



Darlene 3 Fire – Seeking Solutions

Monday, July 29, 2024 | 5:00 – 8:00 PM | In-Person

In-Person: La Pine Activity Center

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Agenda & Notes

Introduction

- 5:00 – 6:00 **A. Community Meal**
6:00 – 6:30 **B. NRP & Darlene 3 Reflections**
- (add notes or info from slides)

6:30 – 6:40 **C. Guest Introductions**

Daniel Richer – Mayor, City of La Pine
Geoff Wullschlager – City Manager, City of La Pine
Brent Bybee - Principal Planner, City of La Pine
Patti Adair – Deschutes County Commissioner & Coordinated Houseless Response Office
Heather Miller - Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office
Nathan Garibay – Emergency Manager, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office
Stephen Lopez - Sunriver Police Chief
Capt. William Bailey - Deschutes County Sheriff's Office
Dan Dougherty – Assistant Fire Chief, La Pine Rural Fire Protection
Amanda Roberts – Prineville Dist. Manager, Bureau of Land Management
Holly Jewkes – Deschutes National Forest Service
Janice Garceau - Director, Deschutes County Health Services
Kevin Moriarity - Deschutes County Forester

6:40 – 8:00 **D. Group Discussion**

Kristine and Courtney provide introductions and cover the agenda.

Courtney sets the stage. Kristine covers the guidelines for participation. Julia introduces NRP and recognizes the working group. Shares takeaways from the survey results and emphasizes that the number one concern was wildfire and public safety from the community.

Kathy covers and reiterates "What happened" and "what went well" with the fire.

- Emphasizing the regional coordination, and emphasizes that it's about the community, both housed and unhoused

What went well

- BLM fuels reduction efforts near Darlene cost over \$250k to complete.
- Neighbors, families selflessly came to each other's aid

Kathy recognizes that a lot more names should be on the thank you slide, and recognizes a few individuals for their work:

- Shannon
 - Runs the La Pine Facebook Page, organizes the community and aided with this community meeting
- Chief Dan Dougherty
 - For service to the community and reaching out and coordinating with the governor's office for the conflagration act
 - La Pine Rodeo Association

Recognizing community organizations for their work after the fire:

- After visiting some unhoused communities in the Darlene area, two shared that they wanted dumpsters to help clean up their areas. Republic has donated dumpster services for those areas.
- Sheriff's department Capt Bailey & La Pine City Manager Geoff W for distributing fire extinguishers to 25 camps
 - Oregon Disaster Funders Network for providing \$5000 to help NRP continue to distribute fire extinguishers and fire blankets (in partnerships with the forest service)

Purpose this evening:

1. Learn from one another
2. Provide the community a platform
3. Cultivate ideas for immediate and long-term prevention methods

Insights here will help drive this community change. Reminder that the town is resilient in the face of adversity, for helping each other in a time of need, and for its independent spirit. United, we can forge a safer Newbury Country for everyone.

Kristine starts introducing the special guests.

Nathan Garibay – Emergency Manager, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office

Capt. William Bailey – Patrol Captain, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office

Heather Miller – Regional Fire Risk Reduction Specialist, Oregon State Fire Marshal

Commissioner Tony DeBone – Deschutes County Commissioner

Asst. Fire Chief Dan Dougherty - La Pine Rural Fire Protection

Daniel Richer – Mayor, City of La Pine

Commissioner Phil Change – Deschutes County Commissioner

Holly Jewkes – Forest Supervisor, Deschutes National Forest Service

Kevin Moriarity - Deschutes County Forester

Commissioner Patti Adair – Deschutes County Commissioner

Stephen Lopez - Sunriver Police Chief

Geoff Wullschlager – City Manager, City of La Pine

Janice Garceau - Director, Deschutes County Health Services

Amanda Roberts – Prineville Dist. Manager, Bureau of Land Management

Brent Bybee - Principal Planner, City of La Pine

- Brent explains the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire grant (CPAW). Explains that the city is doing a full comp plan update, and are updating their Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, in partnership with CPAW.
 - CPAW does a full review of city plans and creates recommendations to protect developments and lives from wildfire.
 - If you want to get more involved, check out lapine2045.com

Nick Strader - Chief of Staff for Congressman Cliff Bentz

Group Discussion

Courtney Sets the stage. Kristin covers examples of short term and long-term solutions.

Stu Martinez: It's amazing to see this many people in one room in La Pine. It shows the gravity of the situation we are facing today. When the city incorporated, we didn't imagine seeing these effects. The community incorporated to give voices representation; La Pine had been relying on the County for everything. It's better for us to have one voice as the community. Hope that everyone has the

opportunity to share, but in a respectful manner. Let's honor each other's own personal views. Let's get through this like we have gotten through so many other situations in the past. Proud to have served as the first mayor, and knows that we can get through this as a team.

SO: @BLM – Shares that he has encampments behind his house that have doubled in size since the fire. Officers have been sent out there to stop people from cutting down trees. Wonders how they can get rid of the encampments and prevent others from moving in. Shares that he believes these fires are man-made and wants to know how to stop them.

- Amanda Roberts: States the shared sentiment is probably on a lot of other minds. States that BLM is a federal agency which is obliged to follow the laws and rules and their own regulations. They cannot legally evict anyone with the current rules and laws. BLM Law enforcement officers make between 15-30 site visits/contacts in homeless encampments each week. They've issued nearly hundreds of citations. Once the citations are issued, they have no more jurisdiction for what they can do to have a camp moved; it's up to the US Attorney's Office. They are working with US Attorney's Office to better collaborate on prosecuting those misdemeanor citations. Amanda sometimes worries about the safety of Law Enforcement officers.
- There is a 14-day limitation on most BLM land for dispersed camping. There is a process they have to follow to get a camp moved.
- Shares that she came to the meeting because they are working together for solutions, and to create a common understanding of what the rules and laws are -- not that they don't want to enforce them, but because they are working within the boundaries of their authority and jurisdiction. They are equally concerned about the trash dumping, behaviors, and fire risk.
- **Emphasizes that any use on public lands of public lands is a fire hazard. On the day of Darlene fire, there were 70-human caused starts across the area.** They are doing everything they can to prevent wildfires through their prevention program and personal use restrictions.
- There is no one dominant reason for human starts. They don't all come from homeless camps, They come from trash piles on private land, recreational target shooting, campfires, cigarette butts, sparks from train, suspicious fires, and sometimes homeless camps.
- We all live with the risk of wildfire in Central Oregon.
- The community of La Pine's response to the Darlene 3 fire was quite amazing. Organized, supportive, working collaboratively. That doesn't happen in all the communities we work in.
- The fuels reduction program that was deliberately executed was helpful.
- We recognize that La Pine is important to agency, have been working there for 15yrs long before homeless encampments came and have been working to do fuels reduction to prevent catastrophic fire damage to homes
- The audience claps and says "thank you"
- There is nothing being hidden. It is really difficult to prosecute and move people off public lands. Trying to work through houselessness together.

CL: I'm a houseless resident living near the area of the fires. None of the fires have started on my property. I understand on both sides how difficult it is. I understand that wrecked land devalues your homes, and I understand having nowhere else to go. We chose to live closer to town but it's been so hard. My kids get harassed. They stopped two fires caused by ATVs. I don't know what to say to fix these problems because there's bad apples in every group. **We need to have stronger enforcement laws, but we need to deliver more services.** It took me six years to get an ID. Not being able to get medical transport, not being able to get mail. **My major concern is low access to water out there.** Maybe a **call box for water access** to help stop fires. My place was well prepped with water, but other areas are not. Rather than taking the time to record and blame, we should be taking the time to try to save our homes and save our world. We need to work together more to fix this. **I love this community, we need more resources, more medical services, better social support.** I thank all the officers that have come out to help, they save lives.

RR: The community comes together so well because they've had 3 chances to do it. **We need to get the US Attorneys to start charging people for their citations.** I don't know where to put people, but we need to find a place to put them. I think DEQ has to be involved, Cliff Bentz chief of staff needs to help get in touch with the Attorney. I want to find the answer to help the homeless, I really do.

