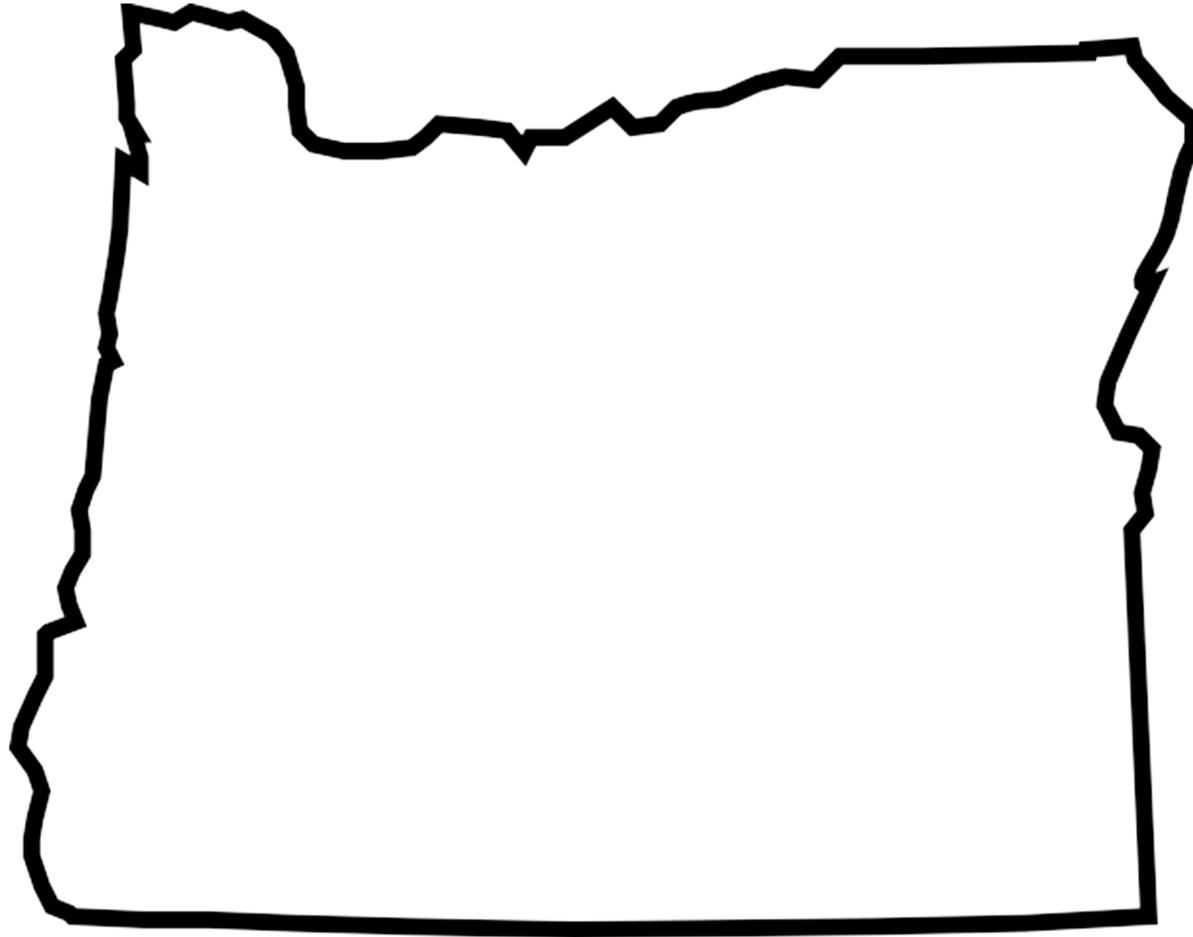


# **Oregon's Wildfire Response Council**



# **Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: Communications Plan**

## **1. Restore & Maintain Resilient Landscapes**

- Communicate prescribed burn plans
  - Promote smoke management toolkit, support health monitoring efforts
- Engage communities in fuel reductions strategies
  - Prescribed fire
  - Managed wildfire
  - Thinning projects
- Support local collaboratives
  - Amplify messaging

# Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: Communications Plan

## 2. Fire-Adapted Communities

- Prevent human-caused wildfires (e.g., Bigfoot, Smokey Bear)
- Educate residents to reduce wildfire risks (e.g., Firewise, Fire Restrictions)
  - Defensible space
  - Building codes
  - Behavioral risks
  - Wildfire Risk Explorer
- Support vulnerable populations

# **Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: Communications Plan**

## **3. Respond to Wildfires**

- Training for initial attack
- Disaster response, evacuations
- Disaster recovery, resources
- Health

# Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: Communications Plan

- Recommendations → Communications Structure



- Data Driven
  - Facts, stats, data to direct messaging
- Target Communications
  - Audience - demographics, geography, relevance
  - Communicators – public/private, integrated
  - Key Messages – urban, rural, public/private
  - Methods – media, social media, print, face-to-face
- Opportunities & Gaps
  - Identify to bridge gaps and amplify successes

# Opinion

## Oregon shines after eclipse

As the moon slipped across the sun Monday, many who'd felt entirely lukewarm about the historical event admitted they were surprised by just how darn cool and awe-inspiring the total eclipse truly was.

Some cried, some felt odd sensations and some marveled at the shadows. But no one was surprised by what happened as the sun returned. And that's entirely thanks to the hard work by state and local officials over the past year to brace everyone — even visitors themselves — for such a massive, tourist-driven event.

Traffic was dreadful in places, highlighting the weaknesses of Oregon's transportation system in a major earthquake. Still, the congestion didn't come close to worst-case scenarios. The state's most bone-dry high desert region was inundated, but visitors were respectful of the potential for wildfires. And while even Mother Nature threatened to crash the celestial party with cloud cover and smoke, the morning broke clear enough for all to catch the moment that the moon totally covered the sun.

Some have complained the eclipse was "overhyped." No, this was an effective informational campaign paired with on-the-ground operations that were perfectly appropriate to the scale of an attraction expected to draw as many as a million visitors.

Disagree? Consider how Oregon — Portland, in particular — has been brought to its knees in recent years by inches of forecasted snow.

Public and private planners appropriately turned to other towns and regions that had experienced crushes of visitors. As *The Oregonian/OregonLive's* Lynne Terry reported recently, hospitals stocked and staffed up. The main hospital system in Central Oregon canceled elective surgeries during the weeklong period in which the population of 280,000 was expected to double.

This was a particularly well choreographed preparation considering that the 60-mile path of totality sliced through some of Oregon's bigger towns through the valley and on to some of the least populated counties of the state.

With concerns that cellphone networks might be maxed out, emergency managers activated emergency communications with satellite phones and had ham radio operators ready to go. The Oregon Department of Transportation wisely distributed emergency response trucks along highways expecting the worst congestion.

It mostly worked. As predicted, traffic inched along through late Monday night along stretches of Oregon 97 in Eastern Oregon and on Interstate 5 south of Salem. The backups make vividly clear how the two freeways — and

**This was an effective informational campaign paired with on-the-ground operations that were perfectly appropriate to the scale of an attraction expected to draw as many as a million visitors.**

others — will be stressed if they become major escape routes following a major earthquake along the Cascadia subduction zone.

Still, officials had warned travelers to bring enough food and water to last two days. And while traffic was at a standstill Monday morning, most areas cleared out by the afternoon with an added hour or two on typical travel times.

But it wasn't just state and local officials who deserve praise. Visitors came prepared and they came patient.

As *The Oregonian/OregonLive's* Elliot Njus wrote Tuesday, routes around Redmond and Madras were expected to remain slow through Wednesday. That's a good thing. It means that eclipse watchers listened to officials and delayed their departures to help ease the mayhem — just as many staggered their arrivals last week.

Of course it would have been better if drivers had heeded police warnings about the danger of parking along freeways to catch the moment of totality. But no major crashes occurred and law enforcement saw fit to give scofflaws a celestial pass.

