

# NEXT

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Ferguson recently viewed the damage and said the flooding concern is real.

"Those who understand the potential of flooding are certainly concerned," he said. "The county wants to stay close to this issue."

Much of the damaged area are steep slopes now filled with debris. Add in the lack of vegetation and the potential for catastrophic flooding increases.

In the worst-case scenario, Ferguson said, "the silt and ash and debris that could come down that creek could be devastating. Everybody is still pretty focused on fighting the fire. But I am worried about the possibility of imminent flooding problems. We just don't have anything left to hold back a flood."

The county has asked Ferguson to get ahead of the issue and work with the various agencies to coordinate the restoration and flood-mitigation work that will take place.

Ferguson met with officials from the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service and other agencies Sept. 2 and the different entities began hashing out a plan to address the issue.

Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin told people attending the Grant County Court's regular meeting Wednesday that restoration efforts to help control flooding, including soil stabilization and erosion control projects, will be conducted as quickly as possible.

"We're moving as fast as we can," he said. "My directions to my team are: Let's have those investments down before the snow flies."

In an Aug. 26 report to Grant County Court, Ferguson said the "post-fire condition of the Canyon Creek drainage is a potentially catastrophic situation. Given a good rain, the flood, silt and debris which may come down Canyon Creek is hard to predict or imagine at this point."

In the report, Ferguson said the original flood mitigation focus was on Canyon Creek "but

as the fire continues to increase in size, other areas and watersheds will probably also need attention."

Ferguson has already touched base with multiple agencies that will be involved in the restoration effort and said one of his tasks will be to try to ensure there are no gaps or overlap.

"What I'm trying to do is coordinate the efforts of all the agencies so we get the most bang for our buck," he said.

Britton said the county is hoping to cut through the red tape that will be involved with such large restoration efforts and get the work done quickly.

"We have to get out ahead of this," he said. "Let's be proactive to keep this thing from being worse than it already is."

Grant County Court Judge Scott Myers said the flooding concern is legitimate.

"If we were to have a gully washer or sudden downpour, with all the vegetation upstream of Canyon City virtually gone, we could get an influx of mud and debris ... rushing into Canyon City," he said.

# VISIT

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we're not necessarily making a profit," he said.

"It's a tragedy that all of this happened," said Rick RunningHawk, manager of Prairie Hardware and Gifts in Prairie City. "But the fact of the matter is ... it has positively impacted the store."

RunningHawk said the store has sold a lot of garden hoses, batteries, lanterns, flashlights, propane and "anything and everything that people can utilize in order to make it through this bad period."

Mountain View Mini Mart owner-manager Chelsey McDaniel said sales at her business are about even compared with the same time a year ago. The store has seen fewer hunters and tourists, but the firefighters have made up for that business, she said.

"I would say we've bal-

anced out from what we've lost and gained," McDaniel added. "It takes one van or bus full of firefighters to stop in and make up for" the business lost.

Restaurants, however, reported a decrease in sales.

Sean Kelley, a server at The Outpost in John Day, said the restaurant hasn't seen too much business from firefighters because a local caterer is providing food, and tourist visits have been down because of the damage the fire has caused.

"Both this month and last month have been some of our slowest months when normally they would be our busiest," he said.

Squeeze-In owner Shawn Duncan reported a similar scenario.

"Caterers are feeding a lot of the firefighters, so we don't see a lot of that business," she said. "Tourist-wise, yes, we have definitely seen less business."

Wanda Winegar, owner of the Bar WB western appar-

el, footwear and gifts store in Prairie City, also reported business being slower than normal during the fire.

"We've been down a little bit for about the last two weeks," she said. "We're not getting the spin-off from the firefighters that maybe the businesses in John Day are."

Great Basin Incident Management Team fire information officers said their logistics people buy a lot of supplies locally and are conscious about spreading the wealth among local businesses as much as possible.

Some of the items the team purchases locally include medical and office supplies and local fuel and lumber, said Laurel Simos, the logistics section chief.

The team has hired a local caterer and also rents a grange hall and uses a local porta potty vendor and local emergency medical technicians.

"We have an impact on a whole lot of stuff," Simos said.

# RECALL

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The countywide call went out at 12:30 p.m.

"On the initial call, I ended up with 11 engines and 32 volunteer firefighters from Canyon City, John Day, Prairie City, Monument, Dayville, Long Creek and Monument - every fire department in the county - everybody sent me what they could," Turner said.

The CCFD became the incident command center with

staging at the nearby post office. Mt. Vernon Fire Chief Bill Cearns and his department's three engines were sent to the J Bar L Ranch.

Caughlin and Bremner were sent to protect Gordon and Julie Larson's Berry Creek Ranch home.

From there, "we watched this thing blow up," Caughlin said.

Wind speeds were 40-50 mph on the ridges and picked up to 60-70 mph in the canyon, Turner said.

"I was really worried as the fire started coming down," he

said. "The firefighters had to abandon the homes they were protecting - that's when it turned into a firestorm."

Possibly the last one's to leave the canyon, Caughlin and Bremner left the scene between 3 and 4 p.m. At Sheriff's deputy Scott Moore's urging, they picked up a Forest Service firefighter, leaving his truck behind.

