

Fire destroys fruit packing shed in Wenatchee

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — Fire destroyed a packing shed of one of the smaller fruit packers in the Wenatchee area the evening of March 24.

Phillippi Fruit Co. Inc. lost its apple packing line at 1921 Fifth St. in Wenatchee. It has a cherry packing facility about eight miles away at Baker Flats.

The approximately 12,500-square-foot building was unoccupied when fire was reported at 8:25 p.m., said Mike Burnett, chief of Chelan County Fire District No. 1.

The fire was not discovered early on and had spread



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

Twisted rubble is all that remains of Phillippi Fruit Co. Inc.'s packing shed in Wenatchee, Wash., the morning of March 27 following a fire. The fruit storage shed in the background was saved.

enough that firefighters were unable to pursue an interior attack upon arrival but saved an adjacent fruit storage shed just five feet away and stacks of empty apple bins, Burnett

said. About 50 firefighters from seven fire departments as far away as Lake Chelan, 40 miles to the north, responded to the two-alarm fire and

three aerial ladder trucks were used, he said.

There was no immediate threat to nearby homes, and the fire was under control in 2 1/2 hours, he said.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, but there is nothing suspicious, Burnett said.

"It won't be easy to determine because of the extent of damage," he said.

He had no estimate of dollar loss.

Chris Phillippi, co-owner, released a statement crediting firefighters for saving the storage shed, shop, distillery, cidery and office.

"We had already concluded our apple packing season so the facility was only in limited operation. Nobody was working in the facility at the time of the fire," Phillippi said in the statement.

The company is considering options for packing this

fall's apple crop but most likely will not rebuild at Fifth Street, he said.

It's more likely the apple packing will be moved to one of the company's two other locations, he said.

"Much has changed since our facility was built on Fifth Street in 1960. At the time, the area was an orchard district ... but in 2017 we find ourselves as one of the last tree fruit operations in a residential district in the city of Wenatchee," Phillippi said.

The June and July cherry harvest is the company's upcoming focus and its cherry packing plant at Baker Flats will be fully ready, he said.

Snow, rain delay planting in Treasure Valley

By SEAN ELLIS
Capital Press

MERIDIAN, Idaho — An unusually harsh winter, followed by a string of rainstorms, has left farm fields soggy and delayed planting at least two weeks in many parts of the Treasure Valley area of southwestern Idaho and Eastern Oregon.

Many areas of the valley received record or near-record amounts of snowfall this winter, which left soils saturated when it melted.

Coupled with persistent and untimely rainstorms, many farmers have been prevented from planting crops that would normally be in the ground by now.

"It just keeps raining and raining and that's pushing everybody back," said Meridian farmer Richard Durrant. "We hope the rest of spring treats us OK and we can catch up in May and June."

Middleton, Idaho, farmer Sid Freeman is already two weeks late planting his onions and because of more rain in the immediate forecast, that's likely to turn into three weeks.

"We should be finishing up planting our onions by now and we're not," he said.

Don Tolmie, production manager for Treasure Valley Seed Co. in Homedale, Idaho, said many farmers are 20-25 days behind.

"There is so much (ground) work that still has to be done and the rain keeps delaying it," he said. "There is still a lot of moisture to get rid of and



Sean Ellis/Capital Press

Seed peas are planted in a field near Nampa, Idaho, on March 28. Many farmers in the Treasure Valley area of Idaho and Oregon are two to three weeks behind planting their crops due to soggy fields.

we haven't had any real drying weather."

Tolmie and others said the delay in planting is something they can deal with, for now.

"But you delay us another two weeks, and it's going to be really damn serious," Tolmie said. "It can be lived with today but if it gets much later, people are going to be panicking."

Nyssa, Ore., farmer Craig Froerer had all his sugar beets and onions planted by this time last year but hasn't been able to get them in the ground yet in 2017.

He said he will end up planting his onions at least on the second latest date since he started farming in 1978.

Froerer said the delay will likely reduce his sugar beet yields but isn't serious at this point. However, "If we get to the 15th of April and we still aren't going, then we'll start getting nervous."

For fall planted crops, the heavy snowfall was a blessing, area farmers said, because it insulated those crops from temperatures in December and January that averaged about 10 degrees lower than normal.

"All the crops we planted in the fall fared pretty doggone well because of the snow cover, which acted as insulation against the frigid temperatures we ended up having," Freeman said.

"My mint came through the winter better than I've seen it in a long time," said Meridian farmer Drew Eggers. "And my winter wheat seemed to green up right after the snow melted."

