



Eagle Creek Fire – lessons learned

One emergency - two counties, in the Columbia Gorge

Panel 1 – Hood River

Prepare – Respond – Recover Workshop & Conference

October 9-11, 2018

Riverhouse on the Deschutes



3 panelists – 3 perspectives:

Matt English

Sheriff, Hood River County

Mariana Ruiz-Temple

Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal

Barb Ayers

Emergency Manager, Hood River County

Eagle Creek Fire – lessons learned

Eagle Creek Fire – overview

Hood River County Sheriff Matt English



Started Labor Day weekend, September 2, 2017 -
peak tourism season in the Gorge

Teenage boy ignited fireworks during a burn ban

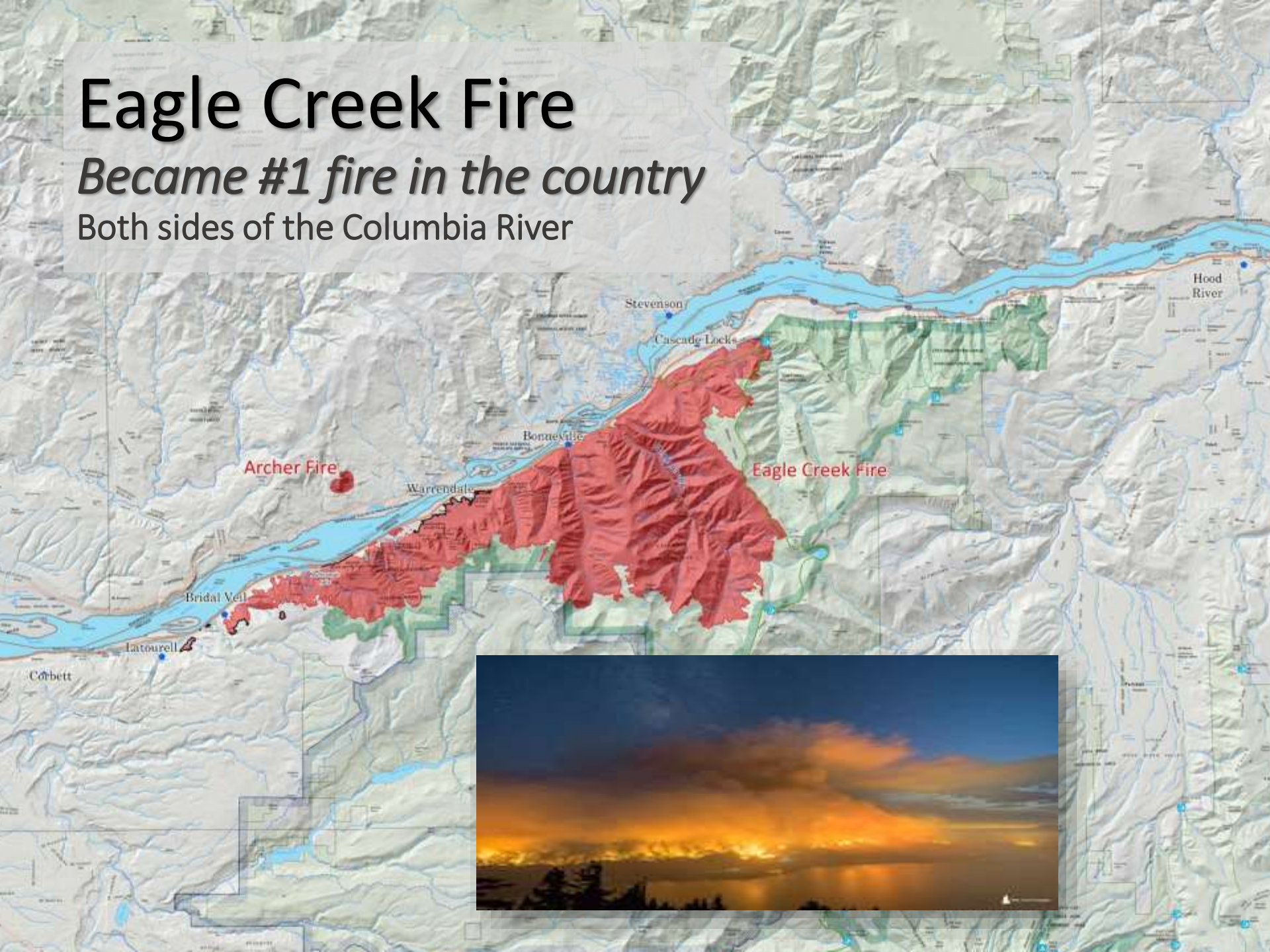
Fire burned 50,000 acres, and burned for 3 months

Declared 100% contained November 30, 2017

Eagle Creek Fire

Became #1 fire in the country

Both sides of the Columbia River





Day 1 - Sept. 2, 2017

Eagle Creek Fire Search and Rescue (SAR)

- Hood River County Sheriff's Office and U.S. Forest Service evacuated hikers
- 3 in the most difficult location airlifted by Oregon National Guard
- Group of 14 hiked out safely
- Large group (approx. 140) sheltered in place and hiked out in the morning. They were located safely away from the fire. Multiple agencies coordinated getting supplies to the group.



Day 2- September 3rd, 2017

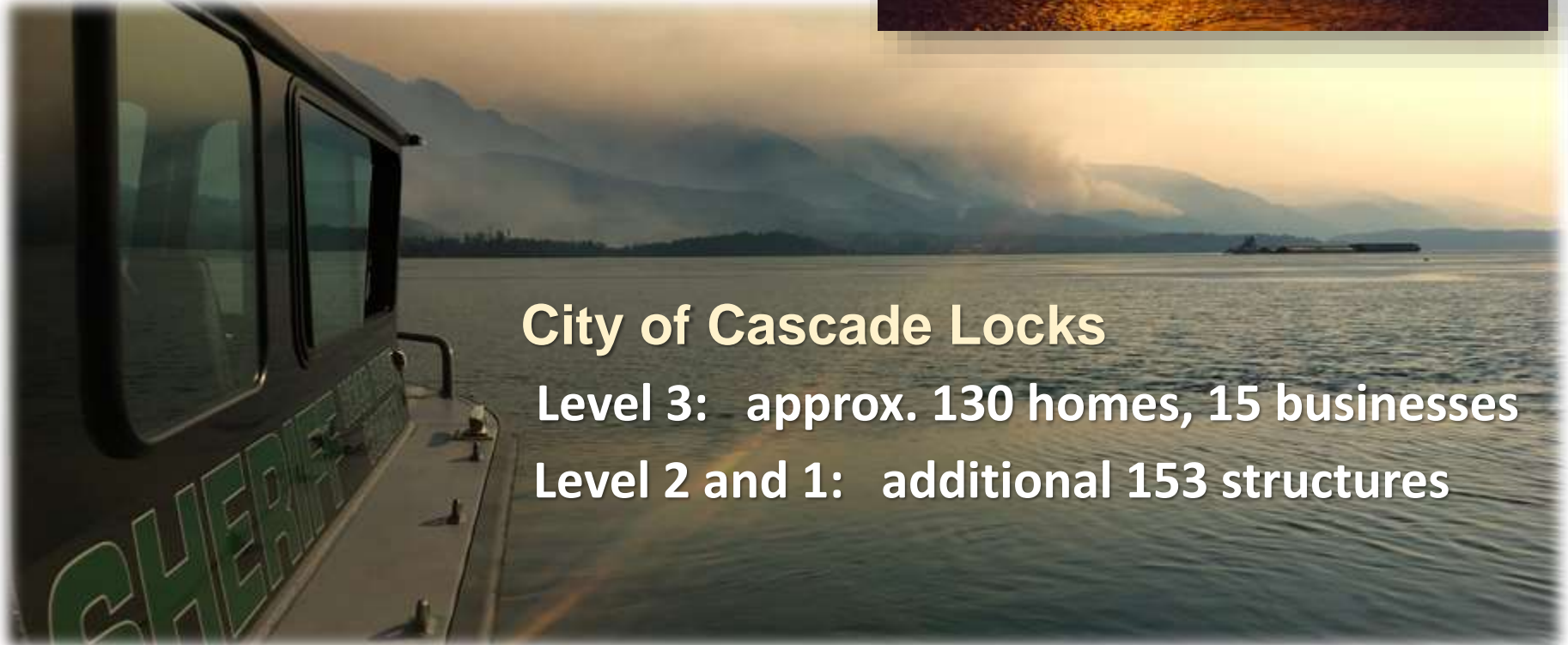
Eagle Creek Fire Search and Rescue (SAR)