KO: I feel really sorry for the people trying to make a living at minimum wage driving to Bend. They're not getting anything for free. I support a family every year, that are working. I don't care where the homeless camps are, but they turn to junk in a week. I went to the cops because people are camping on my property and I was told that it's just the way it's going to be, that I can't kick them off my property unless I have a sign that says no trespassing. Other communities don't have people living in their because they don't allow it. Why do we have to allow it? **There's not fair enforcement of laws.**

- Desch County Sheriff Capt. Bailey. I met [the speaker] over a week ago to hear the concerns but I didn't know about the trespassing on private property. We can enforce trespassing on private property and I'll make a call. I've had staff out there to enforce illegal dumping. Our deputies are empowered to enforce state law. staff can enforce the law. This year we have dedicated two full time and a half time dedicated 100% to patrolling the public lands. They have multiple responsibilities, including:
 - Fire risk mitigation. We meet at least monthly with forest service to talk about what we and they can enforce. For example, Sheriff's office does not have ability to enforce the 14 day camping. It's a fed land and we don't have authority to enforce; if we do, that's illegal. But I'm working on what I can do by leveraging the dept. sheriffs to visit lands doing proactive patrols. Last year deputies put out 9 campfires that helped prevent fires. Last year the Forest Service has partners with us to hand out fire extinguishers in encampments. **A \$10 investment in fire ext. is a better investment than the fire that comes and destroys property.**
 - This year we've expanded that to La Pine, working with the City and NRP. 25 distributed, 25 more going out. COIC gave \$2000 more to help with distribution.
 - Sheriffs dept invested in 30 water tanks to go with deputies to help. I believe that if the folks out there have the resources, they'll help prevent the fires.
 - Attendee asks if someone will go out to check on the fire extinguishers. Capt. says as much as they can to leverage their resources. They'll give out fire extinguishers if they can prevent a fire. If one ends up not being used and is sold, fine, the \$10 investment is worth it.
- Patti Adair: **Don't forget to have a fire extinguisher and shovel in your car to help fight the fire.**

BR: Do we know the numbers of houseless people out there?

- Attendee says they have a neighbor who flies the plane over the desert looking for poaching who sees everything else.
- Capt. Bailey: We have an idea, but we might not know the exact number. We know that some are transient, some moving around more than others. Numbers may change weekly and with the season. **Accurate information is number one goal for things we need to make accurate decisions moving forward. something that we need going forward. China Hat is a pilot project with Forest Service that could be expanded.** We build solutions around what people are ready to accept.
- Phil Chang: We don't have really accurate summer information, but every year there is an official Point In Time (PIT) Count. It's a significant undercount, but the more volunteers to help with the PIT the better the results. We know that south county is one of the areas where homelessness that are increasing over the last 10 years, and there are parts of Deschutes County where the numbers are leveling out or decreasing. The count is done in January to capture the long-term residents in a community. **You can help get us the data we need to help people get out of homelessness by participating in the PIT count in January.**

GT: I see two things: a community that came together, and I see a lot of hatefulness. I hold two truths; I'm scared and I get it, and also they're human beings who are really struggling. Please recognize that this is a complex situation that could affect any of us by becoming homeless. It's not because of a lack of work ethic, it may be because an addictive gene that activated. When we talk about low-income housing, and helping people, what about helping other people? Who in this town and in this country that owns property that charge exorbitated rent? People cannot afford homes. Let's hold both sides of the coin.

- Attendee responds: I own a business in town and 4 rental properties. I'm who you're speaking to. My properties have been thrashed and damaged, \$90,000 spent on one rental and I rented to a homeless lady and couldn't get her out of property for 9 months. My husband works every day at 6am for a business in town, we work hard. [Swearing] We're constantly getting ripped off, vandalized, and destroyed. Are you saying that because we work hard, we're entitled to this?

Facilitators try to calm the anger and tension in the room.

KD: The one thing we're most concerned about is the public land. We all feel like it's our property, I'm scared to go out there now. I know that a lot of people who are homeless are not by choice, and I know there are a lot of programs out there to help, and I know that people who don't want help and it shouldn't be done on our dollars. We spent \$3m on the Darlene fire, and that could go a long way to making things better instead of paying for things that are contributing to the issues.

Facilitators remind the crowd to focus on solutions.

Janice Garceau, Desc County Pub Health: Shares about her background and experience, that it's harder to try to get everyone to agree on the same cause and it's better focus on problem solving. Acknowledges that there are unhoused people who are destructive, don't want help, and don't want to leave the wilderness. There are also many unhoused people who don't want to live where they live, who want and accept help, and after receiving help have nowhere to go after they receive help. **Let's step away from fighting and toward problem solving as a community.**

- Audience member asks if she has anyone living with her.
- You are a community that knows how to get things done. We still must solve problems today, and we can't get stuck in who's to blame.
- Audience member interrupts - There's a camp outside Newburry Estates that's been there six years and no one has done anything.

Amanda: Appreciates the look towards problem solving, recognizes the frustration and wants to share a solution that they're owning. **BLM has a contract with Deschutes County Sheriffs,** but it's murky and unknown on both sides. Shares that she is **committed to making sure both sides understand the agreement so they can better work together on information and enforcement.**

JC: I lost a patient who died from complications because he evacuated during the fire. I want to know that we have a plan going forward to take care of our medically fragile people. He was sent to the ER from the shelter, and he was sent home and died. There were a lot of moving pieces; I can't get mad but I am grieving. We didn't have a good process for check-ins; I wasn't able to check them in. If we need to have different Levels of facilities, let's do it. He didn't have his medication when he was checked. But I want to know how I can go and check in on him. **I want to know there's a plan to take care of the medically fragile.**

- Nathan Garibay: Thanks JC for sharing that, and says that our vulnerable populations are some of the highest concern; we're making improvements everyday. States that they should go through the situation together, and thanks JC again for sharing.

BV: Comment. Wanted to check in on neighbor after fire, to see what the area looked like. Checked in on neighbor that's got 40 acres in the middle of nowhere, and that family is leaving because of their fear of fire. Think about how much we lost in that fire, 4000 acres is a lot.

- Phil Chang: Talks about his 30yrs experience working around fire and community wildfire protections. Emphasizes that people should understand that this is a fire prone environment because of past vegetation management; it's more dangerous today than 150yrs ago. Mitigation includes fuels reduction in public lands, around homes and communities, investing in fire fighters and fire protection capacity. Today's topic is about ignition. 90% of wildfires are human caused from a variety of sources. It doesn't mean we shouldn't focus on this specific ignition source, also need realize we live in a fire prone environment. Even with all the fuels mitigation and fire resources, when the wind, humidity, temperature is such it is still a dangerous place. We have to have realistic expectations about how safe we can be.

RM: Are we confusing enabling for compassion with some of these issues? Where do we as voters and citizens need to apply the pressure to get the US Attorney's attention?

- Holly Jewkes: We are doing that work, and we are trying, but we are all operating with that frame. Conversation with elected officials.
- Nick Strader: Data – Congressman Bentz is frustrated on the actual data. He was here a week ago at the meeting. Everyone knows that the citation is toothless. Everyone knows this is the last safe-haven in Central Oregon. Bentz talked to Chief of Forest Service 2mo ago. Head of forest service committed to work with us, and we're looking at potential legislative options.
- Lots of angry comments from the crowd wanting to know the specific options; that it's smoke and mirrors
- Kristine: That's why NRP was formed; to listen to you. Kathy has worked so hard, and it's baby steps to getting things done. The people in this room that organized this meeting care deeply and deserve your respect.

SH: There's a witch hunt going on and that needs to stop. We need to find solutions, that's why we're all here. There are petitions, there are things we can do. If someone here can point us in the right direction for what to do, where to vote, how to petition. If we can get something proposed and done, we can all have a voice.

- Kristine: Please sign up for NRP alerts. There are handouts present at the meeting directing you where to go.
- Nick Strader: Bentz is open to legislative changes. There are conversations around enforcement. Everything should be on the table. We're here to listen and take your concerns back to DC
- Geoff W: Shares the current difficulty trying to navigate the nuances between State Legislation and Federal case law around enforcement. Reach out to your state rep and state senator and tell them you support the reconsideration of HB 3115.

