

## Duluth News Tribune

Published May 18, 2013, 06:00 AM

### Wisconsin DNR provides more details on origin of major wildfire

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By: **News Tribune staff**, Duluth News Tribune

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Firefighting crews on Friday continued to mop up hot spots from the approximately 8,000-acre fire that destroyed 17 homes and cabins and 30 other structures between Gordon and Barnes.

The DNR reported Friday that a crew from Ray Duerr Logging was conducting routine harvesting operations with a Timberjack 840 feller-buncher about 2:30 p.m. Tuesday southwest of the intersection of Germann Road and Doetsch Lane in the town of Gordon when they noticed smoke coming from below the machine's cutting head.

"Fine grasses (and) abundant woody debris coupled with dense jackpine with low-hanging branches caused the fire to start out as a surface fire and quickly move to the treetops. It was only a matter of minutes before it hit the crowns, and it was off and running," Gary Bibow, DNR fire law enforcement specialist, said in a news release.

Bibow said the fire started underneath the cutting head; officials ruled out all other possible causes.

"There was no indication of the saw coming in contact with a rock or that the equipment appeared to be faulty," Bibow said.

The logging crew made a concerted effort to extinguish the fire and immediately called 911, officials said. The investigation determined that there was no negligence involved, and the DNR recommended that no criminal charges be filed.

"The entire logging crew stayed on scene," Bibow said. "They have been extremely cooperative throughout this entire process."

Ray Duerr Logging is based in Rib Lake, Wis.

DNR officials have flown over the fire and used infrared photography to locate remaining hot spots. Firefighting crews are slated to remain in the fire zone this weekend to douse those hot spots and monitor the fire perimeter. Forecast rainfall over the next few days should aid in those efforts.

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