



This Monday photo provided by KATU-TV shows a wildfire burning near Cascade Locks as seen from near Stevenson, Wash., across the Columbia River.

FIRE: Eagle Creek Fire spreads to more than 10,000 acres

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Brown has already signed an emergency conflagration act that allows authorities to tap state, interstate, federal and local resources to fight the flames and protect private property.

Brown said the Eagle Creek Fire has spread to more than 10,000 acres, compared with 170,000 acres for the Chetco Bar wildfire in Southern Oregon. There are more than 1,400 emergency responders battling the Chetco fire.



A man looks out over the Columbia River from the Bridge of the Gods, Tuesday afternoon, as the Eagle Creek wildfire rages nearby.

Lt. Damon Simmons, a spokesman from the Portland Fire, Bureau said firefighters saved 58 structures in the Dodson and Warrendale area during the ongoing battle.

“It was really a gutsy effort,” he explained. “They had to work to make that fire move around those structures — rather than burning through them. It was house by house, structure by structure.”

Though the cause of the Eagle Creek fire is still under investigation, a news release alleges that a 15-year-old boy from Vancouver, Wash., and several others may be responsible. They were seen playing in the woods with fireworks,

according to various media reports.

“I would expect that they be held fully accountable for what has happened,” Brown said when pressed by reporters.

The Union Pacific rail line traveling through the Columbia River Gorge has been closed, as has Interstate 84 between Troutdale and

Hood River.

Sgt. Bryan White, a Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office information officer, asked the public to please stay away from affected areas.

“They’re curious. They’re taking pictures. They’re taking videos. I cannot emphasize enough how dangerous that is,” he said.

Brown announced at the

press conference that she had called up an additional 250 National Guard troops, for a total of more than 600. Those men and women are serving in support capacity during clean-up efforts, not as first-line firefighters.

Zane Sparling is a reporter for Pamplin Media Group’s Gresham Outlook.

SMOKE: Pendleton High School canceled outdoor athletics

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press releases Tuesday, urging the public to stay indoors.

“People with chronic diseases should check with their health care provider before wearing a mask,” the department’s press release states. “People with asthma, lung and heart disease, or have had a stroke should check with their health care provider for advice about leaving the area. Anyone with shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain, heart palpitations, extreme fatigue, or difficulty moving or speaking should call their health care provider or call 911.”

Jim Setzer, the county’s health director, had a two-word piece of advice: “Be prudent.”



A group of fifth graders take part in indoor activities Tuesday at Washington Elementary School in Pendleton. Due to poor air quality from wildfire smoke, outdoor activities were canceled by the district.

Besides staying indoors, Setzer advised Umatilla County residents to cool their houses with air conditioning instead of opening a window, if possible.

The press release further advises residents to set their air conditioning to recirculate and close off air intakes. The county also suggests using indoor air cleaners with HEPA filters and an N-95 respirator mask if residents need to be outside.

If someone starts to feel any ill effects from being outside, Setzer suggested they take a seat to see if it subsides and seek medical attention if it doesn’t.

According to the press release, hospitalizations for lung disease increase by 50 percent during smoky conditions.

Peter Brewer, who coordinates wildfire smoke responses for DEQ, said Umatilla County has been getting smoke from fires in

Idaho and Montana, and last week from central Oregon, but this week’s spike was likely tied to the Eagle Creek fire in the Columbia Gorge.

“You’re kind of getting hit from all around,” he said.

He said that many of the government websites featuring air quality and weather information have been crashing from the higher-than-usual traffic, but one useful resource is oregon-smoke.blogspot.com, which combines information on smoke in Oregon from many government sources.

St. Anthony Hospital spokesman Larry Blanc said he spoke with Emergency Department Manager Steve Hardin, who reported that the hospital hasn’t experienced an uptick in emergency room visits so far. Blanc said the hospital is hoping people heed warnings to stay indoors and keep themselves out of the emergency room.

Smoky skies throughout the area caused local schools to shift some of their outdoor activities indoors Tuesday. Pendleton High School canceled outdoor athletics,

including boys and girls soccer games against La Grande, and either moved practices indoors or canceled them altogether. Umatilla High School also canceled its scheduled soccer games against Baker.

Pendleton School District Superintendent Chris Fritsch said he drove to a few schools around noon to take stock of the conditions, with the district making the decision to move recess indoors and cancel outdoor sports activities in the early afternoon.

Fritsch said Pendleton schools have the gym capacity to continue holding recess indoors and doesn’t anticipate any other school operations altered as a result of the smoke.

The district will continue to monitor air quality reports and conditions to assess when students can return outdoors.

Many local schools, including Stanfield, Umatilla, and Hermiston, moved recess indoors.

Hermiston School District officials monitored air quality conditions

throughout the day, and decided Tuesday morning to move recess inside. Some sporting events were canceled, including boys and girls soccer games in Hillsboro. All outdoor practices were also moved indoors or canceled, and district officials said they would continue monitoring the smoke and make adjustments as necessary.

For more information on air quality, visit www.deq.state.or.us.

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EAST OREGONIAN

Patient treated for burns from minor explosion

East Oregonian

Umatilla County Fire District 1 and the Umatilla County Sheriff’s Office responded Tuesday afternoon to a medical call for burns from an explosion, which had happened several hours earlier. The patient, who was at a home on North Townsent Road, was a 21 year-old male who was

transported to the hospital for burns, which he had received around 1 or 2 a.m. on Tuesday.

UCFD Battalion Chief Jimmy Davis said he didn’t know the exact cause of the “so-called explosion,” but that crews thought it had something to do with a paint can. The patient was transported to the hospital for treatment for his injuries.

STANFIELD: Approved agreement to take Echo’s treated wastewater

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“There’s more than one way to be a nuisance,” Sue Whelan said.

Four residents present at the meeting still voiced complaints and questions, however, about the smell and why the city had not shut down the plant after voting in July to order it to “cease and desist.” Councilor Jason Sperr said after that vote the council had been informed by the city attorney that an attempt to go that route would mean a years-long process in court and possible counter-suits by the company.

Larsen said an update about progress the company was making on abating the smell was supposed to go in residents’ latest utility bill but the company that handles mailing the bills mistakenly did not insert it. The newsletters are available online, at city hall and at the library.

mental Quality that it must work toward sending the recycled water somewhere besides the Umatilla River.

The agreement estimates that Echo will pump less than 60,000 gallons per day during certain times of the year, and will pay 60 percent of the residential sewer rates since the recycled water does not have to go through the same level of treatment as raw sewage.

Stanfield public works director Scott Morris said the city had enough capacity to handle Echo’s needs and he didn’t foresee there being a problem with the arrangement.

“I think it will be pretty simple to coordinate with them,” he said.

On Monday the council also voted to allow the proposed Oregon State Extension taxing district to go before Stanfield voters in May. They also brought up a citizen’s plan to start parking a food truck on private property in town and told Larsen they would like to see staff or a committee work on an ordinance regulating mobile food vendors.

Contact Jade McDowell at jmcdowell@eastoregonian.com or 541-564-4536.

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