Facilitators share that there's a lot of people still left to share and the meeting needs to wrap up. Propose staying until 8:30pm.

What's one action or solution you'd like to propose?

BW: proposal: drone program that would help to get an overview of the forest. Video, audio, and thermal imaging, plotted to create a database and seamless info sharing and better resource connection without hurting privacy. Fears that if we don't address the issue we'll have another Paradise California.

- Janice G: If you want to know who's out there, don't fly over, go talk to them.

Jl: This area has a 100 year burn over and we're at 140 years. **They've taken down all our old lookouts in this area. We should bring them back, they're helpful.** There used to be 23 lookouts in 1940.

- Holly: Our lookouts will appreciate hearing your appreciation. We definitely have fewer lookouts than when you first came to La Pine, but we still staff lookouts with humans and there's a mix of cameras all across Oregon. Lava, Round Mountain are both staffed lookouts, and there are cameras involved. ODF has deployed a lot of cameras across the state, and humans watch those cameras all day long.

Facilitators: Try to limit comments to 1 to 2 minutes and put contact information on contact cards.

AC: Defensible space only works when people do it. Who do we contact about getting BLM to come do defensible space on their property?

- Amanda: Context is helpful - Prineville district is 1.5m across 13m acres in 13 counties, from Hood River down to La Pine. 120 staff on district, 40 tied to fire, 30 tied to eastern side of district, 30 to this side. We're doing the best we can to triage and prioritize defensible space around communities. We treated 95k acres around La Pine. La Pine gets more attention from the Prineville district than anywhere else. 130acres just burned on the north fork of the John Day, I have 4 critical management teams with 4000 personnel fighting fire right now. We can't get to everything, but we do the best we can in response to the places that will have the most impact to protect – that's part of why we've had so much success here in La Pine. And you can call the Prineville District BLM.
- Tony Debone: **Community Wildfire Protection Plan** is something the County has been doing in partnership with the fire district, homeowners, Forest Service and BLM gets updated every 4yrs. 1991 Aubrey Hall fire in SE Bend where homes were lost was when this document got serious. Partners come together and talk about where the priorities are for communities.
- Lisa Clark - Field Manager for Deschutes BLM field office. **We're working on an environmental assessment available this fall for public comment that will allow us to retreat all 95k acres of the treated lands in La Pine, plus all the target areas we haven't done yet.** NRP will know when the EA comes out, La Pine has our attention.
- Kevin Moriarty: Manage Project Wildfire - **coordinating on fuel treatments with federal and nonfederal partners.** Main objective is to educate community and offer grant opportunities to do defensible space on private and nonfederal land. We work with federal partners adjacent to those treated properties to make sure we're working together. The La Pine CWPP is up for a renewal so we'll work on that soon. There's good communication between all partners in these programs.
- Phil Chang - **if the question is how do we get BLM to do more fuels reduction around my neighborhood? Part of the answer is money. It can cost over \$1000 acre to do fuels reduction on federal land. The BLM can do more if congress appropriates more money for fuels reduction.**

ME: Solution - wood cutting permit - **BLM could allow us to take the deadwood/wood in the areas that have burned.** People are the best resource that are available.

DR: In Central Oregon, you can't exclude fire from the landscape. Fires are going to happen and they start in a multitude of ways. **Most important thing we can do is start with our own house, our own structure – "Fire Harden".** Hope we can get more organization within the neighborhoods to work collectively.

LV: We have 3 problems: fires, homeless, animosity. The animosity is well founded – the "people causing the disaster fires are not being held responsible." Why don't we sanction an area for the homeless?

- Janice: **managed camps are a good idea, they're a part of the solution.** There are some that will happily go to a managed camp as some see them as safer. There's great progress towards managed camps. But there are people who won't want to go. **Think continuum.** Starting with

camps, and housing in your community, and fire extinguishers. [Someone asks for clarity on a managed camp]. Managed camps be a lot of different things. At the lowest level it's a supported camp, like what's at Juniper Ridge – some amenities available and more safety. A higher level there might be a fence and agreements as to what's required for living there. [Someone asks about drugs] A lot of managed camps will allow use but not sale. And there are some high-threshold ones that say you have to be sober and engaged in treatment and services; and those are the most expensive.

- Patti – There's a map in the room that shows Deschutes County Property within City Limits (Kathy send out the addresses of the county lands within the city limits) We just approved a managed camp on our property in Redmond – utilizing 8 acres. To do this right we have to have a social service provider, there may need to be some regulations that change, but we can do that. There are some good opportunities within the La Pine properties for a managed camp. Great pilot program out of Lane County in Eugene – providers were with homeless 4 days/week.
 - Will La Pine see a managed camp soon? Patti – I hope so.
- Geoff: We have to consider land both within and outside the city limits. Outside UGB has restrictions for a managed camp. Within city limits it has to be zoned appropriately. We do have industrial land, but we have to work with the restrictions, and we're willing to look at options that fit outside current toolbox.

With the executive order state of emergency in Oregon, is there anything we can do to expedite our solutions based on this order?

Someone shares the print out with contact information for representatives and recommends attendees reach out.

It's important that we don't make all homeless people the same. There can be a myriad of causes and just one instance that causes homelessness.

[Lots of people talking over each other, hard to make out specific conversations but angry tones around a feeling of enabling the homeless]

Someone shares that we are all one bad decision and bad luck to be homeless. They work with the homeless daily, and not all people are out there by choice. A lot of people hold two jobs, have gotten out of homelessness, and then one small thing and they're out of a house. We cannot fix the problem until we open our hearts, lead with kindness love, faith if it's important to you. Deschutes County can help.

VH: How can my firewood business get out into the woods to do fuels treatment? We have fire trucks, water trucks, tree treatment capabilities.

Mayor Richer provides closing comments, talks about the watermain the city installed down Darlene which was helpful for fighting the fire, and the limitations and opportunities of what the City can do, and reinforces that we need to focus on solutions. [Lot's of people talking hard to follow conversations].

AP – Lives in the scar of Darlene 1 and has also been close to being homeless. You have to make sure you call the people you're trying to reach daily. We have to have an idea to get the leadership to listen to us – we need a managed camp, and we have to hold people accountable. Law enforcement needs to have a presence, and the community could get involved like with what New York City did with the Guardian Angels.

Facilitators close the meeting, encourage people to reach out to engage@newberryregionalpartnership.org

Additional Comments from Cards:

- Any petitions/legislation that we can take action on?
- Can we provide a central, safe location for the unhoused – with garbage and restrooms?

Sticky Notes – Short- & Long-Term Solutions

Short Term Solutions

- More law enforcement presence
 - Hold camps to the same level of laws & regulations for all x3
 - Criminal, trash, human waste
 - Enforce 14-day camping x4
 - Enforce all burn bans - Coordinate with Federal Public lands, county and cities
 - Dedicated patrols, equipped with water tanks
- Encampments
 - Have sign in and out for public land use x2
 - More trash service x3
 - Move to burn scare
 - No camping in unimproved areas
 - Empower and do not enable
- Improve emergency shelter services during disasters
 - Especially for those with disabilities x2
- Create a managed camp
 - Long-term visitor area on public land
 - Safe parking program within city limits & rural
 - Within La Pine's industrial lands
- Short-term immediate housing for homeless
 - With rules enforced, residents held accountable
- Fire mitigation
 - County codes that prevent fire hazards on private property that are enforced
 - La Pine Fire cadet youth program
 - BLM more fuel reduction to create defensible space
 - Education & fire extinguishers, meetings
- Better/accurate data on camps included needed services
 - Drone program
 - Mapping of camps and damaged areas

Long Term Solutions

- More enforcement
 - Laws for criminals

- Fire prevention programs
- More police presence
- Increase BLM and Forest Service Staff, Public Lands
- Apply pressure to US Attorney to enforce
- Be prepared for migration from California
- Increased services for houseless
 - Designated/managed camp with services like mental health, job connection, food, dumpsters, showers, etc – x6 suggestions
 - Increasing resources to rehouse people
 - Supportive housing with case management, recovery treatment, rehabilitation
 - Better data on houseless in the area, how many are unhoused in South Deschutes County?
- Better support for those needing medical services during fire evacuations x2
 - City should have an app that shows the risks of those that need medical attention during fires
 - Medical station check-in, 24hr staff
- Convince people charging high rents to reinvest money into community services
- Better Fire Protection/Mitigation
 - Hold private property owners accountable to fire restrictions
 - Don't sell firewood during fire season
 - Find grants to create Firewise communities
 - More trash services
 - Thin perimeter around town
 - Have water silos around town
 - Fire hydrant lock box for emergency access
 - Bring back the fire lookout towers x2
 - Fund bio-mass plant to encourage fuels reduction
 - Burn ban on BLM land
 - Allow logging in areas where fuels need to be reduced
 - Allow residents to cut firewood near town
- Create a culture of Fire Preparedness

Submitted Comments

1

My name is Antony and I live on the West side of La Pine. The Darlene 3 fire was a significant moment for my wife and I. As new residents, we realized the significant danger La Pine is in if we as a community, in partnership with Deschutes County, do not prepare for local fires that threaten homes and families.