- The final group hiked to the Wahtum Lake area and was bussed the reunification site.
- No hikers were unaccounted for
- One hiker was transported non-critically via ambulance for exhaustion and dehydration.



That night - September 3rd

Eagle Creek Fire Evacuation orders issued overnight



City of Cascade Locks

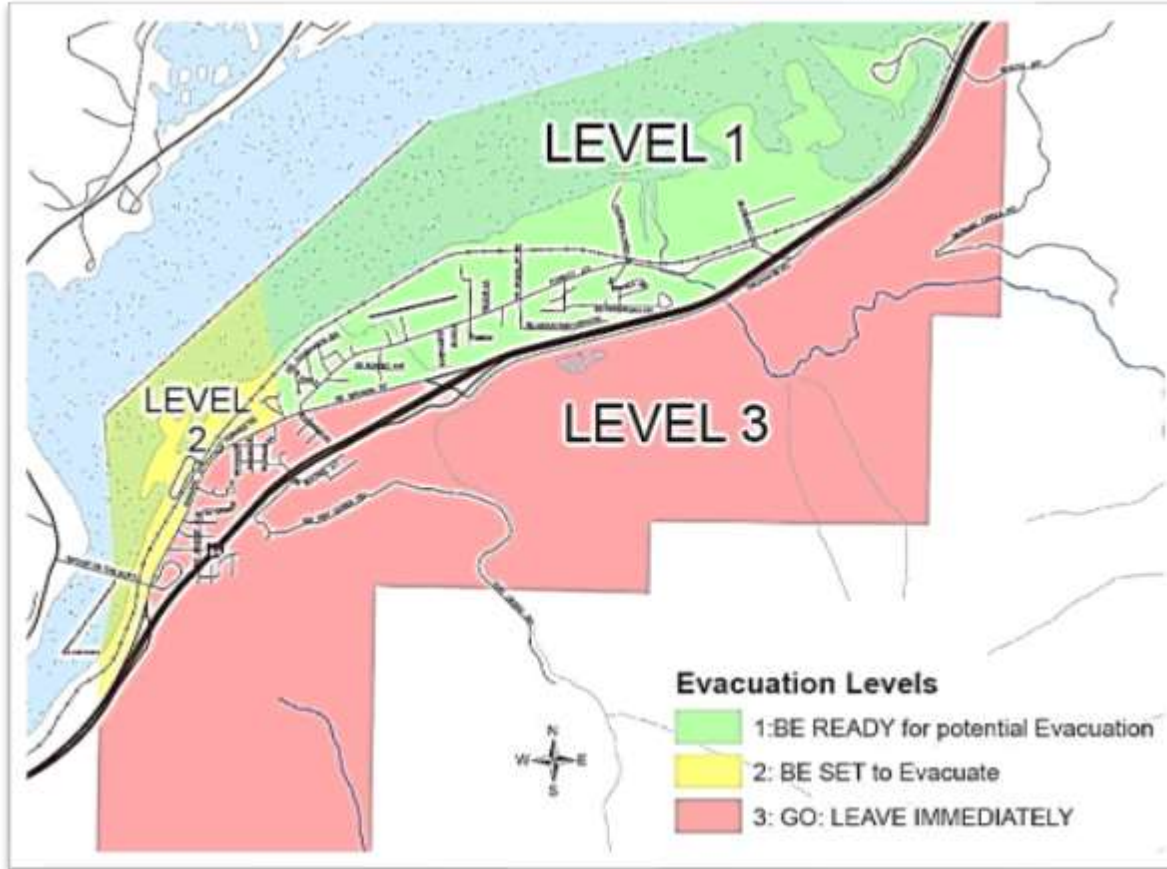
Level 3: approx. 130 homes, 15 businesses

Level 2 and 1: additional 153 structures



Day 3 - September 4th, 2017

Eagle Creek Fire Evacuations expanded in City of Cascade Locks



By morning, the fire had grown to 3,000 acres.

Three Strike Teams on duty to protect structures, with three more teams arriving today.



September 5

Evacuations expanded in Cascade Locks

Fire closes popular Gorge destinations (i.e. Multnomah Lodge) and USFS trails, threatens fish hatchery

Fire hops Columbia River to WA state - Archer Mountain fire.

New evacuation orders in south County near Mount Hood - public lands where campers, hikers, and hunters recreate.



September 6

In the early hours, the Eagle Creek Fire merged with the Indian Creek Fire.

Fire officials estimated that, together, over 31,000 acres were actively burning.



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September 7th, 2017

Fire marches closer to the more populated areas of Hood River County

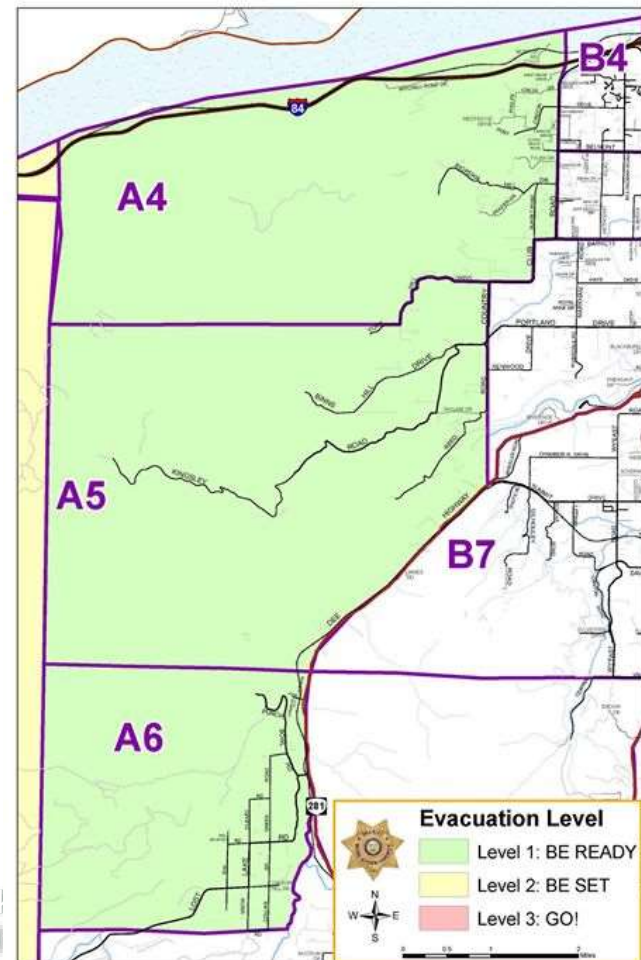
Community meeting at the Hood River Valley High School

