News Release

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Released: 8 AM Sep. 19, 2020

Media Contact:

Jo Niehaus, Public Affairs Specialist
Mobile: 503-580-9210
jo.niehaus@oregon.gov

Jason Resch, Communications Manager
Mobile: 503-508-4149
jason.resch@oregon.gov

Oregon State Parks Begins to Assess Wildfire and Windstorm Damage

The devastating wildfires that continue to level the Oregon landscape have so far burned about 900 acres of state park land, most of it undeveloped forest, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) reports.

Some parks remain closed due to windstorm damage, or their proximity to active fires. Twenty-four parks have been closed since Sep. 7, when rare, severe wind events caused wildfires to quickly sweep the landscape. Go to https://stateparks.oregon.gov/index.cfm?do=visit.status to check park status.

Given the scope and severity of the fires, the 900-acre toll was a testament to both luck and extraordinary first responders, said OPRD Director Lisa Sumption.

The heavily forested Collier Memorial State Park took the biggest hit, losing some 400 acres of Ponderosa Pines. OPRD Forester Craig Leech said that “although 400 acres is a lot by any estimation, the careful fuel reduction and stand improvement slowed the fire spread enough to be contained before major damage occurred.

Detroit Lake State Recreation Area and the Mongold day-use area on the lake suffered only minor damage from the Beachie Creek Fire. Local authorities, the Oregon Marine Board and emergency responders are working together to help safely retrieve boats that people had to abandon on the lake when they evacuated.

Nearby, North Santiam State Recreation Area suffered far worse damage. The fire burned straight through the small campground on the North Santiam River.

Several parks in the Willamette Valley and on the north coast are serving as evacuation sites, some in partnership with the American Red Cross. We are happy to help provide a temporary landing place for those whose lives have been uprooted by this wildfire disaster,” said OPRD director Lisa Sumption. “We are looking forward to restoring and reopening our closed parks as soon as is safely possible.”

OPRD staff are assessing damage and scheduling repairs, where conditions allow. In many cases, fires are still burning near parks, evacuation orders are still in place and air quality remains unhealthy. OPRD asks the public to stay out of closed parks as restoration and recovery efforts take place.

“We are still very much in the emergency response mode. We will have more information to share about restoring and reopening damaged parks once it is safe for our staff to do so,” said OPRD Communications Director Jason Resch.

A complete list of closed parks is on our Fire Information Page. Please keep in mind that damage is still being evaluated.

- Silver Falls
  - 125 acres burned on the SE part of the park. Contained at this time.
- Detroit Lake State Recreation Area
  - Minor damage along some campground loops closer to the highway.
  - Loss of one water storage tank.
  - 40 acres burned.
- North Santiam State Recreation Area
  - 120 acres burned.
  - Loss of some structures.
- Bonnie Lure State Recreation Area
  - 40 acres burned.
- Collier Memorial State Park
  - 400 acres burned.
  - Damage to historic museum and some equipment.
  - Loss of one historic cabin, wood shed, and host trailer.
- Wallowa Lake State Park
  - Wind damage to dock.
- Devil’s Lake State Park
  - No fire damage, but many trees down.
- Other coastal parks with trees down include Munson Creek Falls State Natural Site, Sitka Sedge State Natural Area, Cape Lookout State Park, Beverly Beach State Park, William M. Tugman and many areas of the Oregon Coast Trail are reported to have trees down as well.

Many parks remain open, but still could be experiencing poor air quality. Some major highways and roads used to access parks are closed.

- OPRD Fire Info Page
- Oregon Wildfire Page
- TripCheck

Photos in this release can be found here:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q565D2q2AFrScOjJWyO_az9MKaXMxrBJ?usp=sharing



(above) A host RV trailer survived the fire that burned a OPRD shop building at North Santiam State Recreation Area.



(above) Wildfire burns through the night at Collier Memorial State Park.



(above) Charred remains of a historic cabin at Collier Memorial State Park illustrate some of the damage at the park.



(above) Downed trees at Cape Lookout State Park block trails and access.



(above) Downed trees at Devil’s Lake State Park block access in the campgrounds.

###