In support of this past spring's West Bend Prescribed Fire Pilot Project, I would like to advocate for more prescribed fire and mechanical thinning of the local forests surrounding La Pine.

2

Enjoyed speaking with you as well Kathy! I will be sharing my experience as well as some of the experiences of others with disabilities about the Darlene Fire at our Oregon Disabilities Commission meeting tomorrow. Hoping to call for action to collaborate with OEM, State and local agencies to revise our State's Evacuation and Sheltering plans to include meeting the needs of people with disability and health needs.

I greatly look forward to working with you and the Newberry Regional Partnership in bringing services to our community.

Thank you!

Christie Rudder, Commissioner

Oregon Disabilities Commission

3

From Kathy, to include

<https://ktvz.com/news/2024/07/17/every-summer-were-dodging-bullets-gunnels-hopes-ruling-prompts-feds-to-move-homeless-campers-away-from-cities/>

4

On Tuesday, June 25th, my dogs and I were evacuated from our home in the Newberry Estates neighborhood. There was about an hour and a half between seeing smoke and getting the Level 3 evacuation notice, and I am grateful for that time. However, no time is enough when you're evaluating what to pack and what can't be replaced if the unthinkable happens.

I did have time to get my work shift for that evening covered, pack up whatever I needed for the dogs, and two very haphazard suitcases.

Driving out, I couldn't control my emotions. I had my dogs and my life, but what about the property that I cherish, that is the first I've owned and all of the money and countless hours of work I've put in over the last year?

I am so grateful for the crews that worked hard prepping our homes, our neighborhood Facebook group with members who stuck behind and gave updates, and that ultimately the fire was pushed away from our homes. I estimate my financial loss was \$700-\$900 due to lost work and having to buy clothing and supplies that I didn't pack in my frenzy, but it could have been so much worse.

This experience has changed me and I feel a vulnerability that wasn't there before. I couldn't help but think if that fire had started in the camp just a hundred or so yards behind my house, there's no way we wouldn't have lost homes and maybe lives. They are close enough that I can hear their voices, dogs, generators, and see their trailers through the trees.

I know the homeless issue is complicated and I truly don't know all the answers. However, it's unfair that people are allowed to stake their claim and build permanent camps on public land, especially so close to residential areas. As a community we need to seek solutions to help the people who truly want to improve their situation find stable housing and figure out how to deal with the people who CHOOSE to live on the fringe of society without contributing, who trash the land and live recklessly, because both do exist.

I have no problem with transient people, living in their vans or RVs in the forest. However, if they choose that lifestyle, they need to follow the same rules the rest of us do, moving on every 14 days and picking up after themselves. There should also be camping restrictions for all people within a certain distance to residential areas.

I look forward to hearing the community's ideas and hope that we can work together to come up with solutions and put pressure on the federal agencies that we need to enforce their rules. Thank you,

— Danielle Pokorny

5

Patricia Williams

We need new laws on the Homeless and we need a Town Hall for everyone! We need to give them an area policed and Tiny Homes built for them with all services. When they are safe, we are safe! We are paying taxes to pay for their wildfires! Thank you so much!

LA PINE TRANSIENT DISPERSED CAMPING PROBLEM
In Deschutes County

Respectfully submitted July 15, 2024
By George Potter
50940 Huntington Rd.
La Pine, OR 97739
208-503-2131

The recent Darlene 3 fire in La Pine on June 25 burned nearly 4,000 acres and threatened homes and the city of La Pine itself. Reports indicate that it was human caused and originated in a transient camp in the BLM.

I called 911 at approximately 1:30 PM when we saw a dark smoke plume billowing up 1/4 mile directly behind our house on South Huntington Road. Within an hour the fire had advanced rapidly in a northeasterly direction towards the city and obliterating any view of Paulina Peak. We checked in with our neighbors and I began watering down the lawn as tanker planes made low passes over our house. This was a repeat of the Darlene 1 fire two years ago. However the wind took that one to the southeast. We received evacuation notices 1, 2 and 3.

WILL A DARLENE 4 FIRE BLOW IN A WESTERLY DIRECTION?

We bought our home on Huntington Road nearly 10 years ago. We had horses at the time and, having just retired from Oregon State Parks, and my wife from teaching, we loved the idea of access to the trails in the BLM as well as all the outdoor recreation La Pine has to offer.

That dream is being crushed for us and many of our neighbors in the area due to the unregulated and growing transient problem in the BLM forest surrounding La Pine.

The underlying issue is that we have a transient population that is unmonitored, unregulated, destructive, and dangerous as well as hazardous to the environment, wildlife and residents of the community.

IT IS A TOUGH PROBLEM AND NO ONE WANTS TO TAKE OWNERSHIP.

La Pine doesn't want to deal with it, the Sheriff's office says they have no jurisdiction because it belongs to BLM and BLM claims to be understaffed and doesn't have the resources. In the meantime, LA PINE BURNS and the transient population grows and destroys the forest.

The trails we once rode and walked are now dirt highways. Trees are cut down, more roads are cut into the forest for makeshift campsites for derelict vehicles and burned out campers. Our neighbors no longer walk the trails due to the threats and trash dumps. Our land adjoins a designated wildlife corridor for migration. There has been a camp there for the past 3 years. The last few years have seen a steady decline in the wildlife populations in this corridor. This spring I've seen two deer when in the past it's been small herds.

THERE IS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM ALREADY IN PLACE:

The BLM policy on dispersed camping regulates a stay on public lands to 14 days. It is not enforced here. We have camps that have been there for months and years. If we expect these people to be good neighbors the BLM camping rules must be enforced. The 14 day limit is during a 28 day period. After 14 days a move of at least 25 miles is required.

Camp sites must have been previously established. Personal property or refuse must not be left behind. If a transient leaves, the trash and abandoned vehicles and sewage is disgusting. It's no wonder the people avoid the BLM around La Pine.

My career with Oregon State Parks and also with the Oregon State Forestry recreation program working with the public has made the following point abundantly clear.

REGULATIONS AND RULES MUST BE ENFORCED TO BE EFFECTIVE!

A wise man once told me "Inspect What You Expect."
An expectation with no inspection and follow through is worthless.

This seems to me to be the issue in our forests. The camping rules pertaining to stay limits, trash and human waste disposal and fire have not been enforced for so long that they are blatantly ignored with no fear of consequences.

THE HEALTHY FOREST RESTORATION ACT

In 2003 Congress passed the HFRA which directs federal agencies to collaborate with communities in developing a Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).
A CWPP can apply for federal funds or grants to address SPECIAL CONCERNS to reduce the risk of catastrophic loss as a result of wildfire.

CWPP's have been developed for South Deschutes County with community input. Two predominant environmental issues raised by participants were:

1. Wildlife habitat
2. Maintain defensible space

The agencies have done a wonderful job of tree thinning and undergrowth control in many area as evident along Findley Butte Road which was, no doubt, instrumental in controlling the Darlene Fire.

HOWEVER, NOW IS THE TIME TO ADDRESS THE CAUSES OF THESE FIRES.