Fire crews run back-burn operations near Cascade Locks



September 8th, 2017

New evacuations on County's south side (Dee) and Cascade Locks Level 2 expanded

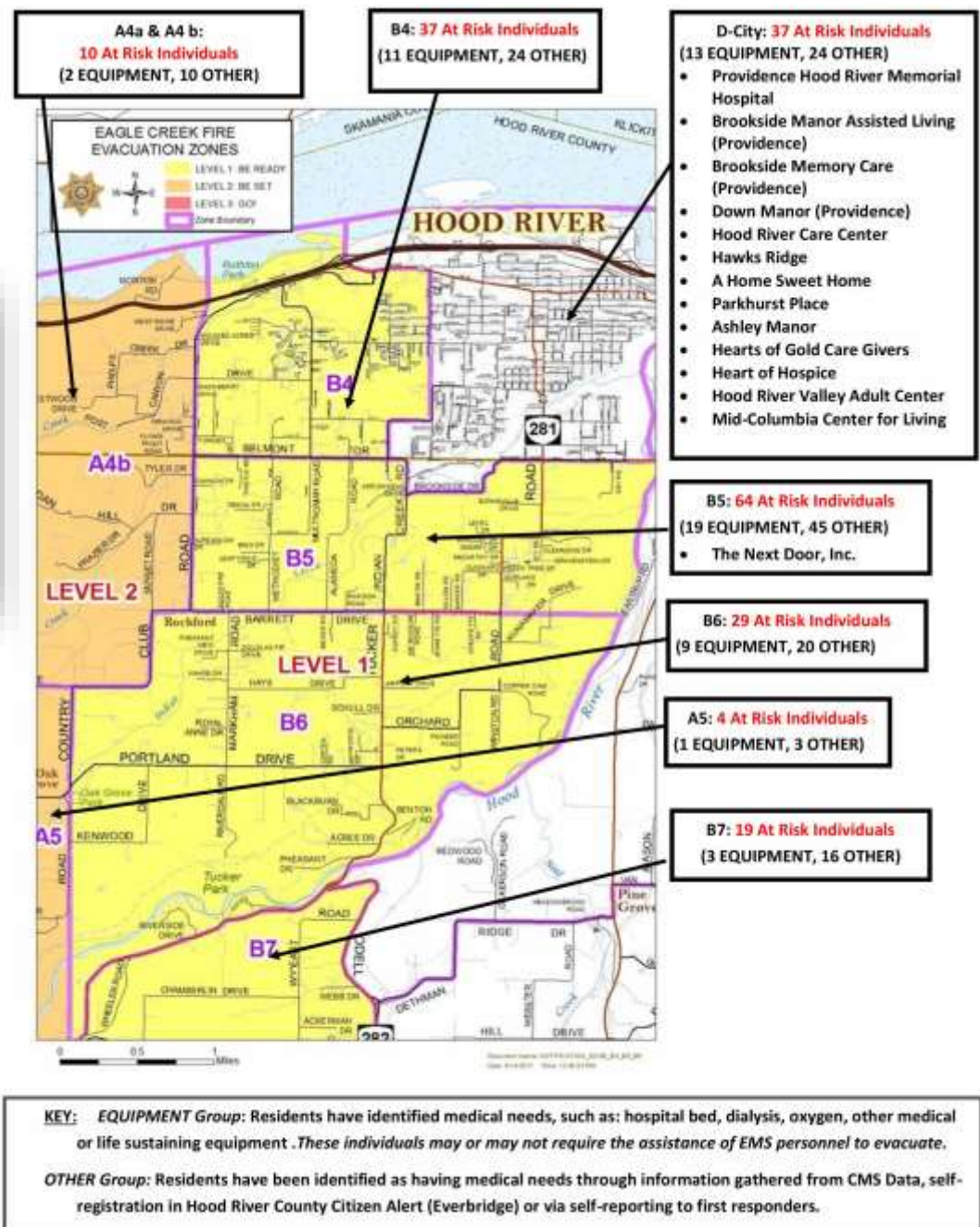


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A week later –
September 14



Hood River County
evacuation orders
now approaching
Hood River City limits



EOC opened Joint Information Center (JIC)



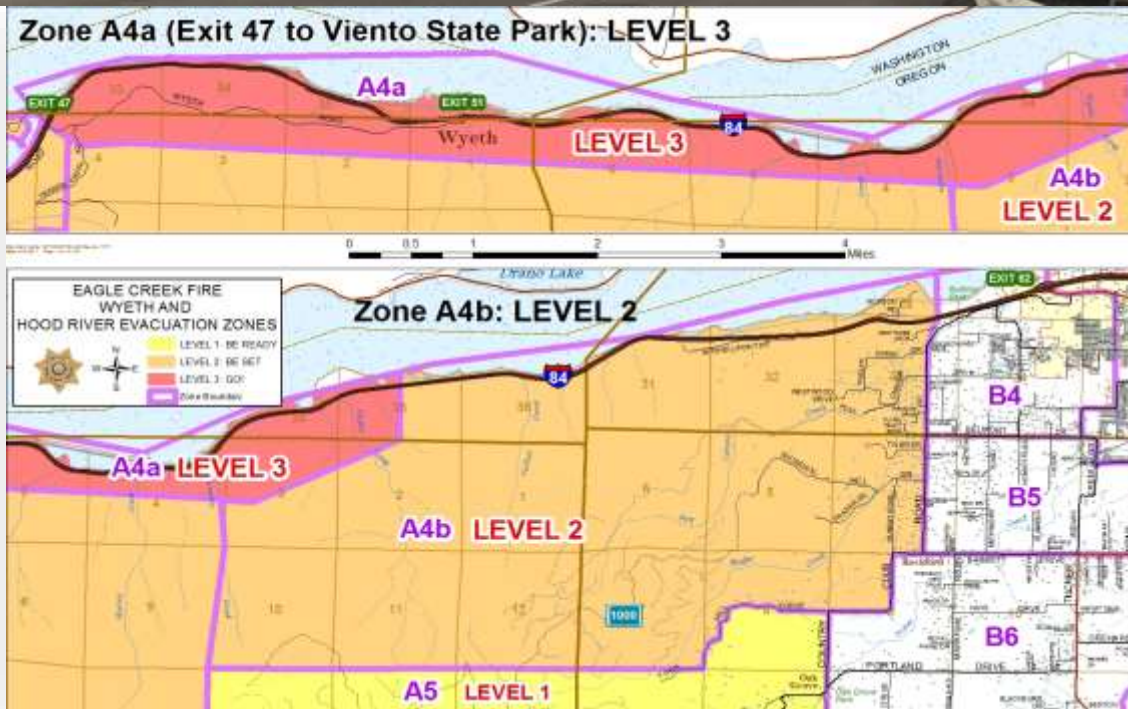
Real time Public Info

- Facebook
- Website
- Interactive web map
- Public meetings
- Cops and firefighters carried content

