Pend Oreille County Public Utility District
Administrative Offices - P.O. Box 190 ◆ Newport, WA 99156 ◆ (509) 447-3137 ◆ FAX (509) 447-5824
Box Canyon Hydro Project - P.O. Box 547 ◆ Ione, WA 99139 ◆ (509) 446-3137 ◆ FAX (509) 447-6790

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2026

Media Contact: Joe Hathaway
jhathaway@popud.org / 509-447-6354

Pend Oreille PUD Selected for National Wildfire Resilience Program

NEWPORT, Wash. - Public Utility District No. 1 of Pend Oreille County (PUD) has been selected to participate in the Wildfire Insights and Support for Electric (WISE) Utilities program, led by Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).

The program connects electric utilities with experts, research tools and innovative technology to help them better understand wildfire risks, identify areas of concern, and find ways to protect their electric systems. **Participation in the program comes at no cost to PUD customers.**

Wildfire mitigation is a critical priority for Pend Oreille PUD, given the heavily forested, mountainous terrain of Pend Oreille County and the miles of power lines that cross it. Through this partnership, the PUD will gain access to additional research and tools to better understand where wildfire risks are greatest and use that information to help guide future decisions about protecting its electric system.

PNNL is a U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory based in Richland, Washington. Its researchers work on challenges involving energy, the environment, and infrastructure. Through programs like WISE, they help utilities use research and data to solve real-world problems.

Moving forward, the PUD will work with PNNL to explore how these tools can support wildfire planning, reduce risks, and help strengthen electric system reliability. The PUD will also have opportunities to share what it learns with other utilities across the Pacific Northwest that face similar challenges.

“This is a great opportunity to build on the work we're already doing to protect our electric system,” said Michael Schleich, Director of Engineering and Operations with Pend Oreille PUD. “Working with PNNL will help us learn more about wildfire risks and explore new ways to plan for the future while continuing to provide safe, reliable, and affordable service to our community.”

The partnership gives Pend Oreille PUD another way to prepare for wildfire threats, make informed decisions, and learn from experts, all while sharing useful knowledge with other utilities facing similar challenges.

About Pend Oreille County Public Utility District
Pend Oreille PUD was established in 1936 and began operations in 1948. The PUD is governed by three locally elected Commissioners. A General Manager and staff operate the utility within policies set by the Board of Commissioners. The PUD has four operating systems: The electric system distributes electricity to the county, the production system produces power from the Box Canyon Hydroelectric Project, the water system consists of nine individual water distribution subdivisions, and the community network system provides wholesale broadband communication services. For more information visit: http://popud.org.