For a fleeting moment, all those watching the eclipse felt something. Whether mental or physical. Perhaps it was the quiet, or the shift in the wind or the drop in the weather. It had been something to look forward to — a break in the barrage of national events that are much more complicated and difficult to understand.

That moment was a gift that the many months of preparation helped make possible.

— *The Oregonian/OregonLive Editorial Board*

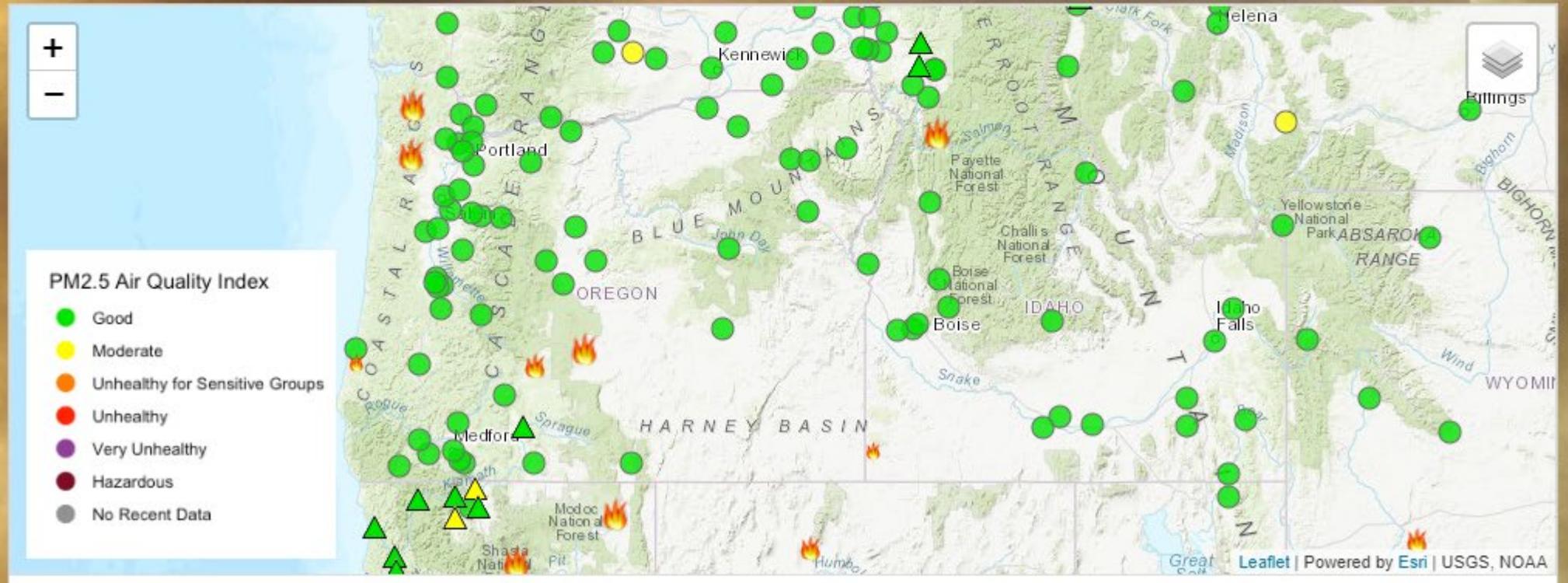


- **4 days in mid-August**
- **10 agencies**
- **Hundreds of thousands of visitors**
- **ZERO human-caused wildfires**
- **Lower than 10 year average**