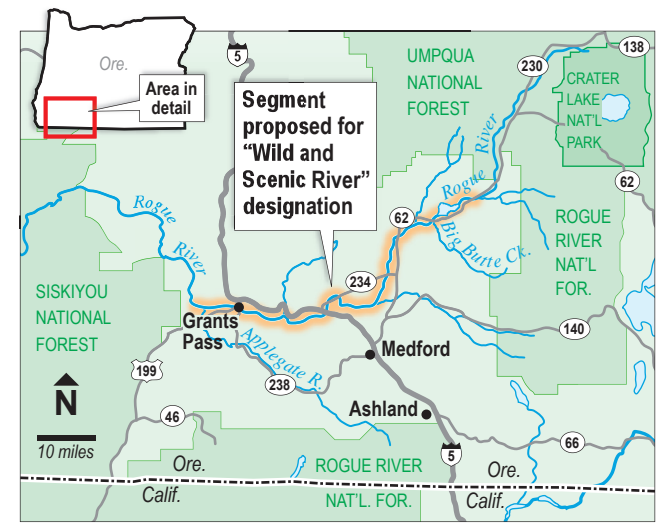
Snow mold damage to winter wheat and triticale that Eastern Oregon farmer Bill Buhrig worried about several weeks ago has mostly vanished.

"Now you have to look diligently to find it," he said. "Things seem to be rebounding real well."

LEGAL

PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 98 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE FOLLOWING VEHICLE WILL BE SOLD, FOR CASH TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER, ON 4/14/2017. THE SALE WILL BE HELD AT 10:00 AM BY PARKING ENFORCEMENT SERVICES 12700 SW HALL BLVD. #D TIGARD, OR 2005 DODGE 2500 VAN VIN=WD0PD744855808154 Amount due on lien \$1317.00 Reputed owner(s) TIMOFEY EROFEEFF

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Alan Kenagal/Capital Press

SW Oregon ranch fighting Rogue River management plans

Lawsuit challenges 'wild and scenic' eligibility of river's 63.5-mile segment

By MATEUSZ PERKOWSKI
Capital Press

An Oregon ranch is challenging federal management plans for a 63.5-mile stretch of the Rogue River, arguing they'll impede stabilization of the volatile river channel.

The Double R Ranch of Eagle Point, Ore., filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Bureau of Land Management for adopting plans to protectively manage the segment, which is eligible for designation as a "wild and scenic river."

Aside from hindering permits needed to fortify the river, BLM's decision will complicate changes to irrigation diversions and the development of water rights, the complaint said.

The lawsuit is joined by the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, which worries other ranchers will encounter such problems, as well as the Oregon Concrete and Aggregate Producers Association, which fears barriers to erosion control efforts.

Capital Press was unable to reach a representative of the BLM as of press time.

In 2016, the BLM determined the 63.5-mile segment is "suitable" for protection as a wild and scenic river, which is the final administrative step before Congress can make that designation.

However, this particular stretch has a long history of human manipulation, disqualifying it from designation because it's not "free-flowing" as required by federal law, the complaint said.

"Throughout the proposed segment, streambanks have been extensively modified, armored, and engineered to stabilize the river channel," the complaint said.

This segment of the Rogue River is prone to "extreme flood events" and channel migration, so further work will be needed to reinforce its streambanks with rip-rap rock and otherwise avoid undesirable upland impacts, the complaint said.

Gravel pits near the channel are susceptible to being inundated or "captured" by the river, which has occurred in the past, polluting the water with massive amounts of sediment, according to plaintiffs.

A coalition of landowners, government agencies and conservationists has rectified past problems, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would "almost certainly deny" future permits for such projects due to restrictions associated with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the complaint said.

"Thus designation of the proposed segment would effectively halt future bank and channel protection activities," the lawsuit said. "That could result in further pit captures, severely degrading downstream fish habitat and frustrating the very purposes and policies the WSR Act was created to protect."

The plaintiffs claim BLM's own analysis found that state and county governments are already protecting the river, so leaving the segment undesignated wouldn't threaten its wild and scenic values.

"Designation would duplicate local management and could easily undermine it," the complaint said.

Upper and lower reaches of the Rogue River are already designated under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, but those sections flow mostly through public land, according to the plaintiffs.

"In contrast, the proposed segment is almost entirely private property, with insignificant land ownership by federal agencies," the complaint said.

LEGAL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING TO: ALL OREGON CLOVER SEED GROWERS

Notice is hereby given that a public hearing will be held pursuant to ORS 576.416 (5), on Wednesday, May 10, 2017, at 7:00 a.m., at West Salem Roth's IGA, Founder's Room "O," 1130 Wallace Road, Salem, Oregon upon a proposed budget for operation of the Clover Commission during the fiscal year July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018. At this hearing any producer of Oregon grown Clover seed has a right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for public inspection, under reasonable circumstances, in the office of each County Extension Agent in Oregon. For further information, contact the Oregon Clover Commission business office, PO Box 3366, Salem, Oregon 97302, telephone 503-364-2944. The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please make any requests for an interpreter for the hearing impaired or for other accommodation for persons with disabilities at least 48 hours before the meeting by contacting the Commission office at 503-364-2944.

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The Oregon Processed Vegetable Commission will hold a public budget hearing on April 20, 2017, 7:00 p.m. at 1320 Capitol Street NE, Salem, Oregon. Any person wishing to comment on the budget is welcome to do so either orally or in writing. A copy of the proposed budget is available for public inspection during normal business hours at the commission office located at 6745 SW Hampton Street, Suite 101, Portland, Oregon.

13-7/#4

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