

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE

Body of 50-year-old woman recovered 10 days after landslide

BY AIMEE GREEN

The Oregonian

Multnomah County Sheriff's deputies recovered the body of a 50-year-old woman Saturday after her car was swept away and buried by a landslide in the Columbia River Gorge this month.

Jennifer Moore, 50, was driving her SUV as part of a caravan of cars of family members who were evacuating the Warrendale area shortly after midnight Jan. 13. Authorities had advised residents of the area to leave their homes due to torrential rains that night that had increased the risk of flash floods and landslides.

Moore was driving near the community of Dodson, east of Multnomah Falls, when the landslide hit.

A day later, searchers found part of her car which they said appeared to have detached from the rest of it. They continued to search for her body, which they had said could have been buried under 15 feet of mud and debris.

The sheriff's office shared no new details about the circumstances leading to Moore's death or about the recovery.

The sheriff's office said workers will continue to clear debris from the area.

Abuse

Continued from A1

Tim Rusk, executive director of MountainStar Family Relief Nursery in Bend, said his child abuse prevention organization mostly serves children 5 and younger, which are the most likely age group to experience abuse and neglect.

"Because of the pandemic, they are in the home more than ever with adults who may be unbelievably stressed and frustrated and angry, and kids can be the nearest target," Rusk said.

To prevent abuse, MountainStar works directly with families and offers support to young children and their parents. The work has been done virtually due to the virus, but the staff is still connecting with the families, Rusk said.

A recent survey of the families served at MountainStar showed they feel optimistic about the future, which is a motivation for Rusk and his staff to keep providing their services.

"I think part of our job is to have families optimistic about the future and focus on how they can change themselves," Rusk said.

Kara Tachikawa, program director at MountainStar, said the pandemic has reduced the amount of time staff can visit with the families. Rather than having children in the early learning programs twice a week and doing hour-long home visits with parents, staff is seeing the children a few times each month and checking in with parents over 20-minute virtual meetings.

"It's definitely a different level of connection, but I think it continues to help families," Tachikawa said. "If they encounter an issue, they have someone to call."

Tachikawa said families continue to be stressed and many are struggling with unemployment due to the pandemic.

Having schools reopen is a risk with the virus that causes COVID-19 still spreading in the region, but it will help families and the children, Tachikawa said. Older siblings



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Delia Panchot, an interventionist at MountainStar Family Relief Nursery in Redmond, wipes down a small table while working on sanitizing the facility.

in grade school will be able to talk with teachers. And MountainStar's staff will see younger children more often.

"For kids who might be at risk of abuse and neglect, going to school even two days a week will be beneficial for them," Tachikawa said.

More opportunities for children to interact with teachers and other mandatory reporters will also benefit the state's foster care system, said Melissa Williams, director of Every Child Central Oregon, which assists foster families in Deschutes, Jefferson and Crook counties.

Williams said her organization is bracing for an increase in child abuse reports when children return to in-person learning. The organization is hoping to find more foster families in Central Oregon who may be able to help house the possible influx of children.

Central Oregon has 182 foster homes, but 108 of those families are related to the child. The remaining 74 homes are open for general need.

"If we could get to even just

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— Kara Tachikawa, program director at MountainStar Family Relief Nursery in Bend

100 general foster homes in 2021 I think that would be a major win for us," Williams said. "It wouldn't solve all problems but it would give our current homes a little bit of breathing room."

Gil Levy, executive director of KIDS Center, a nonprofit child abuse intervention center in Bend, said the number of abuse evaluations has been steady, but he still hasn't seen a major increase.

"I still feel that we will see a real uptick once society returns to a more normal level of function and when kids are truly back in school in-person," Levy said. "It's going to increase these reports even more than

we are already seeing."

Levy has noticed the children and families served by KIDS Center have seemed more traumatized than usual from navigating the pandemic while dealing with abuse.

"A lot of the children and families we are seeing are just exposed to a truly significant level of additional stress on top of what they might have experienced from an abuse incident," Levy said.

"The level of trauma our clients are experiencing is really quite high."

Levy is keeping a positive outlook since his organization has been able to meet the need through the pandemic and is preparing for an uptick of abuse cases in the new year.

"It's been a tough year for all of us," Levy said. "We came through 2020 and we are really excited to be feeling strong and able to provide these services. We are definitely here to do that in 2021. We are looking forward to things shifting and taking a turn for the positive."

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Council

Continued from A1

Other ideas suggested included "restructuring city council meetings" and paying city councilors at least part-time wages to allow more people of different incomes to run for council.

Central to the housing goal is to make sure anyone who works in Bend can live in Bend.

Other housing goals include incentivizing building more homes for people making middle to low incomes in Bend, encouraging housing specifically in the core area of town around Third Street, and maximizing the vacant land left in Bend's urban growth boundary, which is an invisible line that delineates where urban development can take place.

Another goal identified by councilors is to specifically have a housing-first model to address homelessness in the community.

"Homelessness is not a crime and it's really important we don't address it as such," City Manager Eric King said in the meeting Thursday.

The council also emphasized the importance of making everyone in Bend feel like they can access services and feel safe — in particular, police services.

Some on the council wanted to move away from calling Bend "a welcoming community," which is terminology the city has used during an event called "Welcome Week," and instead set goals that are action-oriented toward making the city more inclusive of marginalized communities.

"Just because we say we are a welcoming community doesn't mean we are a welcoming community," said Councilor Megan Perkins in the meeting.

Councilor Anthony Broadman offered an example he heard discussed at a Downtown Bend Business Association meeting, where business owners reported having employees who are women or people of color feel uncomfortable parking in the Deschutes County Services building parking lot downtown at night.

"These are meaningful barriers to living in Bend right now," Broadman said. "Business owners in our

community see this as a critical goal in terms of economic development."

The council also made addressing climate and environmental issues a separate goal, a departure from the previous council, which only featured "natural resource stewardship" as a point under the larger goal of "economic vitality."

Some goals suggested include transitioning city vehicles to be electric and implementing the city's Climate Action Plan passed in 2019.

The council also decided to rewrite the preamble, which is a statement that generally states the values and priorities of the council overall.

Though still in draft form, the preamble begins with saying the city's prosperity should be for everyone, and honors the Native Americans that "came before us on these lands and acknowledge that the health of our community relies on the health of our environment."

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