

Wildcat Community Destroyed



Sandy firemen string safety line in Wildcat creek area to aid those who must walk through swift runoff water as streams gush out of banks. Raindrops are magnified in photo.

The Wildcat Creek section of the Mt. Hood highway was a vortex of storm violence, costly in loss of property and blamed for at least one death.

Some 100 persons were left homeless as surging water tore at their houses. An estimated 30 dwellings were damaged, of which 28 are counted as destroyed.

The death listed was that of A. Harry Engels of the Wildcat Creek community. His entire house was crushed by an avalanche of mud, trees and rocks that poured down the Wildcat creek watershed. His body has not yet been recovered. Areas upstream had been cut over and in some cases was relatively barren and thus these sections were unable to retain much of the mass of melted snow and rain.

Others in the community had time to flee but nearly every family in the small mountain community suffered losses — some their entire home and all furnishings.

The pictures to the left and right tell a related story. Sandy firemen set up the line shown at left that they might cross the swift stream of runoff water that separated them from the women in the picture at right, who needed help in making it to the refuge of the house on higher ground.



Sandy river boils toward Columbia amid torrents of rain, raised to flood stage by last week's storm.



Car tossed by flood sits with all four wheels dangling.



Refrigerator is now only junk after being torn from home.

Outlook - Post photos by Paul Blixt, Betty Hartman, Walt Taylor, Buford Sommers



At Wildcat creek, Sandy firemen lead women to house on high ground, only haven in area. They are from stricken dwelling at right of picture.



Sentinels of no-mail delivery along Wildcat creek area. Closure of roads through bridge washouts put kibosh on mail service for while. Picture was taken during peak of rain and flood last Tuesday. That's Sandy river in background.



Wildcat Creek, as rough as its name, runs at will through broken home.



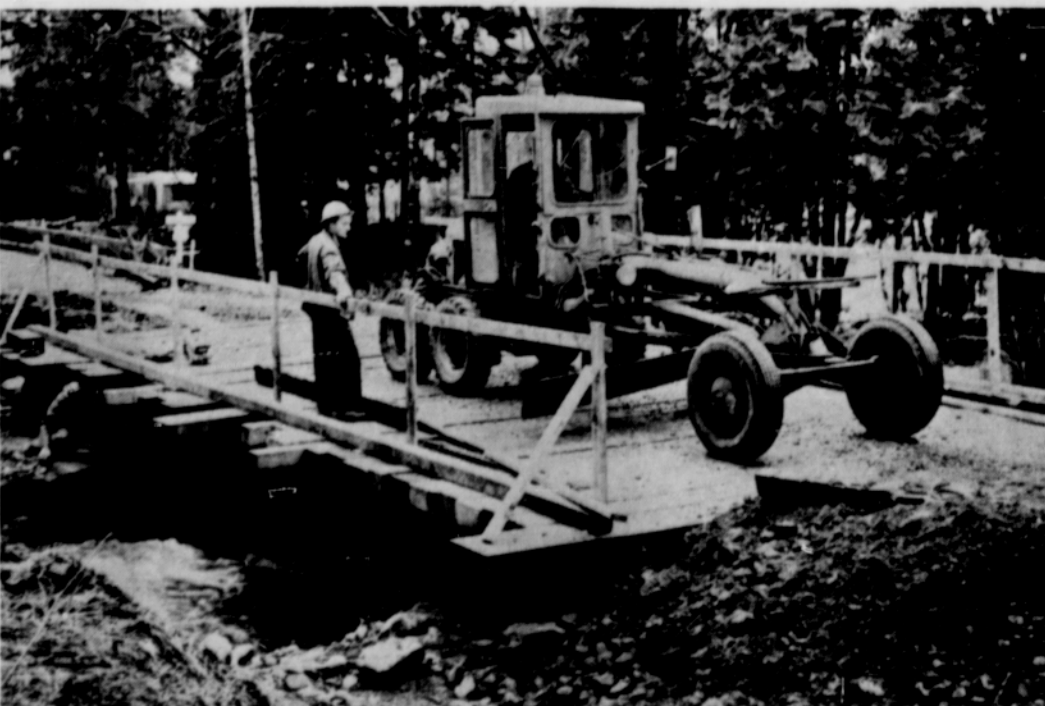
This pile of wood, logs, stumps, houses blocked US 26 at Wildcat, caused water backup as cut-over land flooded in last week's rains, snow melt. Picture shows highway in center. Height can be measured by road grader.



This new home was a total loss as creek poured in tons of water, rocks, trees.



Creek took new course, undercutting home shown at left. This was taken two days after flood.



Road grader crosses temporary bridge over creek — now 50 yards east of old course. This is only link now east of Sandy.