



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 28, 2019

Enjoy Independence Day outdoors, but leave the fireworks at home

(Boise) – Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) reminds those who will recreate on Idaho endowment lands to enjoy the celebration of Independence Day, but to please leave your fireworks and other pyrotechnic devices at home and use extreme caution if you choose to have a campfire.

During closed fire season (May 10 to October 20), it is illegal to throw away any lighted material, including fire crackers or fireworks on any forest or rangeland in the State of Idaho. (Idaho Code 38-117) Starting a wildfire by the use of fireworks is considered negligence, and the person who started the fire will be billed for the cost of fighting the fire. (Idaho Code 38-107)

In the past two years, IDL has sent out multiple bills totaling \$4.7 million for the cost of fires investigators determined to be negligent. The negligent fire bills range from a few hundred dollars to more than a million dollars.

Last year, approximately 80 percent of all fires that occurred on land protected by IDL were human caused and preventable. As you recreate throughout the summer, here are actions you can take to help prevent wildfires:

1. If you plan to tow a boat or RV, please secure your safety chains. Dragging and sparking chains are a frequent cause of wildfire along Idaho's highways.
2. Don't drive a vehicle over tall dry grasses in the heat of summer, and clear out vegetation before you park.
3. Make sure your ATV, UTV, or dirt bike has a properly working spark arrestor.
4. If you target shoot, do not use tracer bullets or exploding targets; both have caused wildfires in the past.
5. Carry a shovel and water container in your vehicle.
6. Campfire safety:
 - Use a contained fire pit when having a campfire. If one is not available, dig a pit away from hanging branches in a cleared area and surround the pit with rocks.
 - Never leave a campfire unattended.
 - Keep water and a shovel near the campfire.
 - Make sure the remnants of a campfire are cold to the touch before leaving it. If it is warm to the touch, it is too hot to leave.

Endowment lands offer a great opportunity for recreation, but they serve an even greater purpose of generating income for beneficiaries, primarily Idaho's public school system. Please respect the land and be good stewards, knowing what it provides our children.

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