

More homes being placed in the path of wildfires

Quiet life, higher risk

By ASHLEY AHEARN
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Chris Hopkins moved to Pine Forest for the trees. He was drawn to the hilly, forested community in Washington's Methow Valley, and decided to build a cabin there in the 1990s, "before we really knew about fire danger," he said.

Then came the Carlton Complex Fire in 2014, which burned more than 250,000 acres just down the valley from Pine Forest. And then the Twisp River Fire the following year. It came even closer to Pine Forest and killed three young firefighters. Chris's brother lost his home in the Carlton Complex, as did more than 300 others.

"We had spent most of the day clearing brush but it wasn't enough," Hopkins recalled. His brother and sister-in-law had lost power and were in their home with the shades drawn to stay cool when they heard a knock on the door. It was someone from the U.S. Forest Service telling them they needed to evacuate immediately. "Sure enough there was a 30-foot wall of flames heading towards them," Hopkins said.

For people like Hopkins and his brother, whose homes straddle what's called the "wildland-urban interface," wildfire risk is the new normal, and the risk is increasing as more people move into places where cul-de-sac meets forest or sagebrush.

Heather Dean knows everyone in Pine Forest. She and her husband walk their two dogs twice a day along the dirt roads that weave through the for-



AP Photo/Ringo H.W. Chiu

A wildfire burns near homes in the Cleveland National Forest in Lake Elsinore, Calif.

est. In the winter they snowshoe and cross-country ski on the extensive trail system that connects Pine Forest with surrounding Forest Service land.

Fuel to burn

Wildfire has always been a part of this dry, forested landscape — as it has in many parts of the West — but as more people have moved in the wildland-urban interface over the past century, federal and state agencies have aggressively suppressed fires that would have otherwise burned at lower intensity and cleared out the underbrush that builds up in a forest over time.

"Our biggest problem is that the forest has largely been left to its own for a good chunk of the time that Pine Forest has been here and it's gotten too overgrown," Dean explained.

Now, when Dean walks through Pine Forest she sees too many trees, too close together

with too much undergrowth.

The recommended density of this forest is 25 to 30 trees per acre, according to forestry health experts Dean consulted. On some plots in Pine Forest that number is closer to 600. That's a lot more fuel to burn.

But she and others in the community are working to do something about it. Pine Forest residents now pay \$350 more in homeowners association dues to cover the cost of thinning the trees in the common areas and along shared roads. The homeowners association contracted with a logging company to give individual property owners the option of paying out of pocket to have extra thinning done on their property if they choose. Dean said that when she bumps into her neighbors on her frequent walks she's been heartened by their response.

"A lot of people think, I can do this all myself, but then they realize it's really a lot of work,"

she said. "We are much more likely to get it done if we band together and do it."

Dean said that 60 percent of the 135 lots in Pine Forest have now been thinned. "If you can get 60 to 75 percent participation you've made a significant reduction in your risk of a large fire, so we're hopeful."

That risk remains, of course, but by taking the "all for one, one for all" approach, as Dean calls it, the Pine Forest community has reduced its risk. Fire resilience is a team effort, if you ask wildfire scientists. An individual homeowner can do everything correctly on his or her property, but if a neighbor's lot has a dense, overgrown forest, a fire can intensify and spread across the tree canopy to destroy even the best-protected homes nearby.

Harm's way

Since 1990, more than 60 percent of new homes in Cal-

ifornia, Oregon and Washington state were built in the wildland-urban interface. Washington has more homes in the interface than any other state, according to Headwaters Economics. The National Academy of Public Administration predicts a 40 percent increase in homes in the interface between 2001 and 2030.

Fire destroyed an average of 3,000 homes in the wildland-urban interface annually over the last decade, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. And with hotter, drier summers and a longer fire season, experts predict that number to rise.

Despite the risk, across much of the rural West, local governments and planning departments are hesitant to prevent or hamper development.

"I'm not real big on over-regulating people," said Andy Hover, an Okanogan County commissioner who lives near Pine Forest in the Methow Valley. "You would hope that people, when they buy a piece of property, that they understand what they're doing when they buy that property."

Hover said it's the responsibility of each individual homeowner, not the entire community, to protect his or her property from fire risk. And it's not necessarily the job of the county to tell people where and how they develop their property, in light of that risk.

"Rules and regulations are kind of like — well, is that really what we want? It's a little more tricky to lay out policy that everybody can get behind," Hover said.

