



John Hendricks

Flames and smoke rise from the Bootleg fire in southern Oregon on Wednesday.

Bootleg fire expands in southern Oregon

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

PORTLAND — Firefighters scrambled on Friday to control a raging inferno in southeastern Oregon that's spreading miles a day in windy conditions, one of numerous conflagrations across the West that are straining resources.

Authorities ordered a new round of evacuations Thursday amid worries the Bootleg fire, which has already destroyed 21 homes, could merge with another blaze that also grew explosively amid dry and blustery conditions.

The Bootleg fire, the largest wildfire burning in the U.S., had torched more than 377 square miles by Friday morning and was just 7% contained. It has stymied firefighters for nearly a week with erratic winds and extremely dangerous fire behavior. Early on, the fire doubled in size almost daily and strong winds from the south on Thursday afternoon yet again pushed the flames rapidly to the north and east.

The fire has the potential to move 4 miles or more in an afternoon and there was concern it could merge with the smaller, yet still explosive Log fire, said Rob Allen, incident commander for the blaze. That fire started Mon-

day as three smaller fires exploded to nearly 5,000 acres in 24 hours and was still growing, fanned by the same winds, Allen said.

Firefighters were all pulled back to safe areas late Thursday due to intense fire behavior and were scouting ahead of the main blaze for areas where they could make a stand by carving out fire lines to stop the inferno's advance, he said.

Crews are watching the fire, nearby campgrounds "and any place out in front of us to make sure the public's out of the way," Allen said. He said evacuation orders were still being assessed.

The Bootleg fire is affecting an area north of the Oregon-California border that has been gripped by extreme drought. On Thursday, authorities decided to expand previous evacuation orders near Summer Lake and Paisley. Both towns are located in Lake County, a remote area of lakes and wildlife refuges just north of the California border with a total population of about 8,000.

It has periodically generated enormous smoke columns that could be seen for miles — a sign that the blaze is so intense it is creating its own weather, with erratic winds and the potential for fire-generated lightning.

Columbia County approves rezoning farmland for industrial park expansion

By GEORGE PLAVERN
Capital Press

CLATSKANIE — Columbia County commissioners have approved rezoning 837 acres of high-value farmland for industrial use despite concerns over its potential impact on neighboring farms and salmon habitat.

It is the third time since 2014 commissioners have approved the rezone. The decision was previously remanded twice by the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals.

At least one environmental group is already pledging to again appeal to the state land use board, which could take months to review the case.

The property in question was purchased by the Port of Columbia County in 2010. It is adjacent to the Port Westward Industrial Park along the Columbia River.

Officials are seeking to rezone the land to attract new tenants that can utilize the port's deepwater dock, which provides 4,000 feet of waterfront access for large cargo ships. The dock is also self-scouring, meaning it never has to be dredged.

Opponents fear whether new fossil fuel developments may pollute the air and water, harming endangered salmon and contaminating farms within a vulnerable, low-lying area.

Jim Hoffmann, who farms 175 acres of organic blueberries roughly 2 miles downstream of Port Westward, condemned the commission's vote on Wednesday as "a travesty."

"The port and the county are turning back the clock on Oregon's land use progress with plans to pave over wetlands on the floodplains of the lower Columbia River," Hoffmann said, adding the port's plans will put local crops like berries, spearmint and peppermint at risk.

Dan Serres, conservation director at Columbia Riverkeeper, echoed Hoffmann's comments and said the group plans to appeal.

"We think the county commission and the port have made a big mistake," Serres said.

Scott Jensen, a planner at the port, said the rezone application was submitted with no specific project in mind.

"We really have not been talking to people about specific projects, because we want to make sure we have the land first," Jensen said. "We're doing this work so that private businesses don't have to go through and do this type of work on top of their regular development timeline."

However, Northwest Innovation Works, the company behind a rejected methanol refinery in Kalama, Washington, does have

a lease option that was approved by the port in 2019 to build a facility within part of the rezoned land at Port Westward, which has raised worries about the site becoming a hub for fossil fuels.