It seems obvious that as long as we turn a blind eye to the problem of the unregulated transient camps, the fires will continue to happen. The forest will burn and property will be destroyed while wildlife habitat and the environment are damaged. Firewise Defensible Space is a great program but with transient camps starting fires 200 yards away the value is greatly reduced.

So, with the HFR act and the CWPP study in place it appears that this should not be brushed aside as simply a BLM understaffing problem. It's a Deschutes County problem and a La Pine problem as well. Wouldn't it be much more cost effective to stop the fires before they start.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Perhaps, with federal aid available, BLM Recreation Ranger positions could be created to work in south county and enforce the regulations for dispersed camping that are already in place. Time stamp photos of camp sites and frequent wellness visits would let the campers know what is expected of them and the consequences for noncompliance.

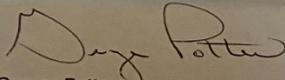
The creation of a managed campground near the city with toilets, water and a campground host, similar to existing BLM and Forestry campgrounds, would provide a degree of security to the campers that are indeed homeless due to personal issue. They could be monitored and provided services.

Now they are just left to disappear into the forest. Bus service might be provided to allow them to come to town for supplies, medical help and other services that are available.

Perhaps with federal help the National Guard could be called into service to sweep the area from time to time to identify unregulated camps.

The inmate highway cleanup crews might also be made available to help clean up the dump sites in the BLM.

Sincerely,


George Potter

7

HOW ABOUT WE "OUTLAW ALL UNAUTHORIZED CAMPING WITHIN AND SIX MILES FROM THE EXTERIOR BOUNDARY OF THE CITY OF LAPINE EXCEPT IN DESIGNATED AND DEVELOPED CAMPGROUNDS"

— Cathy Foran

8

I would like to briefly comment about reaching out to the legislators. Maybe if people don't because they don't know what to write or say, we could have someone work on a form letter to email or call and recite.

Just a thought.

You guys have a great weekend!

— Brooks Eilertson

9

The wildfire risk factor in La Pine is 98 out of 100. I'm lucky they are not canceling my insurance, but it is going up \$1000 per year. My guy said that people may not be able to sell or buy a home if they cannot get insurance, because lenders will not give you a loan if you can't insure their investment. **Some insurance companies are requesting a walk through of property to check for what you have done to protect yourself. No grass over 4 inches, trees limbed up 10 feet, 10 feet between the tree canopies. I can't remember how much clear space around the house. Also nothing on your decks.** I have already done most of those things as well as putting a metal roof on the house. I'm tired of irresponsible people affecting my life and my ability to live in a place I love.

— Laurie Taylor

10

A property owner in our neighborhood has been piling up chicken excrement and branches from downed trees in a row that is at least 100 feet along his property line. It is approximately 6 feet tall and 6 feet wide.

As we have had three structural fires in La Pine in the last few weeks I am petrified that this will spontaneously combust in the coming summer heat or that the property owner will light it on fire as he is mentally unstable and has threatened to, tried to and done harm to several people in the past several years. He has had extensive police contact .

My question to you is how do we eliminate the threat of the potential fire storm due to his piling up the branches over dried chicken manure and branches? A fire is going to happen, it is only a matter of time. My stepmother lives catty corner to his property, and I feel for her safety. We are in a heavily wooded area with jack pines and ponderosa pines.

Even with our property fire safe it will not matter if it is an out-of-control fire started by spontaneous combustion or by a human source, the fuel is there to ignite and create damage or worse death.

How do we keep our neighborhood fire safe without the support of local fire or county code enforcement?

This is an immediate threat to our property and our lives. I would appreciate a call, letter, or meeting with someone as soon as possible, as this is so dangerous.

— Debbie Grinols

11

Thank you for the Darlene 3-Seeking Solutions meeting. It was very informative. I commend you for bring so many agencies together. **One agency that I think should be added to the group is the DEQ.**

I recently gave a ride to a person living in the homeless camp just outside of the Newberry Estates neighborhood. This camp is quite large and has probably at least 15 old rv's or more. I ask this man how they managed their human excrement in the camp. He said they just dig a big hole and dump it there. This to me is a big problem on several levels... first; it raises health concerns for diseases both to the camp residents and nearby neighborhoods. Second; this being such a big camp, I worry about ground water contamination and I'm sure there are other concerns besides just these two.

As land owners we have to abide by strict DEQ regulations yet these camps don't. I am really concerned for our neighborhood.

— Marian Mengel

12

Hi all,

Thank you for all your hard work getting together and moderating the meeting Monday night.

The representative from BLM (sorry, I did not get her name) mentioned that the vegetation management they've recently done (and I believe the USFS recently did some out toward Finley Butte as well), cost around \$200,000. We all operate on tight budgets. I am curious to know why Federal Land Managers (like BLM and USFS) do not do more timber sales. Seems like selling the timber would bring money into the agencies, reduce fuel loading, and create jobs.

Given my tasks at work (and I am not writing this on behalf of my Employer- but I have learned a little about Federal processes), I understand that NEPA, Section 106, and Tribal are all factors in doing **anything legally** regarding soil disturbance (yes - a sensitive topic considering the illegal camping and biowaste hazards); but wouldn't the timber dollars help fund staff to do these studies?

I also appreciate that USFS/BLM Law Enforcement Officers are stretched to the limit, and as explained the other night, they can only write citations. At what point or under what circumstances do they 'enforce' laws? If they can't enforce laws, seems like the title is misleading - and as you witnessed, adding to the frustration.

I would assume there is an agreement between **all** the fire agencies that whomever shows up on scene first, regardless of whose in charge of the land, starts the initial attack and we figure out the money/labor/accounting reimbursement when things are under control. Sadly though, I someone dear to me has witnessed what appeared to be the absolute opposite - responding crews (not federal) returned to a staging area until the proper agency was on scene. If that is how we are operating now, I certainly hope we discontinue that practice.

I know there are many facets to the problems faced by our Community and it is going to take time and a lot of hard work - not to mention patience. I think that keeping the conversation going and 'out there' so that there is no illusion of a cover up/blind eye regarding these problems.

Regards,

Becky Mackel

RE: Darlene Fire Seeking Solutions

Meeting: La Pine Activity Center

July 29, 2024

To all Community Members

I have lived in the La Pine Community Since 1972 and have never experienced the effects of Wildfires the way that we do now. The Public, Health and safety problems can no longer be ignored. Our citizens deserve to feel safe and taken care of by our public officials. The Darlene Fire has proven that to all of us.

Laws have been made to take care of these issues, but our government no longer follows them or upholds citizens to follow them. There are no repercussions or consequences and now our law-abiding citizens are suffering the consequences.

I am an advocate for those in need. I was on the board of St Vincent de Paul for 10 years and helped feed and cloth the underserved. I have held positions with Neighbor Impact energy assistance and La Pine Community Health Clinic as an Outreach provider. I currently help with the La Pine Community Church food bank. I do understand the problems. I have sat across a desk from several of the homeless and I am sorry to say but quite a few do not want to change and live by our rules. I know your annual homeless count says differently than what I am saying. You cannot make them live the way "you" want them all to live. Bring back mental health and addiction assistance!

The solutions that Oregonians are trying are not working. We need to stop giving handouts and start giving hand ups! We need to start holding people accountable for their actions. When these fires cause us to run from our homes to save ourselves, never mind our material possessions, we need to rethink our options.

There are so many other things that can be done besides letting people live on government lands and not go by safety rules. Why do they have other rights than we residents have? If I let a family member stay in a trailer on my property, I am fined, and they must move. Why is this not a universal treatment for all? If I light a fire without using the proper current code conditions, I am then responsible for the results. Why are the houseless not? Why have we created a different class of citizens that don't have to follow the rules? What happened to "all men are created equal"?

We live here because of certain health conditions that bother us in other areas of the state. The smoke is causing those conditions here. Can we not have a clean summer with less

smoke? How about our lungs? These fires probably cause more health issues than any of our other “carbon footprints” Can any of us remember a clean summer?

I took a drive through the burn area yesterday. As all of us should do to see just how devastating this fire was and how close it was to taking our little town out. Our businesses, our Senior and disabled citizens that could not have helped themselves. These residents have the right to feel safe.

