

# NEWSRelease

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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## Prineville BLM Awarded Restitution for Reckless Burning Case

*Bend, Ore.* – On June 9, 2014 the Prineville District, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), was awarded restitution in the amount of \$17, 569.34 from five individuals convicted of reckless burning as a violation. The defendants pleaded “no contest” to starting the 38-acre Mayfield Pond wildfire east of Bend on August 19, 2012. The individuals were shooting at Tannerite, the trademark name for a binary exploding target. The resulting 38-acre wildfire required several engines, helicopter bucket drops, fire retardant drops, heavy equipment and numerous firefighters to suppress before it spread to homes. The cost to the BLM for the fire was almost \$88,000.

At the time of the fire, BLM-administered lands in Oregon and Washington were under a Fire Prevention Order that banned the use of all fireworks and exploding targets. The defendants admitted to purchasing fifty pounds of Tannerite and had used all but five pounds at the time of the incident. They had shot approximately 12 containers of Tannerite and were placing their targets in a western juniper tree, which ultimately exploded when the Tannerite was detonated. The individuals also did not follow the recommendations of the Tannerite Company, which recommends using no more than 0.5 pound of the mixed composition at one time. The Oregon State Police Explosives unit had to respond to the incident to detonate the mixed but unused portion of Tannerite, which cannot be safely transported once the two chemicals are combined.

Exploding targets generally consist of two or more separate chemicals that when mixed become an explosive designed to produce a visual and audible display when detonated by the shock of a bullet strike. When detonated, these targets can result in a fireball, igniting grasses, pine needles, and other combustible material. Although there isn't a single data system for documenting exploding targets as a cause of wildfire on public lands, the Forest Service has identified at least five wildfires on National Forest lands since 2012, caused by exploding targets and resulting in more than 15,000 acres burned and approximately 30 million in suppression costs.

The BLM would like to remind everyone to target shoot responsibly, including obeying all fire prevention orders, shooting in areas where that type of use is allowed, and using a back drop such as a dirt berm. Shooting trees, signs, and buildings is considered damaging government property and is punishable by law. Exploding targets, even when used in amounts recommended by a manufacturer, can cause resource damage and can result in citations for damage to public property. Proper and authorized use extends to users bringing their own targets, shooting in areas where natural resource damage will not occur, and cleaning up thoroughly after shooting. The debris and damage left by people who do not shoot responsibly diminishes the experience of other people seeking to enjoy public lands and uses tax dollars to repair.

**About the BLM:** The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2013, the BLM generated \$4.7 billion in receipts from public lands.

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BLM  
Prineville District Office