Hood River/Multnomah Counties

Interactive Web Map:

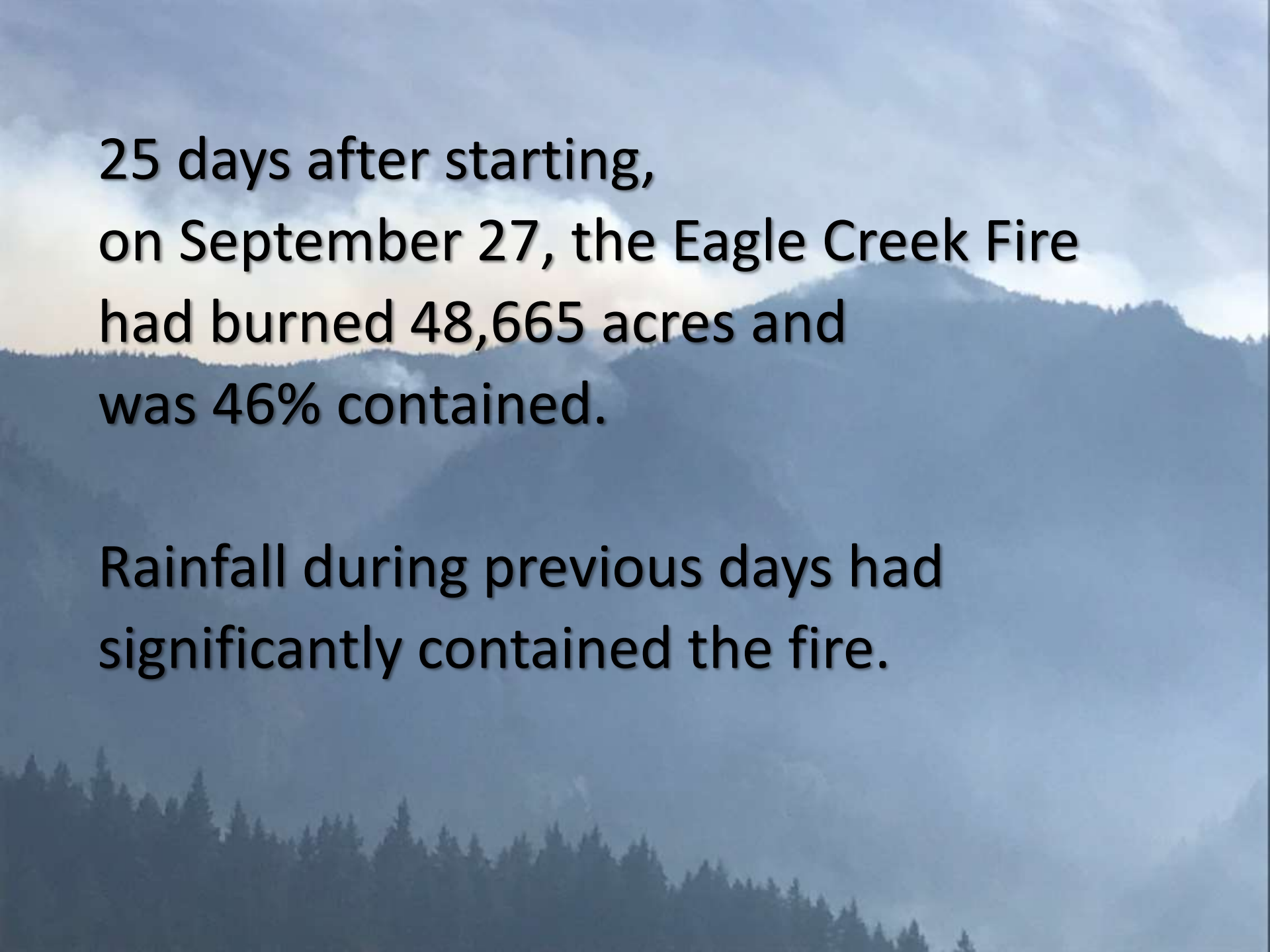
enter your address to see what evacuation level you may be under.



Updated information
available on
hoodriversheriff.com

Hood River Sheriff Facebook
and Twitter pages.



The background of the slide is a photograph of a mountain range. In the foreground, there is a dense forest of evergreen trees. The middle ground shows rolling hills and valleys, some of which are shrouded in mist or low clouds. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds. The overall tone is cool and atmospheric.

25 days after starting,
on September 27, the Eagle Creek Fire
had burned 48,665 acres and
was 46% contained.

Rainfall during previous days had
significantly contained the fire.

Eagle Creek Fire – a year later

May 29, 2018 Still smoldering in some areas

October 2018 Historic Columbia River Hwy
remains closed from Bridal Veil to
Ainsworth State Park

Oregon State Fire Marshall's Office perspective / lessons learned

Mariana Ruiz-Temple,
Chief Deputy State Fire Marshal



August 2017-What else was happening

- August 17th –Nena Springs Fire
- August 17th – Milli Fire
- The Eclipse
- August 20th- Chetco Bar Fire



- Most task forces & strike teams out at one time: 26 (156 apparatus)
- Moved resources from fire to fire
- Extended resources
- Low availability of resources due to weather conditions and deployments
- Use of the Emergency Management Assistance Compact



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Eagle Creek Incident Info

- September 2nd –fire started
- September 3rd – conflagration declared
- September 4th – Assumed Command
 - 30 task forces / strike teams total
 - 88 Oregon fire agencies; 6 Washington
 - 390 personnel on 148 apparatus
- Integrated with type 2 IMT

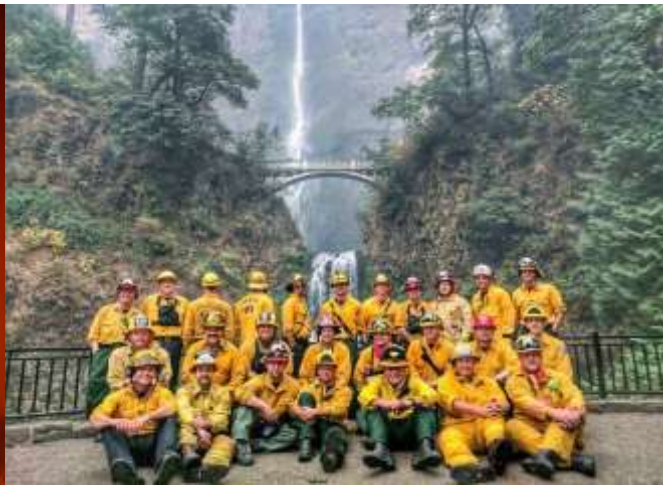


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Eagle Creek Incident Info

- 12 miles in 8 hours on September 4th
 - Washington State
- Threats to communities- 10 delegations of authority (Wy-East, Westside, Parkdale, Hood River City, Hood River Co, USFS, Multnomah Co, Cascade Locks, ODFW, Corbett)
- September 17th – all OSFM resources demobilized
- 5230 threatened structures; 1822 people evacuated
- 817 homes triaged
- 4 residences consumed by fire



