

TODAY

Today is Wednesday, June 23, the 174th day of 2021. There are 191 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

In **1972**, President Richard Nixon signed Title IX barring discrimination on the basis of sex for "any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

In **1904**, President Theodore Roosevelt was nominated for a second term of office at the Republican National Convention in Chicago.

In **1947**, the Senate joined the House in overriding President Harry S. Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act, designed to limit the power of organized labor.

In **1969**, Warren E. Burger was sworn in as chief justice of the United States by the man he was succeeding, Earl Warren.

In **1985**, all 329 people aboard an Air India Boeing 747 were killed when the plane crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near Ireland because of a bomb authorities believe was planted by Sikh separatists.

In **1988**, James E. Hansen, a climatologist at the Goddard Institute for Space Studies, told a Senate panel that global warming of the earth caused by the "greenhouse effect" was a reality.

In **1993**, in a case that drew widespread attention, Lorena Bobbitt of Prince William County, Virginia, sexually mutilated her husband, John, after he'd allegedly raped her. (John Bobbitt was later acquitted of marital sexual assault; Lorena Bobbitt was later acquitted of malicious wounding by reason of insanity.)

In **1995**, Dr. Jonas Salk, the medical pioneer who developed the first vaccine to halt the crippling rampage of polio, died in La Jolla, California, at age 80.

In **2009**, "Tonight Show" sidekick Ed McMahon died in Los Angeles at 86.

Ten years ago: Republicans pulled out of debt-reduction talks led by Vice President Joe Biden, blaming Democrats for demanding tax increases as part of a deal rather than accepting more than \$1 trillion in cuts to Medicare and other government programs.

Five years ago: Britain voted to leave the European Union after a bitterly divisive referendum campaign, toppling Prime Minister David Cameron, who had led the campaign to keep Britain in the EU. In a narrow victory for affirmative action, the Supreme Court upheld, 4-3, a University of Texas program that took account of race in deciding whom to admit.

One year ago: The Louisville police department fired an officer involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor more than three months earlier, saying Brett Hankison had shown "extreme indifference to the value of human life" when he fired ten rounds into Taylor's apartment. Tennis player Novak Djokovic said he and his wife tested positive for the coronavirus after he played in exhibition matches he organized in Serbia and Croatia without social distancing; he was the fourth player to come down with COVID-19 after taking part.

Today's Birthdays: Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas is 73. Actor Jim Metzler is 70. "American Idol" ex-judge Randy Jackson is 65. Actor Frances McDormand is 64. Rock musician Steve Shelley (Sonic Youth) is 59. Writer-director Joss Whedon is 57. Rock singer KT Tunstall is 46. Singer-songwriter Jason Mraz is 44. Football Hall of Famer LaDainian Tomlinson is 42. Rock singer Duffy is 37. Country singer Katie Armiger is 30.

— Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

Wildfire resilience

Smaller-scale landowners play big role

BY MAX EGENER

Pamplin Media Group

Bob and Bonnie Shumaker know full well a wildfire could be at their doorstep any year.

It's a risk they're willing to take in order to live in a picturesque forest of firs and cedars about 12 miles northwest of Forest Grove.

"We love the forest," said Bonnie Shumaker, who planted the first 5 acres of what is now the 160-acre Shumaker Tree Farm with her husband in 1980.

When it comes to mitigating wildfire risks, foresters say small woodland owners like the Shumakers play a crucial role in the patchwork of forestland ownership.

There are more than 40,000 nonindustrial small-woodland owners in Oregon who each maintain between 10 and 5,000 acres of forestland.

In the three Portland metro-area counties, small-woodland owners account for 22.5% of all forested lands, according to data from the Oregon Forest Resources Institute. In Washington County, the proportion is the highest of the three at 30.9%.

Problem: The costs for small woodland owners

Large timber companies have relatively predictable revenues that allow them to invest in wildfire fuel mitigation techniques such as thinning and pruning trees, which reduce the risk of major wildfires destroying their forests.