# Over 1 million hits in one fire season

## Oregon Smoke Information

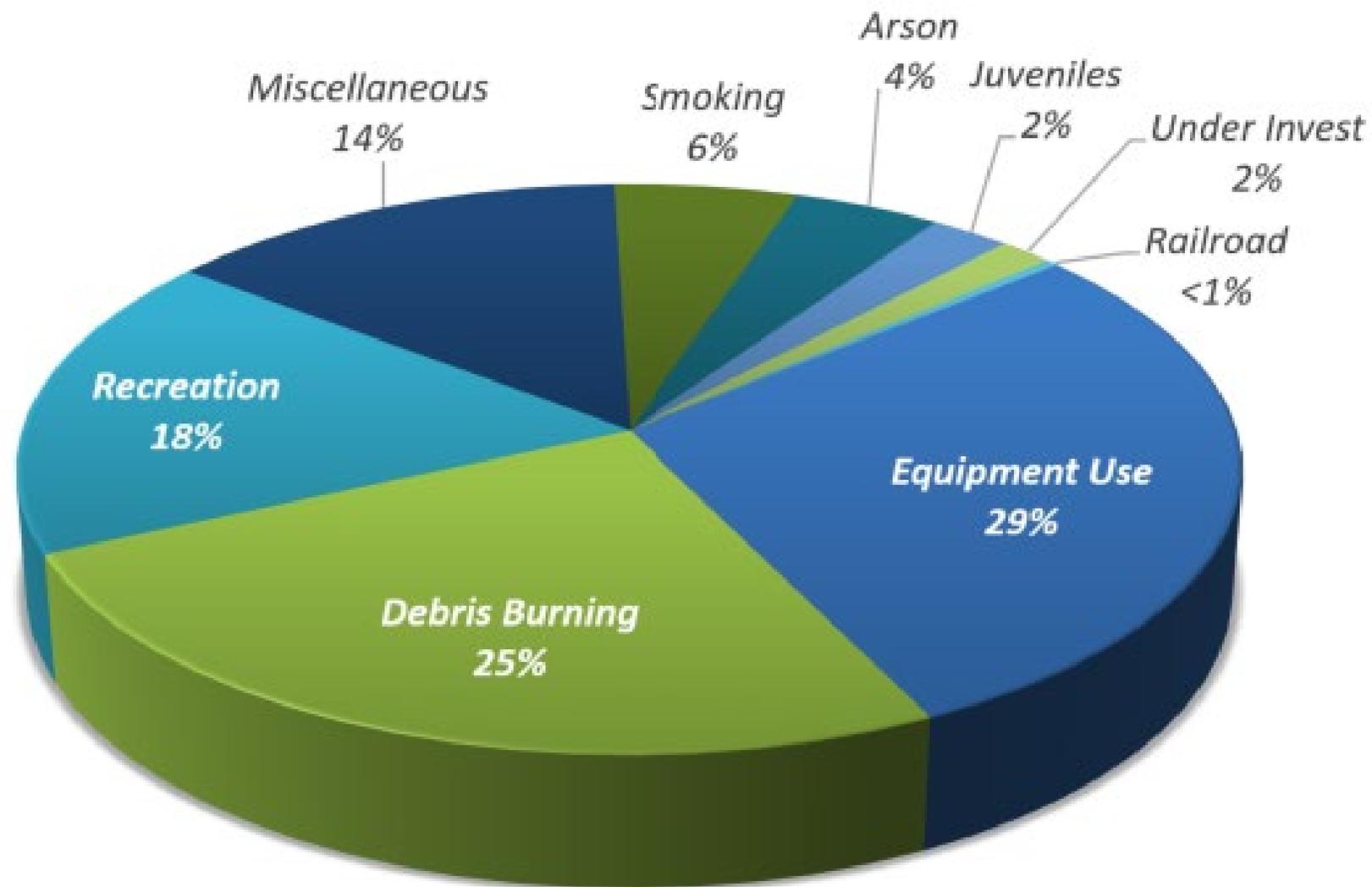
This site is an effort by many city, county, tribal, state and federal agencies to coordinate and aggregate information for Oregon communities affected by wildfire smoke. The information is posted here by the agencies themselves while volunteers built and are maintaining the page.





# ODF Human Caused Fires 2010-2019<sup>ytd</sup>

ODF FIRES query 9/23/2019.



# **Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: Communications Plan**

- **Recommendation –  
Convene Communications Work Group**
- Next Steps:
  - Chair assign lead
  - Identify members
  - Establish timeline
  - **Create and implement** Communications Strategy