

Lostine is region's first 'Firewise' community

By **BILL BRADSHAW**
EO Media Group

LOSTINE — A Lostine Canyon neighborhood has become Northeast Oregon's first nationally recognized "Firewise" community, an event that could lead to more efforts to prevent or combat wildfires in Wallowa County.

Firewise communities are a part of the association's program that teaches people how to adapt to living with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together and take action now to prevent losses.

The approximately 110 properties with 120 structures make up about 15 square miles or 9,600 acres south of Lostine. About 45 individuals are participating in the community, according to Mike Eng, the leader of the Lostine Canyon Firewise Committee.

The Firewise groups and Commissioner Susan Roberts met last Friday at the Lostine Wildlife Area to dedicate signs along the road recognizing the Firewise community. Roberts expressed hopes that Lostine's actions will be an example to other communities in the county.

"Hopefully, your accomplishment will serve to



EO Media Group Photo/Bill Bradshaw/Wallowa County Chieftain

Gathering to dedicate the Lostine Canyon Firewise Community sign are, standing from left, Matt Howard, of the Oregon Department of Forestry; community residents George and Cheryl Oja; Alyssa Cudmore, of Wallowa Resources; Monica Eng; Wallowa County Commission Chairwoman Susan Roberts; area resident Mickey McClendon; area resident Bobbi Atkins; and Wallowa County Commissioner John Hillock. Kneeling in front is Mike Eng, resident leader for the Firewise community.

inspire other communities to take important and necessary steps to improve their protection from the potentially catastrophic risks of wildfire," Roberts said. Eng emphasized the

necessity of the program.

"We live in an extreme fire-risk area and we have to learn to adapt to that," he said. "There's not much we can do about changing the weather, changing the

terrain, changing the land ownership and some of the ways it's managed."

Lostine Canyon residents interested in establishing a Firewise Community conducted their initial meeting

in April 2018. Since then, neighbors in the Lostine Canyon have been working on becoming better informed about how to prevent wildfire from destroying their homes and their community, how to respond in the inevitable event of a wildfire in the Lostine Canyon and how to recover after a wildfire passes through their community.

Residents have been creating "firesafe" perimeters around their homes, removing closely spaced and insect-damaged trees, trimming low-hanging branches and chipping. They have taken advantage of offers by foresters Tim Cudmore and Eric Carlson, of the ODF, to help identify diseased and insect-infested trees to help reduce fuel loads around their homes, while also preserving privacy and wildlife habitat.

They have also taken advantage of free exterior home inspections by one of their neighbors, Gary Willis, a former Hood River fire chief, to learn what they can do to better fireproof the exterior of their homes.

"Being informed that you live in an area with an 'extreme' fire risk, it shifts your thinking from, 'I'll reduce my fuel load one of these years' to 'I need to do

it this year," Lostine Canyon resident Fred Brockman said.

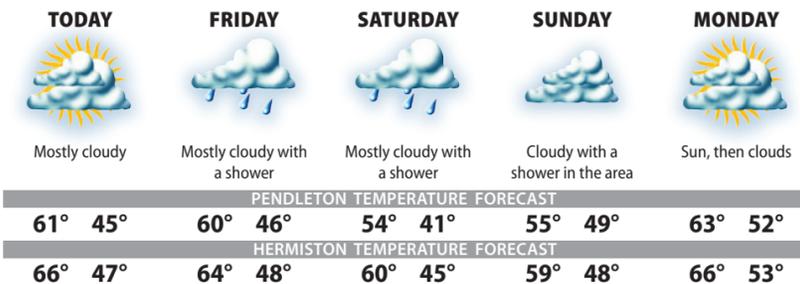
Oregon Department of Forestry forester Matt Howard emphasized the inevitability of another wildfire in the area.

"I don't know if it's ironic or what, but we're standing in a fire spot from about 50 years ago," he said. "It started down in the flat here and with the north wind went up the canyon. So that's within this generation. The fact that you folks were collective enough and had enough gumption to stick with it through this process to become nationally recognized, it's a very big deal. It's something, I think, you should be very proud of."

Howard hopes the Lostine community will serve as an example for others in the county. He expects the ODF and Wallowa Resources can begin work in the spring organizing more such communities at places like Wallowa Lake and Hurricane Creek.

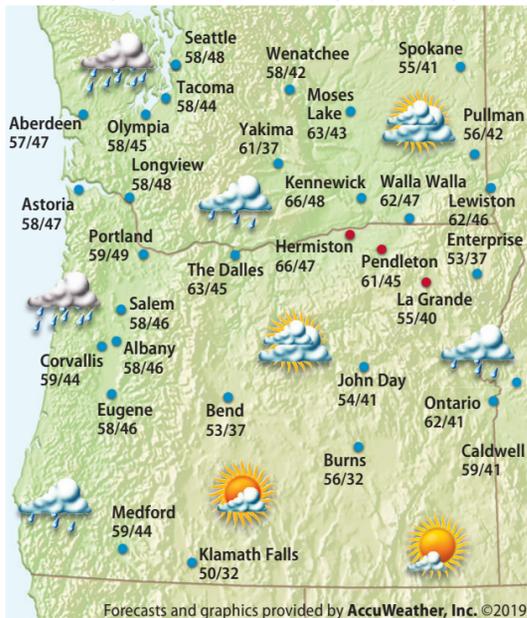
"You folks are a model for other communities in the future and your collective experiences here are going to help other communities decide whether they want to pursue being Firewise-recognized or not," he said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