Eagle Creek Incident Info

Complexity analysis/Values at risk

- Bull run water shed
- Economic impacts
- Transportation closures
- Two counties
- Bonneville power facilities
- Warm Springs fishing sites
- Critical Gorge infrastructure
- The historic Columbia Gorge Lodge located at Multnomah Falls
- USFS brought in a type 1 on Sept 9th



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County Emergency Operations Center Lessons Learned from OSFM

- Engage early on with county EOCs
- Work to include Sheriffs and County Reps into the cooperators meetings early
- Leverage the resources/tools of the Incident Management Team to create consistent messaging and common operating picture between team and EOC.
- Early meeting with EM to understand their needs and how to work with the Incident Management Team



County Emergency Operations Center

- Use of Facebook and consistent messaging
- Understanding the needs and wants of the different counties
 - larger population/media coverage
 - larger agricultural and wildland
- Different levels of need of the Sheriff's Office
 - Evacuations
 - Check points etc.



Riverhouse on the Deschutes

Hood River County EOC perspective

Emergency Manager Barb Ayers



Hood River County
Sheriff's Office
**EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT**



It happens when we least expect it

*Holiday - peak season.
With 162 hikers on the trail.*

2 weeks after Oregon Eclipse

Agencies, businesses just recovering Feb ice storm

And after IEMC course a year in the making

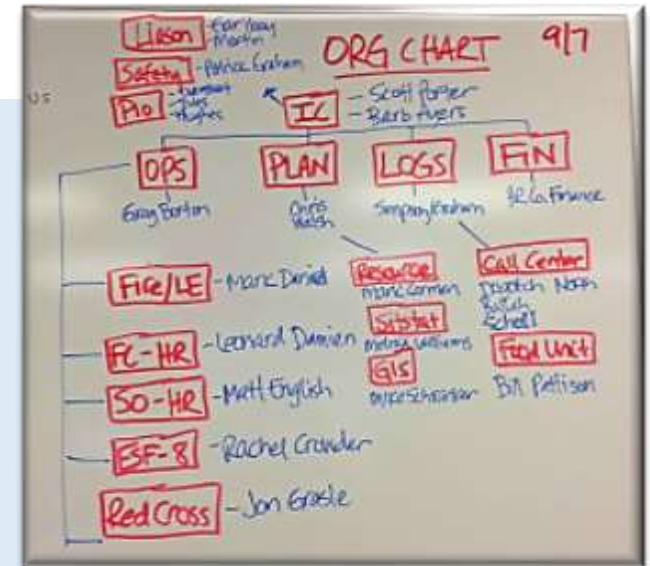


Eagle Creek Fire County EOC

3 week activation / 30.5 people per day average

Mostly volunteers or voluntary

- Our first large scale EOC response
- Small town, high impact
 - I 84 closed – mass transportation problem
 - Community on edge for a month
 - National visibility
- 1 month incident, 12-18 month impact
- Multi- jurisdictional response - complexity
- Tourism economy impacts – small town
 - “Stay away” PR + trip cancellations due to smoke + 1 month lost tourism + closed trails – 1 year or more



Major EOC activities

- **Whole community focus – complimented Unified Command**
- **Partner info sharing conference calls – 2x/day**
 - Averaged 35 partners per meeting – get a high quality speaker phone
 - *FreeConferenceCalls.com* (not secure) – call from anywhere
- **Logistics / contingency plans**
- **Call Center / Public Information**
- **Mass care / shelter / health care support**
 - Shelter open – 15 days
 - County Health active – smoke and health advisories

**THANKS TO RED CROSS, SKAMANIA AND WASCO COUNTIES,
ANIMAL VOLUNTEERS AND PORT OF HOOD RIVER
FOR SHELTER WORK**



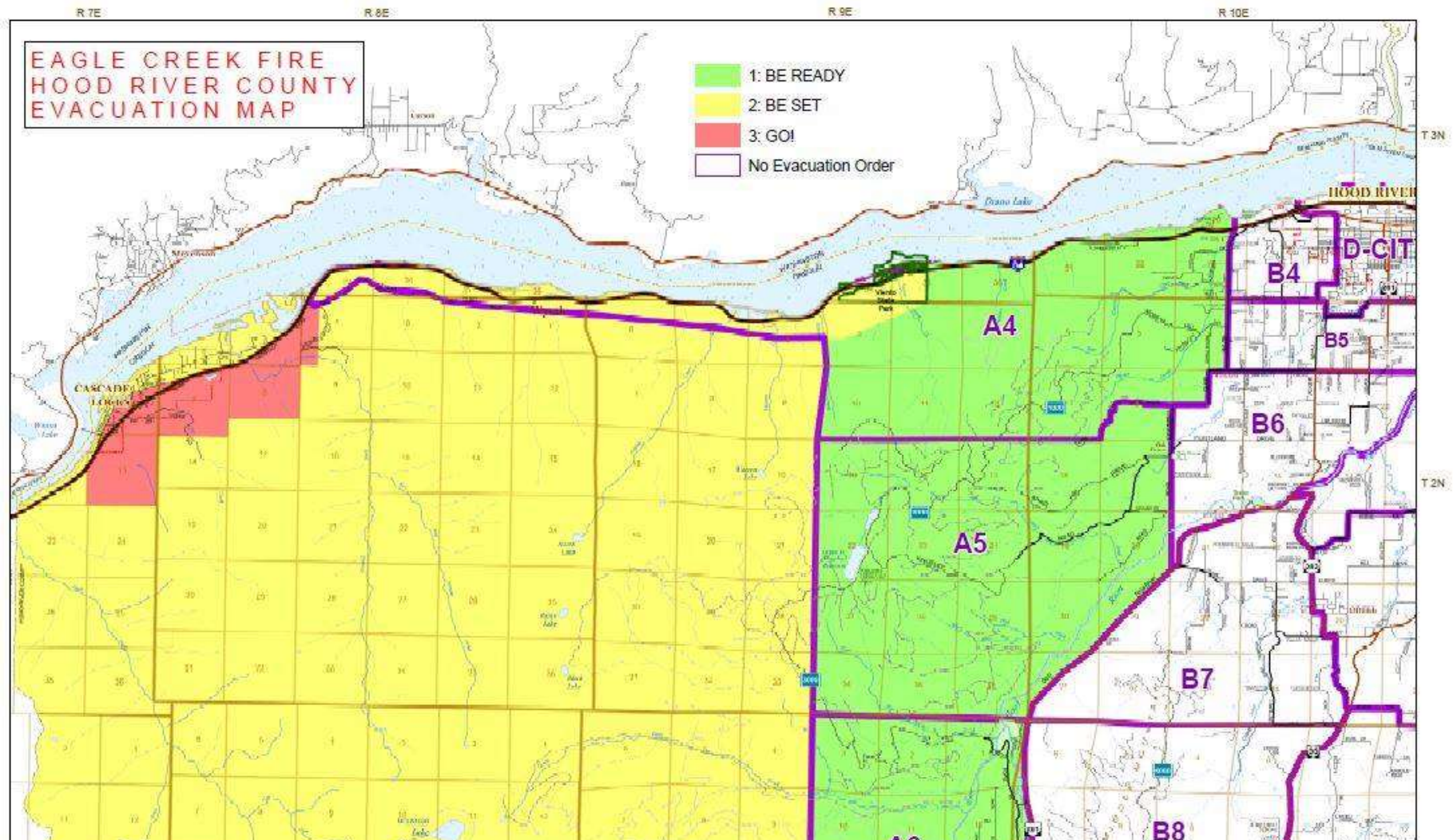
Drafted one of first OR evacuation plans