While on this drive I noticed public lands owned by the city and the Federal governments. Why can't they utilize this land differently? How about clearing 20 to 40 acres of it and making a clean, fire-free zone that they can keep people out of the woods at? Providing dumpsters and this type of property would surely cost less than these fires do! Then they could enforce the 14-day stay rule in the forest and provide a safe spot for the homeless. If the homeless choose to use it, they can and if they choose not to use it and remain in the forest then they should be removed. Easy, follow the current laws and enforce them! If we can pay ODOT to clean up homeless camps in Bend, then we can pay someone to clean them up in La Pine also.

I cannot understand why our public officials cannot work together to take these steps to provide safe zones for all of us. The Homeless and our residents. I watched last week's Deschutes County commissioner meeting and saw 2 commissioners trying to get their way. It was embarrassing! We need to start taking baby steps to solve the problem. Public safety first. We the public deserve that. I have written to State and Federal Reps and “might” occasionally receive a “canned” letter back from them. Never addressing the real problem.

I could go on and on, and already have.....Please help our community out and make us all feel safer and that we are being taken care of by those that we have voted in to do so. All residents matter.

Respectfully,

Carol Zettel, La Pine Resident

14

Dear Committee:

I could not attend mtg and I have been thinking about the Fire and what has happened in La Pine area and have some ideas to share.

The houseless crisis is huge and getting bigger. I know we all want to help our local residents because we know what it is like to be without... But, now it is time to figure out why this problem with homeless: fire and danger are now right in our faces!

We cannot keep letting people settle into the camps and the area in general because we have no way of monitoring what is going on with any regularity, **and we have no services that will house them, jobs for them or anything else!**

When I have working, housed residents come to me and say that they cannot afford to get the items we are handing out to houseless folks, or that they have had people camp on their land and leave garbage, tents and sleeping bags that look newer and nicer than the ones they bought to go camping with their own families, something is wrong. Rick Allen- our FORMER CITY MANAGER ENCOURAGED US YEARS AGO TO STOP THE OPEN INVITATION TO the homeless/ HOUSELESS, by stopping the handouts that are so readily available and find a way to get people out of the woods and moved to place where they will not freeze in the winter or be heatstroked in the summer.

The level of danger in people who are starting fires by accident or on purpose has grown. We are well aware of the theft and desecration of local forests by unlawful camping. Staffing of law/code enforcement is a budgetary nightmare and we are paying thousands of dollars to put out fires, remove garbage and follow up the problems with citations that go nowhere.

Sheriff and other law enforcement are stepping up the contacts, but we are in trouble.

Looking at it from the perspective of a volunteer who tries to help homeless, it is obvious that there are some holes in how the system is being manipulated at the expense of the really needy, too.

Those fire fighting thousands could have built shelters or given people tickets to a warmer climate or some job training, too. Is there now the beginning of a real plan in place? Will there be? just asking!

Teri Myers, La Pine

15

Hello! I wanted to attend the most recent public meeting regarding the Darlene 3 fire, and associated concerns, but was unable to be there. I am not surprised the meeting was tense and somewhat contentious. I was also disappointed the local news station, KTVZ, used a headline regarding "vigilante justice". While there may be some folks in our community who believe that's what needs to happen, I don't believe this is the "whole" of south Deschutes County or even the majority of the residents of La Pine who feel this way. I am a retired Forest Supervisor from the Ochoco National Forest, and I also served as acting Deputy Forest Supervisor on the Deschutes NF, and I was the recreation staff officer for both the Willamette and Siuslaw National Forests. I share this because the issue of homelessness and transients traveling through and residing on public lands infringed on small communities and often negatively impacted them across all of these forests. While I understand

the perspective that it is a "Federal issue", the Federal Government has strict policies in place which allow people to reside for a period of time. When that time is up, there's never enough law enforcement to move people along, and often people have no means to move. So many heart-breaking stories: a mother with two small children stranded in the woods because her husband's vehicle was impounded when he was arrested away from their camp. A pre-teen living under a bridge, trying to hide from the abuse inflicted by a third set of foster parents. Every person who resides on public lands has a story to tell, and they are not all cut from the same cloth. We all know that "sweeping" people experiencing homelessness out of one area pushes them into another area, and creates higher insecurity and vulnerability. It's a vicious cycle with no single solution. The short-term solution I believe is needed for La Pine and south Deschutes County, is to ensure all levels of Law Enforcement are working together and communicating the same message both to homeless residents and residents with homes who are experiencing the impacts from homeless camps. Crimes must be addressed, the population of homeless people needs to be known by Law Enforcement, and constant monitoring and clean up needs to occur while resources are sought for people who need mental and emotional support, and addiction services. The County Government has a huge role to play in helping all South County residents gain access to mental health and addiction support services. That is something we can ask for to happen locally - who at the county level can find funds and staff, and develop a strategy to treat people who are willing to be treated? Are there businesses and organizations willing to offer jobs to some of the residents experiencing homelessness? Are there people out there who want those jobs? The only way to answer this is to get social services to the frontlines and work with houseless people, alongside law enforcement: both county and Federal. We all know houselessness isn't a crime, and it is a complex problem and at the same time we all just want it to go away. I hope the Bureau of Land Management can complete an investigation and let the public know WHO started the fire and prosecute them if appropriate. I also hope the BLM, FS and Law Enforcement are looking closely at the common denominators for the Darlene Fires: when do they start? what are the conditions? where do the ignitions occur? In doing this we can be extra-vigilant during those time periods and with public education may prevent them from starting in the future in this area.

— Stacey Forson

16

Kathy,

Good morning.

I appreciate your energy and the meeting was interesting at some points, very educational. I wanted to speak but with knowledge, I took it as a time to listen and learn. I was sitting with neighbors of mine and ask if they wanted me to get some popcorn. Soda was available there. It got a bit of emotional, which I suspected.

Without having explored Newberry Regional Partnership website fully, am asking for some guidance and direction.

The biggest take-aways from the “town hall” meeting, is that residents are upset with the homeless issue and the fires that have occurred. They appear to be one effects the other. True or not, all of the members I spoke with in section 36 believe it to be the same. Likely yes, having said that, I want to have access to the reports and understand what the investigation revealed. I want facts. Rumors and facts are two different things. As a police officer, rumors give directions, but in the end, they can simply be rumors.

As it was spoken, most forest fires are created by humans, whether it’s accidental, negligence, recklessness or intentional.

I view this problem as:

- Brainstorming
- Prevention
- Education
- Social services
- Enforcement
- Coordinative efforts

Brainstorming: What is the actual problem?

Fuel reduction made me rethink what I have done with my property. I purchased it from an 85-year-old woman around 1999 that sold it to someone prior that simply logged it and never paid her. I chose to replant to reclaim the land to be what it should be. Central Oregon is apparently, very different then the west side. On the west side, trees fight for sun, central Oregon they fight for water. On the west side we plant the woods thick with seedlings and after 10-years you thin the woods. Not the case over in Central Oregon.

Homeless? They are likely the cause of a lot of fires lacking the knowledge of how much of a tinder box it can be day by day. I questioned handing out fire extinguishers, but quickly liked the idea. I always weigh where I am helping or enabling. It’s a tough balance. For years I have handed out water, apples, hot-hands, shoe laces, shoes ponchos, blankets and paid for Thank Giving and Christmas dinners to the homeless for years. Never handed out any money. This is where I learned the humbleness of the majority of these people. Homeless people are a complex problem, as each have a story and circumstances of why they are homeless. I have been interacting with the homeless for well over 30-years and learned most are very honest, humble and good people. A notable portion are addicted and have mental health issues.

Prior to the “town hall” meeting, I meet with several homeless and had a great time in talking to them. I have been in contact with Becca from St Vincent’s De Paul. She knows these people and seemingly is on board and motivated to help. I am working with her to help them reobtain their ID, Social Security card and birth certificate so that they can obtain employment. We do that in Hillsboro, because so many of them want to work and get out of their situation. **Need funds to make it work and an address to receive mail.** As of today, she is being called from our resources, Open Door, to learn the process. Becca said typically the resources are out of Bend. Some homeless don’t have cars or the money for gas to drive that far.

