

FLOODING:
Advance preparation is advisable

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for the area, suggestions for personal preparedness, and local emergency response expectations.

The Sisters Public Works Department, headed by Director Paul Bertagna, has been actively involved in planning and training with Deschutes County and a number of other organizations for any possible flood threat from the creek.

Members of the Sisters Emergency Operations Center, who will be present at the meeting to provide information and answer questions, include: Rick Allen, Sisters city manager, and Paul Bertagna and Nicole Montalvo of the Sisters Public Works Department; Kyle Gorman, South Central region manager of the Oregon Water Resources Department, that oversees ground and surface water, dams, and water rights; Fire Chief Roger Johnson and Deputy Chief of Operations Tim Craig of the Sisters-Camp Sherman RFPD; and Sgt. Nathan Garibay of the Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, emergency services program manager.

Approximately 80 parcels of land within the city limits lie within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) 100-year floodplain, about 75 percent of them developed. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted studies, which resulted in the flood plain designations for both Whychus Creek and the Little Deschutes River.

Limited flooding has occurred along the Little Deschutes River, Whychus and Tumalo creeks, with the most significant event occurring in 1964. After that flooding, the Corps channelized Whychus Creek (then called Squaw Creek) to get it through town and Camp Polk Meadow quickly, and theoretically reduce the odds of more flooding.

The passage of time has shown, however, that creating straight channels has created a multitude of problems, including eliminating a once-healthy run of salmon and trout, eroding creek banks due to rapid water flow, and an increased flooding risk.

Since the 1990s, a number of public and private entities have been working together to mitigate the damage done by straightening out the creek. The Deschutes Land Trust has completed an extensive project at Camp Polk Meadow

where the original creek bed was restored, so the water spreads out over the meadow to reduce the risk of flooding. Additionally, fish habitat and the original meadow ecosystem were restored.

The Sisters EOC has been working with the Deschutes County Emergency Services program to do appropriate planning prior to, and response in the event of, a flood event in Whychus Creek. Coordinated planning ahead of an emergency or disaster helps provide for an organized, efficient, and effective response by all agencies involved.

Although households and individuals are not formally a part of the emergency operations plans, they certainly can contribute to a positive outcome by getting educated on what to expect, and making appropriate preparations

in advance.

The Friday forum will help you know what steps need to be taken to protect yourself, your family, and your dwelling in case of flooding, such as shutting off propane at the tank, and appropriately using sandbags. Residents who live within the 100-year-flood plain would be wise to have flood insurance. If you have insurance, check with your insurance agent to be sure you are doing what you need to do in order for your coverage to be valid should flooding occur.

Volunteers have hand-delivered flyers for the meeting to the properties located in the special flood hazard area designated by FEMA, but all members of the community are welcome to attend the February 10 meeting.

BOWE: Army and law enforcement were part of service

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District budget committee, and remains active in an assortment of veterans groups, from the Sisters Band of Brothers, to the VFW, and was a key player in helping Sisters earn its designation as a Purple Heart City.

Bowe is an active member of the 173rd Airborne Veterans Association, and has enjoyed reunions with his comrades in Australia, Alaska, and Fort Bragg. He and Sandy are looking forward to another reunion in May, in Oklahoma City.

Pat and Sandy, who were engaged prior to his departure for Vietnam, raised two sons together — both U.S. Army

veterans — and enjoy five grandchildren.

"All of the credit goes to Sandy" for keeping the family running and enduring through the years of deployments, shift work, and frequent absences, Pat said.

The Bowes love their life in Sisters.

"It's been a real fun seven years," Pat says. "The people here are courteous. We are blessed to live here."

When asked what has driven him to such a remarkable career, Pat thought for a moment.

"It's a cliché," he said, "But I like to help people, and I like to be in a position to give back."

After 48 years of service, it seems quite clear that Pat Bowe has given back, and lived an exemplary, and without question heroic, life of sacrifice.

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