Zones helped.

Sometimes next door neighbors were in different zones

Mutual aid partner helped us put it down on paper

Leverage ESF-8 data, Everbridge and partner data



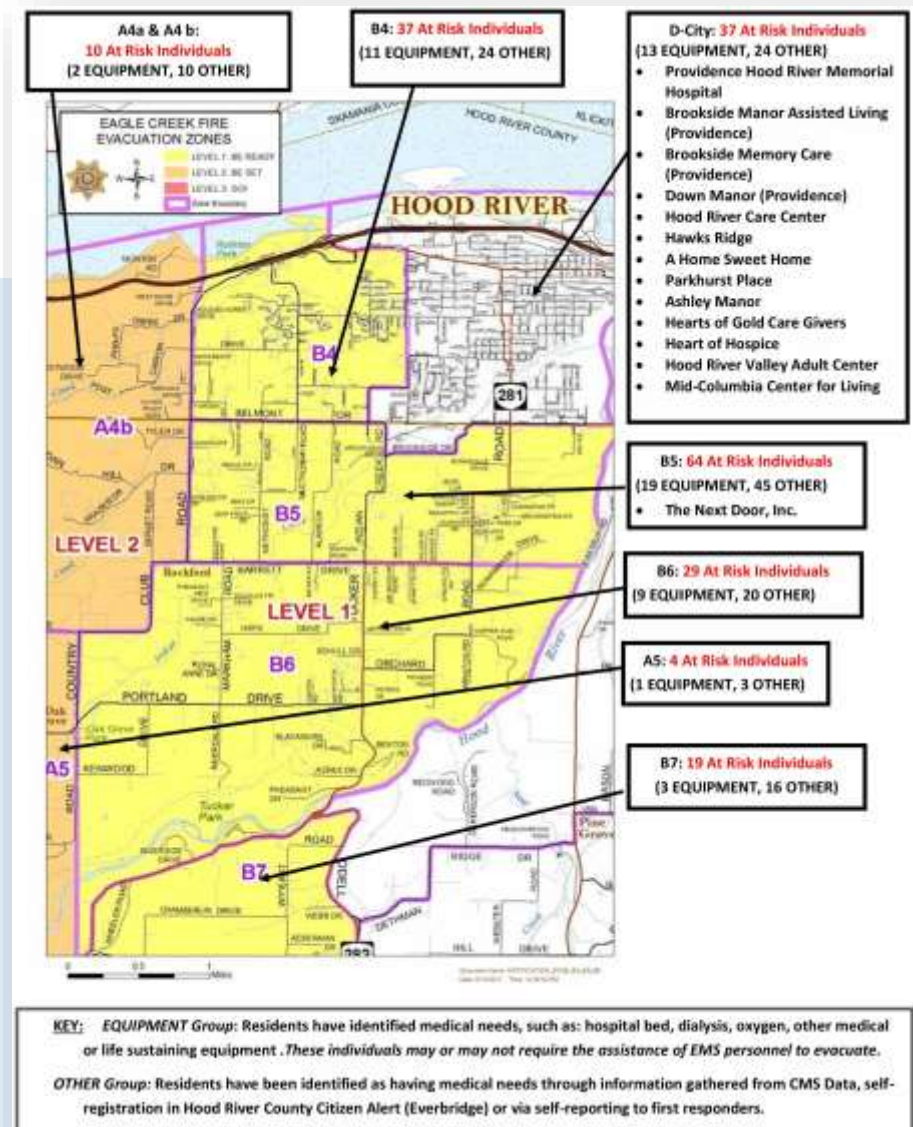
OHA / ESF 8 data – Vulnerable populations

NEW DATA - Use it!

- Strategic planning tool
- Deputies knocked on doors personally

Other ESF-8 lessons learned:

- Deconflicting shelter plans
 - County and Providence or others
- Many Senior Centers did not have, or know, their evacuation plans
- Public Health pushed smoke safety warnings, boil water info and evacuation tips



Critical transportation loss - I-84 closure

Few ways in, out - high traffic corridor

Plus two aging interstate bridges = choke points

# County staff I-84 commute (20-60 min. daily)	HALF
I-84 daily traffic (only east/west access)	11.6 million/Year
Highway 35 / Mt Hood (only south access)	1.1 million/ Year

Tourism / interstate truck traffic:

Gorge visitors USFS	2 million+ / year
Mt Hood National Forest USFS	5 million /year



A6: 7 At Risk Individuals
(3 High Needs, 4 Lower Risk)

A5: 4 At Risk Individuals
(1 High Needs, 3 Lower Risk)

A4a & A4 b:
10 At Risk Individuals
(2 High Needs, 8 Lower Risk)

B4: 37 At Risk Individuals
(11 High Needs, 26 Lower Risk)
• Parkhurst Place

D-City: 37 At Risk Individuals
(13 High Needs, 24 Lower Risk)

- Providence Hood River Memorial Hospital
- Brookside Manor Assisted Living (Providence)
- Brookside Memory Care (Providence)
- Down Manor (Providence)
- Hood River Care Center
- Hawks Ridge
- A Home Sweet Home
- Ashley Manor
- Hearts of Gold Care Givers
- Heart of Hospice
- Hood River Valley Adult Center

B5: 64 At Risk Individuals
(19 High Needs, 45 Lower Risk)
• The Next Door, Inc.