Part of the rezone was also set aside for two new agricultural leases, with Seely Mint leasing 211 acres and Columbia River Ranch leasing 243 acres for cattle grazing.

Port Westward is already home to three gas power plants operated by Portland General Electric, and a loading facility operated by the Massachusetts-based Global Partners Inc. to ship ethanol and biodiesel across the Pacific Ocean.

Jensen said the port expected there would be an appeal, and is prepared to return to the state land use board.

Farmland in Oregon is broadly protected under state land use planning laws — specifically Goal 3, which requires counties to identify land for "exclusive farm use." Rezoning farmland requires what is known as a Goal 3 exception.

The port's first stab at rezoning was approved in 2014. Columbia Riverkeeper and Mike Seely, a local mint farmer, appealed that decision, which was remanded by the state land use board.

The port resubmitted its application in 2017, this time identifying five potential uses for the land. They include forestry and wood products; dry bulk commodities; liquid bulk commodities; natural gas; and break bulk cargo.

Again, Columbia County approved the request, and again it was remanded by the state land use board on appeal from Columbia Riverkeeper and 1000 Friends of Oregon.

Though the state land use board agreed the five proposed uses do depend significantly on Port Westward's dock, and no alternative sites could reasonably accommodate them, the port did not do enough to show compatibility with surrounding farms and habitat.

The question of compatibility remains at the heart of the dispute.

"The scale of this is really big, and resource impacts are significant," Serres said. "It will be interesting to see how LUBA treats this for a third time."

According to a 2012 economic study, the Port of Columbia County and its various properties support 476 direct jobs, 342 secondary jobs and a combined annual output of \$88 million.

By further expanding its industrial base, the port hopes to provide additional jobs and tax revenue to the county.

"We think that this has a huge potential impact to benefiting the county as a whole," Jensen said.



they need YOU

— GET INVOLVED —

Adults in Clatsop County interested in a NEW 4-H Club promoting opportunities for Teen Leadership or other 4-H programs, please contact:

Sandra Carlson
(503) 325-8573
Sandra.carlson@oregonstate.edu

— TEENS, SPEAK UP! —

What matters to you? Teens, let us know by taking the survey at <https://beav.es/3qk>

CALLING CARING ADULTS IN CLATSOP COUNTY!

Clatsop County 4-H is looking for caring adults like you to serve as rotating co-leaders of the new Teen 4-H Leadership Club!

Non-traditional teens, ages 14 to 17, need your help to develop their interests, talents, teamwork and leadership skills. Meetings will be starting soon at Clatsop Community College. Just three hours a month of your time can make a big difference in their lives!

No prior experience is necessary— training, curriculum and guidance will be provided by experienced and caring 4-H leaders during each meeting.



OSU Extension Service prohibits discrimination in all its programs, services, activities, and materials.

CLATSOP CARE HEALTH & REHABILITATION CENTER

An update from your local nursing home

As a not-for-profit community supported organization, it's very important to us to keep the community informed of what's happening in our facility. That's why we've decided to share updates each week in the local paper.

MASK UP FOR VISITATION

The CDC has recently announced that fully vaccinated people are safe to go in most indoor and outdoor spaces without masks. With that, many states have removed their mask mandates for various settings.

Please keep in mind that masks are still required at Clatsop Care Center. When you visit, please wear your mask at all times.

WORK WHERE YOU'RE VALUED

For over 40 years, Clatsop Care Center has been guided by these values: **Dedication, Compassion, Community.**

We selectively hire and train our staff, and actively engage them within the care environment. They take pride in providing the highest quality care to our residents and clients.

We're currently hiring CNA's, housekeeping staff, & support staff. Learn more about our sign-on bonus, benefits, and other opportunities at www.ClatsopCare.org.



Thank you for your continued support!

for more information, please visit www.ClatsopCare.org

CLATSOP CARE
HEALTH DISTRICT