backgrounds now return to their local communities, careers and families and stand by ready to assist as needed.

The training was offered at the Oregon Public Safety Academy in Salem. The training the Guard received is often known as "red card" training and consists of both classroom and hands-on sessions. The training provided will allow these citizen-soldiers and citizen-aimen to be safe and effective in their work in case they are required this year to help support the efforts of wildland firefighters around the state.

Federal funds were allocated, at the request of state officials, to help prepare members of the Guard in case their assistance

will be needed to support wildland firefighting efforts around the state. This proactive work will enable the Guard to assist on the fire lines much faster.

The training was provided by the Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) and is the same training required of all public and private wildland firefighters. Because of the size of the group, DPSST supplemented its training cadre and utilized additional instructors from the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Military Department Wildland Firefighting Section, United States Forest Service, and the Illinois Fire Service Institute.

The Oregon National Guard has a proven track record of supporting wildfire suppression efforts, from the air and on the ground, around the state in recent years. In 2015, members of the Guard assisted with wildfire suppression efforts in John Day and Enterprise. In 2017, more than 400 citizen-soldiers and citizen-aimen supported Oregon's firefighting efforts (air and ground) at High Cascades Complex (near Crater Lake), Chetco Bar, Blanket Creek, Horse Prairie, and Milli fires.

The Guard has a long-standing agreement with the Oregon Department of Forestry known as Operation Plan Smokey, which stipulates the details of how Guard members will be utilized to assist in annual firefighting efforts if needed. This agreement is reviewed

on an annual basis by both agencies and the Governor's Office.

What is different this year is that funds were requested by state officials, and approved by the federal government, to provide training to members of the National Guard ahead of the need. This will allow these wildland firefighter trained citizen-soldiers and citizen-aimen to be activated and deployed much faster should the need arise for their assistance.

DPSST Director Eriks Gabliks said

"DPSST is honored to help support this important mission and has a proven record of success in training over 1,000 members of the Guard for wildland firefighting duties over the past five years. We value and appreciate the partnership we enjoy with the Oregon National Guard."

For questions specific to the Oregon Military Department Public Affairs Office by phone at 503-584-3917 or email at AGPA@mil.state.or.us.



ComParrot
by Bonnie J. Malcolm

Can you spot 12 differences between these pictures?

Solution: 1. Wave by shore is different. 2. Stripe on girl's suit is missing. 3. Fin on small surfboard is missing. 4. Design on surfboard behind girl is colored in. 5. Bottle behind girl is colored in. 6. Bottle behind girl is colored in. 7. Seashell on beach has moved. 8. Extra wave appears. 9. Extra wave appears. 10. Umbrella is wider. 11. Tail on gecko design is different. 12. Patch on elbow is larger.

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