Okanogan County released an updated comprehensive plan — its plan for manag-

ing population and business growth — soon after the Carlton Complex Fire. There was no mention of wildfire in the document. A revised draft plan makes mention of wildfire risk but does not provide specific guidance on imposing building requirements or prohibiting development in wildfire-prone areas. Hover was not a commissioner when the plan was developed.

Economic driver

In cash-strapped counties like Okanogan that once depended on logging or mining for jobs and tax revenue, home construction is a major economic and tax revenue driver.

"There's a whole new cash cow in a lot of communities and that's residential development," said Ray Rasker, executive director of Headwaters Economics. "So when they see a proposal for a new subdivision it's understandable for county governments to say, eagerly, 'Let's approve this because we get more tax revenues from that.'"

Headwaters Economics has worked with local governments across the country to provide guidance.

Rasker said this is not about halting development because of a perceived risk. It's about incorporating the growing body of information about wildfire behavior into development practices. "The science is there, the knowledge is there, to know how to do it better than we have in the past," Rasker said. "We can't guarantee that you can 100 percent make a place fireproof but for the most part, in much of the West, you really can say 'yes' to development — but under certain conditions."

Paving work scheduled in Astoria

The Daily Astorian

The contractor for Astoria's 2018 Paving Project has scheduled work for the following locations and dates:

Tuesday — Cedar Street from 47th to 51st streets; 51st from Cedar to Birch Street; Birch from 51st to 53rd streets; and 53rd from Birch to Ash Street.

Wednesday — Irving Avenue from 16th to 18th streets; Franklin Avenue from 10th to 12th streets; 11th Street from Duane to Exchange streets; and 15th Street from Duane to Franklin.

Thursday — Fourth Street from Niagara Avenue to cul-de-sac; and Fifth Street from McClure to Nehalem avenues. Temporary traffic delays

and road closures should be expected, and alternate routes should be used where possible. Before work begins, there will be notification of parking restrictions. All schedules are subject to change in the event of unfavorable weather conditions.

For questions, call Astoria Public Works at 503-338-5173.

Betty Eleanor Vaughn Naselle, Washington Feb. 3, 1933 — Aug. 7, 2018

Betty Eleanor Vaughn, 85, of Naselle, Washington, passed away peacefully at Willapa Harbor Health and Rehab Center in Raymond, Washington, on Aug. 7, 2018. Betty was born to Gunnar and Eva Nelson on Feb. 3, 1933, in Salmon Creek, Washington.

Betty graduated from Naselle High School as salutatorian of the Class of 1951. She married Leonard Vaughn, and the couple made their home in Salmon Creek.

Betty was a homemaker who enjoyed family, knitting, crocheting, music, baking, sewing, clamming, playing cards and camping in their travel trailer. She was musically talented. She enjoyed singing in the choir, and learned to play a variety of musical instruments. Betty enjoyed helping those in need and volunteered at the local food bank. She also worked outside the home for several years.

Betty had a strong, unwavering faith in God, and was a member of Bethany Free Lutheran Church.

She will be remembered for her kindness. She was a selfless wife and mother who always

had a smile on her face.

Betty is survived by sister, Francy Penttila; daughters, Linda Thompson (Tom), of Naselle, and Judy

Heiner (Scott), of Montesano, Washington; and son, Danny Vaughn (Pam) and daughters Amanda and Morgan) of Naselle; grandchildren, Michal Corbin (Derrill), Danielle Thompson, Jason Heiner (Mandi), Justin Heiner and Calen Thompson; 11 great-grandchildren; and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews.

Betty was preceded in death by her husband, Leonard, in 2017; their first-born son, Leonard Dale Vaughn in 1970; and her brother, Roy Nelson.

A memorial service will be held at Bethany Free Lutheran Church in Astoria, Oregon, at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 15.

In lieu of flowers, please give the gift of your time. Reach out to those in need, visit a shut-in or nursing home resident. That's what Betty would do.

Arrangements are in care of Stoller's Mortuary in Raymond, Washington. You may visit StollersMortuary.com to leave condolences for the family.



Betty Vaughn

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR ASTORIA AccuWeather DOWNLOAD THE FREE APP

TONIGHT	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
54	68 / 53	70 / 56	76 / 59	71 / 58
Turning cloudy	Sun and areas of low clouds	Intervals of clouds and sunshine	Mostly sunny and nice	Clouds and sun with a shower possible

ALMANAC

Astoria through Thursday.