C4: 11 At Risk Individuals
(3 High Needs, 8 Lower Risk)

B6: 29 At Risk Individuals
(9 High Needs, 20 Lower Risk)

C5: 12 At Risk Individuals
(0 High Needs, 12 Lower Risk)

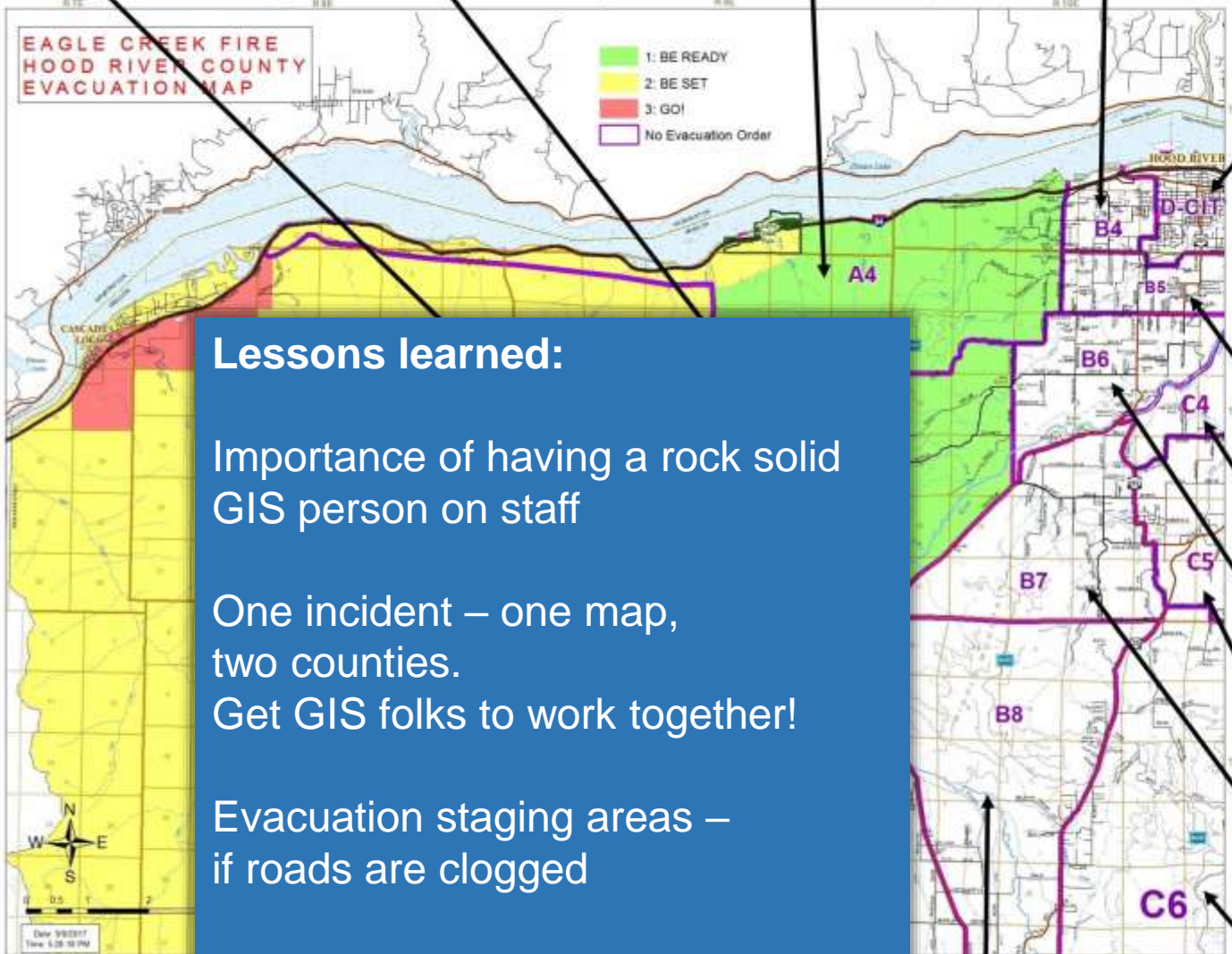
B7: 19 At Risk Individuals
(3 High Needs, 16 Lower Risk)

C6: 9 At Risk Individuals
(5 High Needs, 4 Lower Risk)

B8: 16 At Risk Individuals
(4 High Needs, 12 Lower Risk)

**EAGLE CREEK FIRE
HOOD RIVER COUNTY
EVACUATION MAP**

- 1: BE READY
- 2: BE SET
- 3: GO!
- No Evacuation Order



Lessons learned:

Importance of having a rock solid GIS person on staff

One incident – one map,
two counties.
Get GIS folks to work together!

Evacuation staging areas –
if roads are clogged

Encourage self evacuation –
motorhomes and campers

Rapidly changing evacuation notifications + zones = thousands of worried, confused callers

- **Set up Joint Information Center**

- Evacuation notices daily – sometimes several times a day
- Set up outreach systems - Facebook /web / flash alert / trap line / public meetings / partners share same vetted info
- Interactive online evacuation map

- **Call center – thousands of daily calls from residents**

- English/Spanish – real person, in depth info sharing
- Entry point for new volunteers and EOC staff
- Before every new evacuation notice, staff up Call Center
- 3 volunteers per shift x multiple shifts x 18 days
- Reduced call impact on 911
- Fielded calls from both sides of river and incident
- Excel spreadsheet of volunteer/donation offers and feedback
- Recorded info lines – English and Spanish (if no call pick up)



Lessons learned

Headline RE: Sheriff English

**'In the middle of
a catastrophe,
he took the time
to take care of
his citizens'**



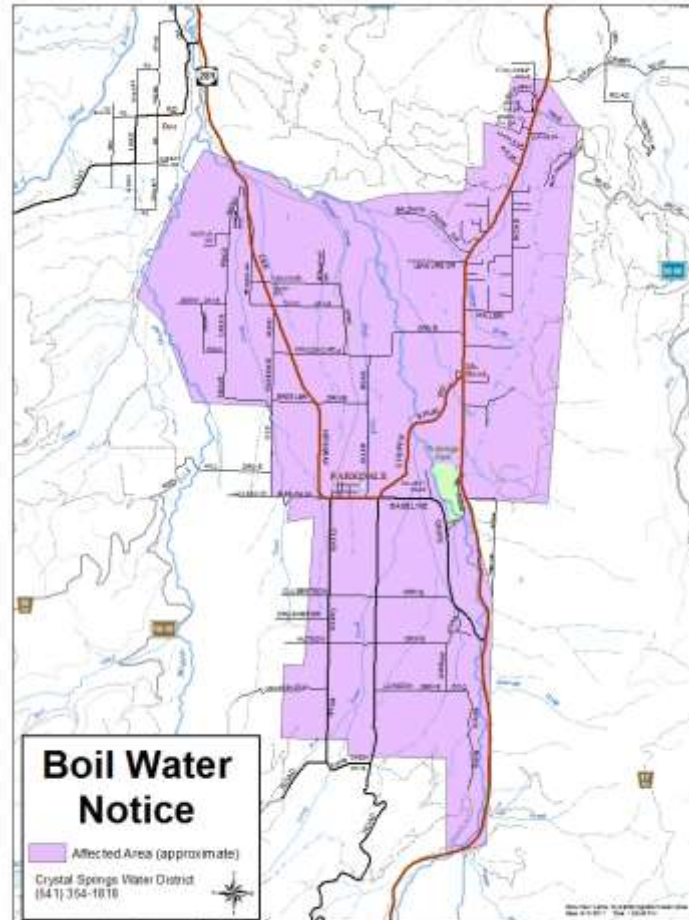
Take special care of residents affected

- Cascade Locks evacuated more than 2 weeks – deserved special treatment
- Send a dedicated PIO to shelter and gathering places
- Red Cross Shelter allows no contact with evacuees; EOC received hundreds of concerned calls from family members and friends



It's a long game.