But the cost of managing forests in a fire-resilient way and the labor required to do it can be barriers for small-woodland owners who typically don't receive regular income from their trees.

People living in rural, forested areas generally belong to an aging demographic, said Matt Mackey, wildland fire supervisor with the Oregon Department of Forestry's Forest Grove District.

It becomes increasingly difficult for older residents to maintain defensible space around their homes, to prune trees and clear woody debris from the forest floor on their own, Mackey said.

"The physical labor can be too much for them at times," he said. "And then on top of it, it is expensive work to do if you are going to contract it out."

Costs vary depending on the type of forest, but rou-



Max Egener/Pamplin Media Group

An example shows thinning on Cedar Canyon Tree Farm, owned by Bonnie and Bob Shumaker, right, since 1977.

time fuel mitigation can be as much as \$1,000 per acre annually, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

Building water sources or roads that allow firefighters to better access properties and fight fires — actions that are considered best practices — is even more costly.

"Folks who are living on a fixed or limited income, they're not gonna spend the money on that, and I don't blame them," Mackey said.

After the devastating 2020 Labor Day fires, Mackey says he saw a substantial increase in the number of people asking the Forest Grove District office for advice and help to find financial support for wildfire mitigation.

The fires drove home that even forested areas surrounding Portland, which have historically been less prone to frequent major fires, are vulnerable, Mackey said.

He says small woodland owners should be looking to do more fire fuel mitigation as the wildland-urban interface — where forested lands meet developed areas — becomes more populated and as climate changes drive increased fire danger.

Every year, the Forest Grove District office applies to a competitive grant program for federal wildfire fuels mitigation grants, Mackey said. The grants make funds available to forestland owners on the landscape scale, but they typically go to higher priority areas outside of the Portland area. In 2020, Yamhill County received one of the grants.

Solution: Elbow grease and asking for help

Bob Shumaker knows intense wildfires are getting more frequent in Western Oregon forests.

"It's just a fact of life," Shumaker said. "We're getting drier, and so we have more chance of a devastating fire."

He says the more than 200 hours per year he and his wife each put into managing his forests is recreation — much of it with an eye toward fire mitigation.

It's worth it to be able to sit with their dog Bailey on the floating dock they built on their pond, which creates the headwaters of Cedar Canyon Creek.

"Our job is to be stewards," said Shumaker, 76.

Although he admits he's getting older, and the work is getting harder, they're able to save costs by doing almost all of the labor themselves, he said.

The Shumakers invested in equipment, including a bulldozer and tractor. That's al-



lowed them to prune about 80 acres of their trees, maintain a road system that can handle firetrucks, remove invasive plants and plant native ones to try to create the healthiest, most fire-prepared ecosystem possible, Bob Shumaker said.

Even though they've been able to spend the time and money to take such actions, they say there's always more fuel mitigation that can be done.

They've turned to grants from the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Envi-

ronmental Quality Incentives Program, which shares costs to do precommercial forest thinning.

All in, or not

In 2019, the state Legislature provided funding to create a fire program through the OSU extension service to, in part, help create fire-resilient communities across the state.

Aaron Groth is a regional fire specialist with the fire program.

He works with small-woodland owners to prepare for fire by helping them to meet their individual management goals.

Management goals across a landscape often are diverse, Groth said. Some small woodland owners want to maximize their ability to profit from timber harvests; others want to create ideal wildlife habitat or to support fisheries, or both.

The hope is that enough small-woodland owners create such plans to create fire-resilience on the landscape scale.

If only one person in an area is taking steps to be fire-resilient, "we're not really making an impact on the landscape scale," Groth said.

But he says the OSU extension fire program is uniquely positioned to help foster agreement between landowners who often have differing, potentially conflicting management goals.

That's mostly because the service isn't coming from a government agency with regulatory power, Groth said.

He and other program specialists plan to convene more fire-resilience workshops with organizations like the Washington County Small Woodland Association going forward, he said.

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