Temperatures

High/low 67°/58°
Normal high/low 69°/53°
Record high 90° in 1927
Record low 44° in 1973

Precipitation

Thursday 0.00"
Month to date 0.33"
Normal month to date 0.46"
Year to date 36.07"
Normal year to date 37.40"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight 8:21 p.m.
Sunrise Saturday 6:18 a.m.
Moonrise today 1:39 p.m.
Moonset today none

REGIONAL WEATHER

Shown is tomorrow's weather. Temperatures are tonight's lows and tomorrow's highs.

City	Hi	Lo	City	Hi	Lo
Astoria	54	68	Portland	55	84
Tillamook	52	69	The Dalles	57	92
Newport	52	63	Prineville	44	91
Coos Bay	53	68	John Day	53	91
Roseburg	55	91	Baker	46	90
Eugene	50	87	Burns	42	88
Bend	47	89	Ontario	59	93
Medford	55	94			
Brookings	55	71			
Ashland	56	95			

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2018

UNDER THE SKY

Tonight's Sky: Close approach of the waxing crescent moon and Jupiter.

Source: Jim Todd, OMSI

TOMORROW'S TIDES

Astoria / Port Docks

Time	High	Time	Low
7:53 a.m.	6.1 ft.	1:43 a.m.	0.7 ft.
7:47 p.m.	7.7 ft.	1:29 p.m.	1.9 ft.

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Hi	Lo	W	Hi	Lo	W
Atlanta	85	72	t	85	72	t
Boston	83	72	pc	84	66	t
Chicago	82	69	t	84	68	pc
Denver	86	59	pc	83	55	t
Des Moines	86	65	pc	89	68	s
Detroit	82	68	t	85	66	pc
El Paso	94	74	pc	94	76	t
Fairbanks	61	48	c	68	46	pc
Honolulu	91	79	pc	91	78	pc
Indianapolis	81	69	t	83	66	c
Kansas City	86	67	pc	88	69	pc
Las Vegas	101	84	s	106	87	s
Los Angeles	87	71	pc	86	68	s
Memphis	90	75	t	87	75	t
Miami	90	81	pc	90	80	pc
Nashville	90	73	t	86	72	t
New Orleans	88	78	t	89	76	t
New York	88	74	t	84	68	pc
Oklahoma City	93	69	pc	87	71	pc
Philadelphia	93	74	t	86	72	c
St. Louis	88	72	t	87	71	c
Salt Lake City	94	66	s	88	61	s
San Francisco	72	54	pc	74	54	pc
Seattle	75	56	pc	79	58	pc
Washington, DC	94	76	t	89	74	t

Weather (W): s-sunny, pc-partly cloudy, c-cloudy, sh-showers, t-thunderstorms, r-rain, sf-snow flurries, sn-snow, i-ice.

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Hi	Lo	W	Sat	Lo	W
Baker City	88	46	c	90	44	pc
Bend	86	47	pc	89	50	pc
Brookings	71	55	pc	69	53	pc
Eugene	84	50	pc	87	52	pc
Ilwaco	85	56	pc	86	55	c
Klamath Falls	86	46	pc	89	49	pc
Medford	91	55	pc	94	58	pc
Newberg	81	51	pc	86	55	pc
Newport	62	52	s	63	52	pc
North Bend	66	52	s	66	54	s

TOMORROW'S NATIONAL WEATHER

Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.

DEATH

Aug. 14, 2018
PETTEFER, Billie Jae, 65, of Wheeler, died in Seaside. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Assault
• At 1:13 p.m. Thursday, Robert Dale Larson, 50, of Seaside, was arrested by the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office on the 84380 block of Nordmark Drive and charged with menacing and harassment. He was allegedly involved in a domestic dispute with a woman.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

MONDAY
Knappa School Board, 5:30 p.m., Knappa High School library, 41535 Old U.S. Highway 30.
Astoria City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

LOTTERIES

OREGON
Thursday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 3-6-2-1
4 p.m.: 7-0-1-1
7 p.m.: 4-1-7-0
10 p.m.: 8-6-3-7

Thursday's Lucky Lines: 01-06-12-16-17-24-28-32
Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

WASHINGTON
Thursday's Daily Game:
2-6-1
Thursday's Keno: 11-13-22-26-33-37-38-40-42-43-49-53-57-60-64-70-72-75-77-80
Thursday's Match 4: 12-15-21-23

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