"There was burning debris flying across the road, fire blowing across the road, and the smoke was so thick, we used a spotlight to see the white line," Caughlin said.

"It was a hairy situation - when we got back on the highway, there was a 40-foot

wall of fire coming down the canyon."

A request was sent to federal and state forestry officials for retardant drops.

"I was told they'd been trying to get air drops," Turner said. "Close to that time the fire was close to Whiskey Gulch on the south side. I told them that if I didn't have an air drop in 20 minutes, the fire was going to be in Canyon City, and we were going to have a bigger problem."

Finally, the needed help arrived.

"I would say about 20 minutes had gone by, and a DC-10 came through and

Painted the back side of that hill red - they just kept coming and coming and coming," Turner said. "It was a coordinated effort, and they put it right where I wanted it. That's the only thing that stopped it from coming into town."

The fire slowed and halted at the mouth of the canyon.

Turner said he and Caughlin have been at firefighting for a long time, and have never seen anything as destructive as the Canyon Creek Complex.

"There wasn't even ashes," Turner said. "It was dust - all just dust."

Turner and Caughlin said they have lost a lot of sleep and work over the past couple weeks, but the most challenging part of fighting the fire was seeing residents' losing their homes.

"It's hard anytime that happens," Caughlin said. "We knew a lot of people."

Turner added that most were friends and neighbors, and several who lost everything had no insurance.

He said he's grateful for the community support, and

Grant County firefighters responding to the Aug. 14 fire include:

<b>Dayville</b> Brandon Thompson Tim Briggs Brian Smith Simon Graves Cody Clausen	<b>Mt. Vernon</b> Bill Cearns Terry Coalwell Dan Komring Andrew Molyneaux Larry Palmer Dave Dorschner	<b>Prairie City</b> Eddy Hicks Chris Camarena Ethan Camarena <b>John Day</b> Carl Metler Ronda Metler <b>Canyon City</b> Matt Turner Charlie Caughlin Garth Leighton Greg Bremner Adrian Reed Lee Turner Jason Leighton Brian Thompson Rich Tirico Cindy Tirico
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Please join us in support of a local food bank by bringing a donation of canned food to the concert. There will be collection baskets at the entrances.  
A Dancing Cat Production

# Surveyors survey damage

By Tim Trainor  
Blue Mountain Eagle

Add county survey markers to the list of things damaged and destroyed by the Canyon Creek Complex fire.

The section markers are vital pieces of information

the state, federal and other counties that stayed to fight Grant County's fire.

"There's no way that just our local resources could put this out. Even with all the help, it's been a tough time," he said. "We know we did everything we could possibly do, but Mother Nature won. We can try to fight Mother Nature, but that's a battle we will never win - she started it, and she put it out."

that keep county surveys up to date, and the two-person Grant County surveyor's office is tasked with maintaining those public land survey corners. If they don't reach the damaged markers quickly, before evidence of their exact location has been lost, property owners may have to pay to be forced to pay a private outfit to re-survey their land.

So Grant County surveyor Mike Springer is asking owners of property damaged by the fire to contact his office immediately so as much information as possible can be salvaged.

Before 1910, Springer said stones were placed to mark every mile through much of Grant County. Since then capped iron, brass and aluminum pipes have mostly been used to note both section corners and quarter-section corners. Often, large trees were used as accessories to help surveyors locate section corner locations. Springer said markers in the burned area may have been placed anytime from 1870 to 2015.

"A pretty big range there," he laughed.

Many were destroyed and melted by the scorching Canyon Creek fire, and plenty more were bulldozed out of place by fire crews or knocked off kilter by falling rocks and trees.

Springer's office is now working exclusively on lands affected by recent burns. If you have a section, quarter-section or a bearing tree on your property that you think may have been damaged due to the recent fires, call the Grant County surveyor's office at 541-575-1251 or Springer's cell phone at 541-620-0676.

Interim editor Tim Trainor can be reached at 541-575-0710.

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**Best Fishing PHOTO CONTEST**  
With two chances to win weekly or grand prize!

Go fishing in Grant County, and send in photos from your experience.  
You Could WIN \$10 WEEKLY OR \$100 GRAND PRIZE  
Open to all amateur photographers.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has stocked some big ones in local lakes and waterways this summer. This is your chance to catch supper and maybe win a prize, in the 2015 Best Fishing Photo Contest sponsored by the Blue Mountain Eagle, Boyd Britton Welding and Prairie Springs Fish Farm.

- Photos will be judged for quality, content, viewer appeal. Remember, it's not the biggest fish - but the best fishing photo that takes the prize!
- Photos must be taken this summer in Grant County.
- Digital format is best - e-mail to [kristina@bmeagle.com](mailto:kristina@bmeagle.com) or bring in a disc to the Eagle office, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day.
- Deadline for submissions: Sep. 21, 2015 for the grand prize.

Fisherman's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Where the fish was caught: \_\_\_\_\_ Date taken: \_\_\_\_\_  
Fish Species: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight & Length \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

For more info, call the Eagle, 541-575-0710 - and happy fishing!