

MOSIER CREEK FIRE



The morning after July Maus, her parents, her brother and his wife, and her elderly grandmother evacuated from the Mosier Creek Fire, they went back up to view the damage. "There's still stuff smoldering and burning," said Maus. Contributed photo

FIRE
Evacs in place

Continued from page 1

percent contained. A reported 662 structures remain in danger, and crews have confirmed that a total 36 structures have been destroyed, and one structure has been damaged.

Maus and her family safely evacuated to a friend's house, but they went back up to see their property on Aug. 13. "We just needed to see it for ourselves," said Maus. Her brother lost his house and pretty much everything was destroyed, she said. A friend set up a GoFundMe for the family (www.gofundme.com/f/maus-family-support?utm_source=instagram&utm_campaign=p_cf+share-flow-1&utm_medium=social) and they're working out what to do next.

"We just have an amazing support system," said Maus. "We've just been really well taken care of by our friends and our congregation ... so it's been really encouraging."

The Wasco County Sheriff's Office first issued evacuation notices for the surrounding area on Aug. 12 and has updated the notices several times within the last week as crews got a better understanding of the fire spread (see graphic, page 3, for the

current evacuation map).

While officials have confirmed that the fire is not expected to grow and that firefighters will be in the area to monitor at least through August (see associated story, page 3), evacuation orders remained unchanged on Monday.

"The main priority is safety," said Wasco County Sheriff Lane Magill in an official Q&A on Sunday, Aug. 16. "... Since fires are so unpredictable, we really want to avoid predicting and changing evacuation levels multiple times. Please note, as the sheriff, it is important to me to make sure everyone gets back to their homes as early as possible."

Over the weekend, crews achieved the 200-foot mop-up marker from the containment line to the interior of the fire, and their goal Monday was to reach the 300-foot mop-up marker.

The Oregon State Fire Marshal and other remaining task forces demobilized on Monday and delegated structure responsibilities to local fire authorities. The Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) continues to manage fire response.

For the most up-to-date information on the Mosier Creek Fire, evacuation notices and fire response, visit www.facebook.com/mosiercreekfire2020.



The Mosier Creek Fire burned and estimated 500 acres by Wednesday evening, Aug. 8, 2020. At top right, Emergency personnel from Oregon State Police, The Dalles Sheriff and Oregon State Forestry, among others, gather at the junction of Sevenmile Hill and Dry Creek roads. Dry Creek Road was closed. Mark B. Gibson photo



Above, KATU and KGW interview initial Incident Commander Kiel Nairns of the Oregon Department of Forestry. At right, Mosier Fire Chief Mike Renault and Mid-Columbia Fire & Rescue Chief Bob Palmer hold a "fire truck huddle" with other fire crew members in the first hours of Mosier Creek Fire response. Submitted/Barb Ayers photos



Smoke viewed from Rock Creek Road in Mosier about two hours after the fire started on Aug. 12. Emily Fitzgerald photo



Mosier Creek Fire Sparks
air quality advisory

Wasco, Hood River counties
could see power outages

Wasco, Sherman, and Gilliam COVID-19 Unified Command urges the community to be prepared for all hazards and potential emergency situations. In addition to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the area is experiencing wildfires and short-duration power outages, according to an agency press release.

This announcement is aimed at reminding everyone to be prepared, and stated, "We are particularly concerned regarding a potential disruption to electrical service in our community — while the risk is low at this time, we encourage everyone to be prepared, especially those vulnerable populations that are dependent on electricity for their health, life, and safety."

The Mosier Creek Fire is burning close to the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) transmission lines. Firefighting

efforts could require power to be shut off to the lines to protect firefighter's safety. If this occurs, residents in Western Wasco County and parts of Hood River County could be impacted.

While the outlook today seems to indicate a low likelihood of another power outage, the risk remains and the public needs to be prepared in case the situation changes:

- Wildfire season is in full swing; expect poor air-quality and potential for new fires.
- COVID cases are still occurring in communities.
- There is a small risk for more power outages.
- An outage associated with the Mosier Creek Fire may come with little notice.

If anyone has questions, or needs special assistance regarding a power outage, contact your electricity utility provider directly.

Stay informed

Sign up for "Citizen Alert" in your county via Everbridge:

- Wasco County: member.everbridge.net/453003085612392/login
- Sherman County: member.everbridge.net/892807736724035/login
- Gilliam County: member.everbridge.net/892807736724035/login

Information regarding high heat preparedness and poor air quality may be found on the CDC website:

- Heat at www.cdc.gov/ncesh/features/extremeheat/index.html
- Smoke at www.cdc.gov/air/wildfire-smoke/default.htm

Information regarding the Mosier Creek Fire may be found at inciweb.nwcg.gov/incident/article/6955/53176.

An air quality advisory is in effect for The Dalles-Hood River area due to the Mosier Creek Fire that started Aug. 12. Smoke levels are fluctuating rapidly and will likely continue through at least Saturday morning, according to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared the fire a conflagration, allowing state resources to be utilized. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has authorized use

of federal funds to help with firefighting costs.

The fire was threatening 300 homes and critical communications infrastructure. Mandatory and voluntary evacuations have been issued for approximately 415 homes.

Currently, the fire is located two miles south of Mosier and was listed at 800 acres and 5 percent contained at mid-morning Aug. 13. Structures are threatened and evacuations are in progress at the following locations:

Level 3, GO (Evacuate): All of Paradise Ridge Place Road, and everyone West of State Road. from Evergreen Terrace to Dry Creek Road.

Level 2, GET READY: Everyone East of State Road, from Evergreen Terrace to Dry Creek Road.

Follow the Wasco County Sheriff's Office Facebook page as the situation changes.

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