Every time we almost got our battle rhythm,
a new problem occurred



reference

We're in the partnership business. We are the Whole Community.



Name that
Emergency
Manager!



Partnerships – we're in it, together

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness – it's a sign of strength

Mutual aid – neighbor counties

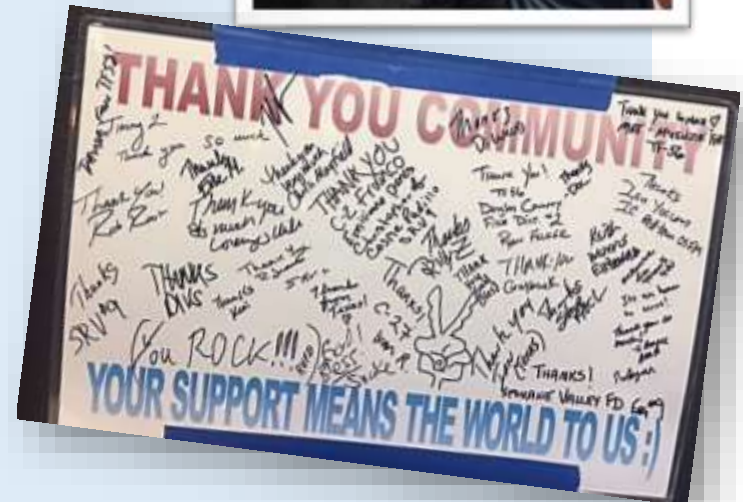
- **Wasco County** – Sheriff Magill and EM Juston Huffman
- **WA - Skamania** – EM John Carlson

Omnibus agreement - 3 days free EM aid

- **Washington County** (EM Scott Porter + amazing EOC team + series of PIOs)
- **Clatsop County** – (EM Tiffany Brown)
- **Jefferson County** (EM Mark Carman)
 - Put them up in a hotel and feed them

OEM / **Bill Martin**

Red Cross / field + liaison in EOC



Eagle Creek Fire County EOC partnership

- **Importance of collaboration**

- Ports, Cities, County
- Intertribe
- School District
- Fire agencies, law
- State: OEM, ODOT, OHA, OSFM, OFW
- Fed: USFS, USFW, Bonneville Power
- Local businesses, restaurants and volunteer groups



- **Volunteers / infrequent staff:**

- Volunteers wanted to help – needed to help
- Shadowing opportunities for EOC volunteers and staffs (mutual aid)
- Day job vs EOC job confusion, especially uniformed staffs

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Lessons learned



EOC was disconnected from Fire Camp – send a liaison

Needed a vast expansion of IT and phones

- Blew out County phones and calendar program

EOC: have good food, lots of it – attract field folks in

Leverage business donations for IC, EOC and community needs.

- Restaurants, retail, Walmart, hotel rooms, free Verizon cell phones



Lessons learned



- **EOC IAP too long, didn't guide our actions**
 - Need shorter, focused template
- **Need a specific plan for policy group / electeds**
- **What if there had been a long term power outage?**
- **What's FMAG?** How is it different than Presidential declaration / IDA-PDA?
 - Volunteer hours counts toward cost recovery match
- **After the fire - the new norm**
 - Unplanned projects, recovery phase, HMGO grant apps. Throw out your work plan.



Now what?

“Columbia Gorge already earned the distinction of the state highest landslide risk...

Eagle Creek fire heightened that threat in some of the most popular Gorge areas... located firmly in the landslide zone” - Dogami



Collaboration - after

**Multnomah county, cities, IMT, OEM
Governor's Office, MCEDD, CGCC
Small Business Center, Travel Oregon**

- Weather spotter – Multnomah Co.
- Post fire landslide planning – Multnomah Co.
- Recovery workshops, business outreach
- SBA Loan program (popular here)

November 9th, 2017

National Weather Service (NWS) offers community Weather Spotter Training in Cascade Locks

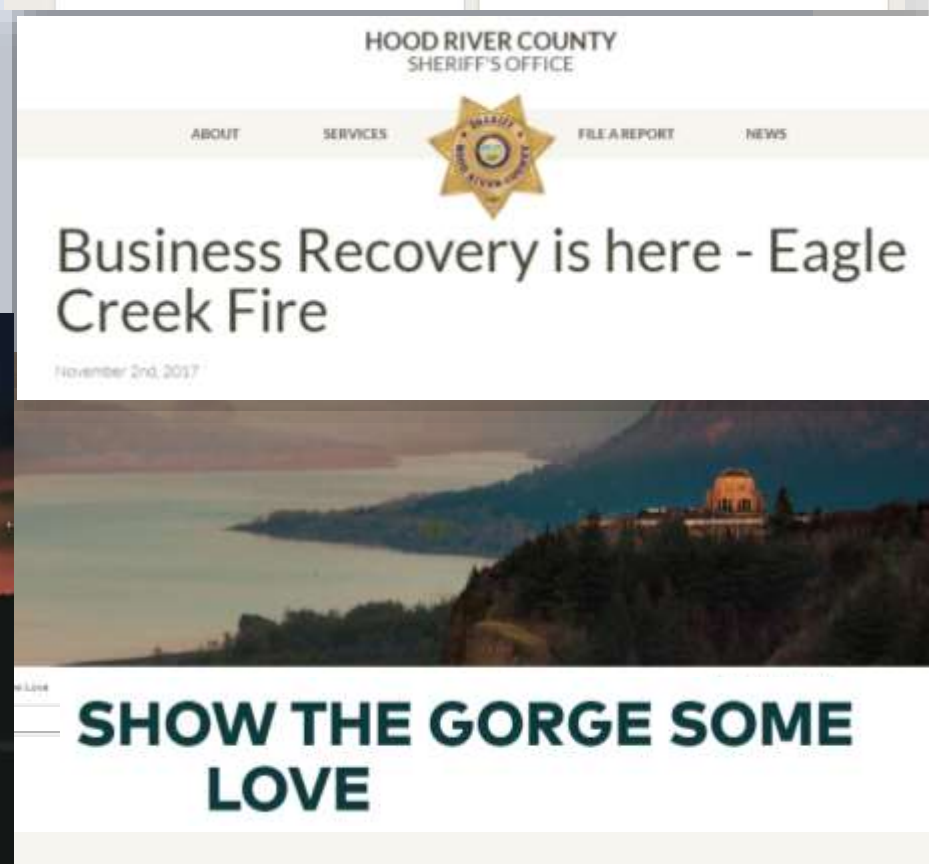
November 2

NWS Portland is coming to Cascade Locks to help recruit and train a stable of local weather

November 2nd, 2017

Are you a Hood River County business with economic losses from the Eagle Creek Fire? Help is here.

Hood River County businesses can now get direct aid from the Federal SBA (Small Business



Gratitude. 2 weeks after our EOC closed...

Northern California firestorm October 2017

Napa, Sonoma – 9 California counties

12 fires in one month

228,503 acres

Destroyed/damaged buildings: 9,141

44 dead 8 injuries



Partnerships – community – working together

Leveraging our greatest strengths