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



ALMANAC

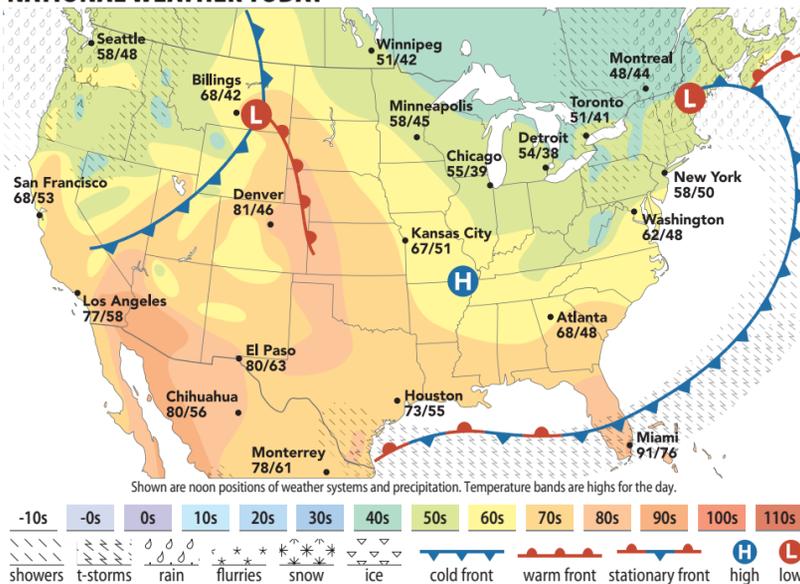
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	63°	43°	
Normals	64°	40°	
Records	83° (1916)	24° (1897)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.05"		
Normal month to date	0.52"		
Year to date	10.90"		
Last year to date	7.91"		
Normal year to date	9.46"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	65°	45°	
Normals	65°	38°	
Records	83° (1963)	21° (1999)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.00"		
Month to date	0.04"		
Normal month to date	0.28"		
Year to date	4.80"		
Last year to date	6.29"		
Normal year to date	6.84"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	Fri.		
Boardman	SW 8-16	WSW 8-16	
Pendleton	SW 7-14	WSW 8-16	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	7:14 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	6:07 p.m.		
Moonrise today	8:31 p.m.		
Moonset today	11:00 a.m.		
Last	New	First	Full
Oct 21	Oct 27	Nov 4	Nov 12

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 99° in Thermal, Calif. Low 9° in Angel Fire, N.M.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Youth catches bass with a surprise inside

By **RUDY DIAZ**
EO Media Group

JOHN DAY — While fishing at the North Fork of the John Day River, 10-year-old Trevor Sasser caught more than he bargained for.

After reeling in a small-mouth bass, everything appeared normal. But when his mom, Tami Sasser, cut the fish open, they found an unknown organism inside the bass.

"It looked like an alien," Trevor said. "It was really disgusting."

Tami described the parasite with multiple tentacles as "spongy" and said it was located under the lung, near the liver. When she pulled the parasite off out of the fish, the suction was comparable to that of a lamprey, she said.

"I didn't think it was that much of an oddity," Tami said. "I have seen external parasites before, but this was the first time seeing something like this."

Not knowing what it was, they tossed the fish away.

Richard W. Stocking, a fish pathologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and



Contributed photo

Trevor Sasser caught this smallmouth bass with a parasite inside on the North Fork of the John Day River.

Wildlife, said the parasite was not harmful.

"While unsightly, there is no reason to be alarmed as it's a very normal life cycle," Stocking said. "These parasites usually do little or no harm to the fish hosts. The

fish are also perfectly safe to eat."

Stocking said he could not identify the parasite from the picture, but white grubs and bass tapeworms are most often associated with intestinal tissues.

BRIEFLY

Judge grants compassionate release for man serving life

PORTLAND — A judge has ordered the release of a 76-year-old man who was sentenced to life for running a large Portland cocaine distribution ring, finding he meets the "extraordinary and compelling" reasons for compassionate release.

The Oregonian reported despite objections from prosecutors, U.S. Judge Michael H. Simon found Adolph Spears Sr. suffers from potentially terminal health problems and is no longer a danger to the community. The judge's ruling is a direct result of

changes to federal law from a criminal justice bill called the First Step Act, which passed late last year and allows federal courts to directly reduce sentences if an inmate meets the criteria for compassionate release.

Federal prosecutors argued that Spears filed his motion for release before the federal Bureau of Prisons was given a 30-day period to respond to his request, and that the court shouldn't take action until that time has expired. They also questioned Spears' medical records and said he's still a danger to the community.

— Associated Press

CLARIFICATION: In the Page A1 story "Amazon Breaks," published Wednesday, Oct. 16, the story stated that the city of Umatilla was unsuccessful in getting more than \$1 million in Strategic Investment Program dollars from Umatilla County for a past Amazon project. City Manager David Stockdale said the city has not signed a written agreement with the county about it and considers it an ongoing matter.

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