Bottomline, if particular homeless are motivated, it is money well spent. If they are unwilling, then tools and authority needs to be given to whatever law enforcement agency has authority. Reasonable enforcement.

Creating a place to house homeless is complicated. With my experience, it has to be monitored. We had a large area for tents and RVs, unmonitored. It was a dismal failure. A number of homeless tend to be hoarders, why, I don't know. We had a mess, with reports of theft, assault and like unreported sexual assaults. We put a huge dumpster along the highway but local residence dropped off couches and garbage which was not for them.

WCSCO, Washington County also allowed a similar place and it was a failure as well. The port-a-potty was burned and there were several crimes that occurred at the site.

This issue needs to be researched for what works and what doesn't, whether its other counties or states. In the same breath, it was said to me if we build the best place for homeless, we shall see an influx of more homeless seeking a hand up. With my experience in listening to the homeless, a lot of homeless have come to Oregon for the Oregon Health Plan. Recently, a lot have come to Oregon due to the decriminalization of drugs. Another dismal failure of voting.

An important note, via experience, the homeless communicate very effectively amongst themselves. Having said that, this is key for what we decide to do and consistency is super important. I experienced this in my district. Not to belittle any adult homeless, I approach them with empathy, sympathy and consistency. They are human and push the boundaries to see what is acceptable or not. It is simply human nature. Currently, we lack tools, funds and seemingly to enforce the boundaries in La Pine.

Build it, they will come.

In my city, I have met new local homeless and they told me they knew me through word of mouth and knew the cities expectations, what was acceptable and what wasn't. Some broke laws and got in trouble but continued to be law abiding.

We do a count of homeless once a year and I was told based on the numbers, there is grant money to help. What that is and what it looks like, is unknown to me. **With this count, I would propose, instead of driving aimlessly, wasting public money. BLM and/or USFS rent/buy a plane fly a grid of Deschutes County marking homeless camps.** Marking transient camps by a plane occurred prior to the meeting on 7/29/24 and I was able to drive directly to them.

It's super easy. 95% of RVs are white and stick out like wow. A friend of mine did that, flew a plane, so I could contact homeless around section 36. He used OnX, which he can send me the Lat and Long. \$29.95 per year for the state of Oregon. It's a picture of camps and I could easily drive directly too. Also, OnX shows whose land it is, whether or not it's private, with the owner's name, BLM or USFS.

Some of the camps I was given, were occupied. Others were a mess and abandoned. Another topic soon. As you know government is seemingly very inefficient. I desire to keep everything simple. Get the job done whatever it is.

I also propose, to dig out the entrance to non-essential roads. During Darlene 3 Forest Fire, bulldozers did a fire line road, and dug it out at the main road so people can't drive down it after they were done. Inactive roads need to be limited. Dig them out. Hunters? It's a walk-in area.

I desire, with BLM's permission to clean out the abandon homeless camps, which I sent the pictures of and dig out the roads once it's done. I will contact DCSCO to obtain the titles, but can only do it with BLMs permission and/or with your help. Identify abandon camps and remove it all. Waiting to hear from Gambler 500. They have interest in helping. Government needs to flip the bill. Just called Journey Salvage and it is like 1-2K per RV for disposal. The Automobiles, they will take them with BLM permission and the county can process the titles. Cars they will take for free. RVs? Not a lot of value thus payment.

There are a lot of people that want to help. Just need permission and direction. I am more than happy to drive over with thoughts and experience.

I was told there was a "secret meeting" recently which rubbed several the wrong way. I also get it as long as it's for the benefit of the community. Town Hall meetings, some super good ideas but a bit of too much emotion. I get it all.

Most respectfully,

Vinny

17

I'm sure these same thoughts came out at the meeting, but the first thing I'd be pushing for is to enforce the law. When in public land, (NF or BLM for example) you are not allowed to stay in one place for more than 14 days. Just by enforcing that law alone I believe you would drastically reduce the issue. One: you would reduce the amount they are able to accumulate and reduce the risk of them burning large stockpiles of trash. Two: this would make homelessness less appealing. I know that sounds weird, but there are definitely people who want to be off grid, disconnected from society and literally choose such a lifestyle. Three: you'll make LaPine less attractive of an area to squat because you are actually enforcing the law and making them move and that's uncomfortable and frustrating. A side benefit to this is you will be giving the public lands back to the people. Before I left Oregon I found my favorite hiking trails ruined by people who moved in on the creek and were washing their clothes and bodies in the creek as well as stockpiling whatever they collected making the woods unusable and uncomfortable for everybody else. I also tried to go mushroom picking and found a large camp with dogs and a couple men who looked unkept and intimidating camped out along one of the roads. I did not feel safe there at all and left. These are just a couple examples. Also, as boon-dockers and hunters, we use our public lands a lot, but we do so following the laws. We keep our area clean and pack out our trash. I find these people that squat on our public lands do not act a stewards of our land but completely disrespect it.

> I also believe in tough love. My parents did but us our first cars as kids or pay our way through college. My dad said when you work for something you take better care of it, because you had to earn it. I have taken those words to heart and raised my children with these words as a cornerstone in their upbringing. Having to work for the things you have gives you pride, self respect and self esteem. I believe in hand UPS not hand OUTS. Gary and I were talking with my sister and brother in law and my brother in law mentioned designating an area for the homeless to live. This area would also hold a facility with drug rehab, job finding assistance, help from domestic abuse and other social services. I don't know that that is THE answer, but I saw his point. Bringing all the needed tools to one place and forcing the homeless who live on undeveloped streets or public land to move to this location thereby allowing everybody else to enjoy their rights, to feel safe, to use their public lands and walk the streets or let your kids play in the neighborhood. There's a point where we're so worried about the rights of the homeless, we sacrifice the rights and freedoms of the not homeless. And that's not OK either. Obviously adorable housing is a major issue as well. Even up here in Montana we're seeing families have to pair up and 4 adults are working to make enough to pay rent. That is absolutely ludicrous! Up here in our little historic town we have these buildings that are store fronts downstairs and maybe an old hotel upstairs or apartments. Most of the owners aren't even using the upstairs at all, and yet we struggle keeping business doors open because we can't get enough workers in town. Part of the reason we can't get workers is because there isn't affordable housing. I think it would be amazing if the business owners could renovate those upstairs to be apartments that employees could rent for say \$300-500/month. You can work somewhere else too, but you can only live in one of these apartments if you or your spouse/partner are an employee of the business downstairs. This will help keep workers around, generate added income from the property and house people. And it should encourage workers to take care of their apartment and want to keep their job because it's a huge perk. Idk if this translatable to LP, but since you're all brainstorming, I guess it doesn't hurt to throw it out there.

> Clarification in my typo: our parents did NOT buy us our first car or pay for our college...

> I'll close with another experience I had before leaving LaPine. We were selling Jordynn's car for her. It was an old Ford Explorer with over 200K miles on it. We were asking \$1000. Right away a lady called us about it and without even seeing it started trying to get us to come down on the price. She needed to get a rig for her son but also her daughter was going to have a baby in Idaho and she was trying to get to the birth. She couldn't come to us, she didn't have a car. After talking with her we came down to \$800 and went to her to show her the car. Gary thoroughly shared everything wrong with it before we gave her a ride to the bank so she could pull money and buy it. We made the deal with her, signed duplicated bill of sale with her and we walked home and she took the car. Several weeks later her son shows up trying to get us to sign another bill of sale and put his name on it. He was shaking so hard his voice vibrated. Gary said no way, it's done. She can add him if she wants to. Thank goodness he did, I later learned they were trying to scam us. They lived at the corner of Darlene and Finley Butte under the power lines on BLM. There is definitely a population of what I call "takers" and they are teaching their kids to be takers. They lack self respect or self esteem. Gary has had kids at school all his life for a dollar so they can buy a pop. They weren't even asking to borrow a dollar, let alone to use it for something like LUNCH. We are not helping the takers by just giving to them. They need to work for it and reap the rewards of working. We tried to help those people and they just tried to take more from us. It needs to stop

SM

18

Hi Shannon Leigh Shahan,

I'm very sorry to hear about nasty comments.

