

FLOOD

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flows of 1,500 cfs.

Because of the loss of vegetation caused by fire, "a 10-year storm would be devastating, according to (BAER) figures," Ferguson said.

The BAER team included hydrologists and engineers and Ferguson said the methodology they used to arrive at those numbers is sound.

"The reasonableness of their (calculations) is evident," he said.

Ferguson is now working with BAER team members, Army Corps of Engineers officials and other agencies to produce a map that shows exactly how the creek would react after a 10-year storm and at what spots the damage would likely occur.

He expects to have that done in about two weeks to a month.

Ferguson has been tasked by Grant County Court with helping coordinate all the various restoration efforts by lo-

cal, state and federal agencies aimed at mitigating the danger of a catastrophic flood.

Grant County Court Commissioner Boyd Britton said the county is trying to be very proactive about preparing for such a flood and he would rather play the role of Chicken Little and be wrong than not prepare properly and have a disaster.

"I'd like to be real proactive about this as much as possible," he said.

Ferguson said a lot of effort is going into addressing the issue — "A lot of powerful people are working on this. It hasn't gelled yet but I feel like it's going in the right direction."

But, he added, there's little that can be done right now to prevent a catastrophic flood from occurring if a major storm hit the area today.

Such a flood would bring a lot of debris with it and if that debris didn't get cleared out rapidly, it could quickly take down bridges near Canyon City, he said. To prepare for that scenario, the county plans to move excavators into

strategic areas so debris can be cleared quickly to prevent bridges from plugging up.

An alarm system to alert people to imminent flooding, which the BAER team recommended, is another thing the local community can do quickly to prepare for flooding, Ferguson said.

Canyon City Mayor Steve Fischer said the BAER estimates are a worst-case scenario "but if it even comes close to the worst-case scenario, the potential for property loss and damage could exceed what the fire did."

Fischer has discussed the issue with Ferguson and city council members and has been told the county court is waiting for permission to remove 50,000 yards of material out of the creek bottom to mitigate the flooding potential.

Canyon City will assist the court on that effort, he said, including contacting all property owners along the creek and getting their permission for people conducting the creek debris removal to enter their property.

John Day City Manager

Peggy Gray said the possibility of a disastrous flood is a major concern and the city is focusing on informing the public about the danger and urging them to get flood insurance.

The city included information in this month's utility bill directing residents where to find more information about flood insurance.

City officials will also walk up and down Canyon Creek and identify hazards, Gray said.

"Anything we think could be a hazard, we'll try to eliminate that hazard prior to spring and runoff," she said. "We want to be prepared for what could come down the creek and the public needs to be aware of what the risks are."

According to a BAER team report, it will take about five years for vegetation to recover in watersheds affected by the fire.

"Flood potential will decrease as vegetation re-establishes, providing ground cover, increasing surface roughness and stabilizing and improving the infiltration capacity of the soils," the report states.



Contributed photo

Medical appointment or just errands? Whatever the outing, Julia Haney is ready to hit the road.

HANEY

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"The tricky thing with brain injuries is that there are a lot of unknowns, and they just don't have all the answers," she said.

One thing all the doctors have agreed on, Cammie said, is that children are resilient, and that Julia has been a good candidate for having a great recovery.

Julia loves all foods, and enjoys listening to music and being sung to.

"Her favorite toys are any that make or play music," Cammie said.

The Haney family is grateful to their family, friends and others in the community

for their thoughts, prayers, cards, packages and donations.

"We wouldn't have been able to make it through such a difficult time without them," Cammie said.

Also high on the family's gratitude list are Julia's current doctors and therapists.

Cammie said, "Because of them, she continues to improve a great amount each week."

She added they give special thanks to Dr. Ginger Vaughn and the Blue Mountain Hospital staff who were on duty the night they rushed Julia to the emergency room.

"There is no doubt that their quick and skillful actions, along with the wonderful treatment she received at St. Luke's in Boise, saved her," Cammie said.

DUMP

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"This action strikes the right balance between public safety and protection of natural resources," Pedersen stated in a news release.

One of the rules that was waived allowed the DEQ on Sept. 23 to issue Grant County a special permit to dig a trench specifically for fire-related debris.

The permit for this so-called "limited purpose trench" is good for six months and can be renewed one time for an additional six months if necessary, said Susan Christensen, DEQ's natural resource specialist.

The department also waived the \$500 fee the county otherwise would have had to pay for the permit.

Clark's Disposal contracts with the county to operate the

transfer station outside John Day and normally hauls refuse on large trailers to Boardman. The property where the transfer station sits used to be a landfill, which closed in 1995.

The trench, which has already been dug, is located on the old landfill site. Transfer station staff will direct people to the trench and there is no cost for disposal of fire debris, Christensen said.

Pieces of scrap metal included in the fire damage will be recycled through the transfer station.

There are already about four dump truck loads of fire debris stockpiled near the trench and it will quickly be pushed in, said Grant County Court Judge Scott Myers.

The trench is 80 feet long, 24 feet wide and 10 feet deep and will hold about 2,800 cubic yards or 280 dump truck loads, he said.

While there is an estimated 4,000 cubic yards of fire-re-

lated debris throughout the area where the 110,000-acre Canyon Creek Complex fire burned, the county anticipates the trench will be more than large enough to hold the fire debris that actually makes its way there, Myers said.

The county will be reimbursed up to \$75,000 by the state for the cost of creating the trench and disposing of the fire debris, Myers said.

The DEQ also waived a fee associated with septic systems and the management of asbestos. A site evaluation is required to reconnect a septic system following fires to ensure major components are not damaged and the fee for this service can reach \$750.

The department is not charging this fee to landowners affected by the wildfires and is expediting the evaluation process, said DEQ Public Affairs Specialist Greg Svelund.

"These people have lost so much already, it just didn't

seem right to charge them that fee," he said.

The department has already conducted about a dozen site inspections for septic system reconnections in Grant County and will continue to respond rapidly as more landowners call for this service, Svelund said.

Grant County Court worked with state officials on the clean-up issue from the beginning of the Canyon Creek Complex fire and Myers said the results are positive for county residents.

"It's been a great deal all the way around," he said. "Everybody's done yeoman's work on this one."



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- Participate in self breast awareness and talk with your doctor if you notice any changes.

- See your family doctor for a yearly check or even sooner if you haven't been feeling well.



Keith J. Thomas, MD, FACS
Board-Certified General Surgeon

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