



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2025 Mid-Willamette Valley Interagency Wildland Fire School begins June 23 in Sweet Home, Oregon

Date: June 17, 2025

Media contacts:

Jessica Neujahr
Oregon Department of Forestry
jessica.neujahr@odf.oregon.gov
(503) 983-3367

Al DeVos
Oregon Department of Forestry
al.devos@odf.oregon.gov
(971) 283-4182

SWEET HOME, Ore.—Approximately 200 wildland firefighters and instructors will convene in Sweet Home, beginning on June 23, to take part in the annual five-day Mid-Willamette Valley Interagency Wildland Fire School. Officials from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) host the yearly training to prepare new firefighters for the rigors of fighting fire, both in Oregon's forests and in wildland-urban interface areas.

The training culminates with a live fire exercise on Friday, June 27 just outside of Sweet Home. This presents trainees with a final challenge: applying their newly acquired skills and techniques to suppress and mop-up a real fire under controlled conditions.

“Cascade Timber Consulting, a local forest landowner, provides a new field site each year and we are very grateful,” said Craig Pettinger, Incident Commander of the Mid-Willamette Valley Interagency Fire School. “The live fire exercise provides an invaluable training experience—working in smoke, hiking through uneven terrain, and working closely with crew members to dig fireline—these are all things they’ll experience this season as wildland firefighters.”

Safety principles of fire training include wearing protective gear, safe use of tools and looking out for hazards.

“Safety is paramount in every aspect of wildland firefighting, and it begins with our training exercises,” continued Pettinger. “Working together in a collaborative training setting improves communication and builds effective relationships for all agencies to draw upon during fire season.”

This year, the field site that will be used for the live fire exercise is located approximately six miles northeast of Sweet Home. Fire officials urge the public to use caution as there will be increased fire traffic in the area and the potential for visible smoke on Friday, June 27.

Note to Media:

This opportunity offers access to both trainee and experienced firefighters as they prepare for the 2025 fire season. Media members are **required to provide advance notice** of your intent to

participate, as all media must be accompanied by an agency escort and have personal protective equipment. **Please RSVP to Jessica Neujahr by June 25 if you would like to attend the live fire exercise on June 27.**

Personal protective equipment includes Nomex pants, long sleeve Nomex shirt, gloves, hard hat, eye protection, and **boots with Vibram soles**. Protective equipment (excluding leather boots) may be available for media to borrow by contacting Jessica Neujahr with ODF.

#