I was invited by Stu Martinez and by our Firewise Chairman from our Wagon Trail Ranch POA to attend this Newberry Partnership Open Forum at the La Pine Senior Center.

First and Foremost, many thanks to you and all of the participants and volunteers who opened the doors of the Senior Center to allow the community at large to open their minds to a very serious issue.

I can relate to all the frustration, resentment, and anger directed to the homeless folks that are being associated with the Darlene 1-3 fires 🔥.

As a forestry professional, I am very concerned about having people who may not be fully aware of their actions within a fire prone environment.

It can be a Recipe for Disaster.

Deschutes County Commissioner, Phil Chang said something that I totally agree with at the forum.

90% of all wildfires are ignited by PEOPLE. So, whether it's a homeless person or a person riding an ATV without an approved spark arrester, or someone parking their vehicle on dry bitter brush or grass or someone who abandoned a campfire 🔥, we have a real issue with people on public lands.

Regardless, whether if it's USFS or BLM lands, ENFORCEMENT must be routinely present, in order, to provide for the SAFETY of our National Assets along with the potential fire 🔥 danger posed by those assets that can directly impact our surrounding communities, like, La Pine, Oregon.

Homelessness and Poverty has remained within American 🇺🇸 culture for a very, very long time.

The statistics reveal that approximately 18% of the homeless are plagued with mental illness, depression, in addition to, perhaps, physical ailments along with bad consequences along one's Life Journey.

If the tables were turned in anyone's life, we could find any one of ourselves in a similar situation.

So, to communicate enough GRACE to others is an important virtue. Giving a helping hand when others want help is a GOOD THING.

Likewise, it's VITAL that EVERY government agency from the Federal, State, County, Local Municipalities, and adjacent Communities begin to STEP UP to find doable solutions to AVOID a Darlene 4.

Right Here, Right Now, I am stepping up to offer myself as a voice through WORD and ACTION to facilitate change.

Thank you for allowing me to speak openly on this forum.

Ron Rommel

19

Robin Mirrasoul

Hi Kathy - just wanted to give you guys/gals an 'atta girl' You guys managed to keep it pretty respectful. Please pass on my compliments to the others. I know it started to get rough there at the end. I would like to make an observation about that.

Several of the people I know, Marc, Jack, Brian Gainer, all signed up very early on before the meeting ever started to speak. All of them had good, solid, thought out comments or questions. Unfortunately, they got pushed to the bottom of the piles and never got to speak. I wrote out my card about 7 and Karen about 7:05 - Karen spoke before me by about 15 minutes. I think part of the frustration with some people at the end knew that their 'card' was not going to be honored even though they had signed up way ahead of others so they started interrupting.

Marc had what I thought was a really good idea that he didn't put on the board, but thought I would share it with you, if you could add it. As much as we all hate government requirements, he suggested maybe anyone that wanted to do DISPERSED camping - not campground, would be required to take an online class, just like you have to have a class and card to operate a boat or drive an ATV..

Food for thought. Anyway - good job. Don't know that USFS or BLM cares very much. Didn't get a whole lot of warm fuzzies from them, or ideas of how THEY thought things could be made better.

I am interested to know what the MOU that the BLM gal mentions contains, since she said neither they or DCSO understand it.... really? LOL

Love ya friend - keep up the good work.

Robin

20

Thank you all for your time to hear me out ... this aspect of the lack of forest management has been frustrating me for a long time, and it is just a piece of the equation we are trying to find solutions for. The couple of comments at the meeting about how difficult it is to obtain firewood, ie: driving by miles of forests that need clean-up to get to the designated area, speak to how absurd the regulations have become. What can we do to make an easier process to get the citizens involved as they once were?

There is so much to be included in this plan that could include the community as partners. Since thinning and clearing is what I started out doing in La Pine back in 1980, I think I can speak to the procedures for allowing citizens to be a part of the process. The actual identifying and setting up of

areas to thin and cut is a process the FS has been doing for a hundred years, they just stopped doing it in our area the late 80's and 90's, after citizens and contractors helped to clear out the thousands of acres of beetle killed forests. I can only assume the powers that be said there was no longer a need to continue to "manage" the forests and they pulled back from marking areas for sales (small and large) to the public (my opinion of course).

A plan could have many moving parts that might include organized "work parties" for those receiving government assistance as has been suggested; private firewood/pole cutting, etc. There is an economic development piece that used to include the processing and sale of poles (an industry that still thrives in other parts of the PNW by the way, but no longer here); the processing and sale of firewood (which I believe is not going away anytime soon); contracting for thinning projects (which is what I did for the Forest Service back in the day). This small industry is in fact what kept La Pine from disappearing during the 80's recession ... but having said all this, I also know that currently Gilchrist Forest Products is basically on a hiatus or very low processing schedule because of the lack of market for their products. Why is that when building seems about the same? Plus, chip sales seem to be very low in our area and yet the global scenario for the wood chips market is robust if you look at industry reports.

Now, granted, this is just me doing cursory research, but the wood products market has not lived up to the first of the year predictions. How can we attract large contractors to help do clean up of the forests when they have no market for the wood chips? Am I missing something? Is the problem that the government agencies are making obtaining wood products so difficult that contractors don't want to deal with it?

Just asking ... I have been watching our forests directly connected to this community for 45 years and I can tell you they are not as healthy as they were when dozens of folks were actively engaged in removing needed products such as poles and firewood. Miles and miles of forest along Highway 31 for instance is now cluttered with debris on the forest floor. The larger trees are stressed because they are fighting for a hold in the drought lowered water table. Along Burgess road to Century drive there exist many areas that are just toothpicks growing in masses (as lodgepole is wont to do). Can we let the obvious picture of the cleared and managed areas along Finley Butte Road burning far less hot and destructive be our flag for working toward better forest management. And if the agencies do not have the capacity to do more, then how can we get the community involved and perhaps create an economy in the process?

Ann Gawith, Executive Director

La Pine Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center

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Drone proposal details

At the end of the meeting, I shared the proposal with the La Pine Fire Chief, Sunriver Police Chief, County Forester, Patti Adair, Congressman Bentz's representative, and Janice Garceau from Deschutes County Behavioral Health. I had intended on sharing it with you and a few others as well, but ran out of copies.

Here is a copy for you to review. I would also like to share it with the Sheriff as it could have law enforcement applications as well.

Proposal for a Drone Program to Monitor and Manage High-Risk Areas for Forest Fires and Homeless Camps

1. Introduction

This proposal outlines the development and implementation of a drone program aimed at monitoring and managing high-risk areas for forest fires and homeless camps. The program seeks to leverage drone technology to enhance early detection, improve resource allocation, ensure interagency communication, and address legal and privacy concerns.

2. Objectives

- Early Detection: Identify and monitor high-risk areas for potential forest fires.
- Safety and Prevention: Plot and assess homeless camps in forested and high-risk areas to mitigate fire danger.
- Resource Allocation: Optimize the deployment of firefighting resources and social services.
- Interagency Communication: Facilitate seamless information sharing among relevant agencies.
- Legal and Privacy Compliance: Adhere to legal precedents and protect individual privacy.
- Training: Provide comprehensive training for personnel involved in the drone program.

3. Program Components

3.1 Drone Technology

The program will utilize drones equipped with advanced sensors and cameras capable of detecting heat signatures, mapping terrain, and providing real-time video feeds. These drones will be operated by trained personnel and will have the capability to cover large areas efficiently.

3.2 Forest Monitoring

Drones will conduct regular surveillance of forested areas to detect early signs of wildfires. By using thermal imaging and other advanced technologies, drones can identify hot spots and areas of dry vegetation, allowing for early intervention and reducing the risk of large-scale fires.

3.3 Homeless Camp Plotting

Drones will be deployed to identify and plot the locations of homeless camps in high-risk areas. This information will be used to assess fire danger, provide necessary social services, and relocate individuals to safer locations if needed. The program will work closely with social service agencies to ensure a compassionate approach to addressing homelessness.

3.4 Fire Danger Assessment



By combining data from forest monitoring and homeless camp plotting, drones will provide a comprehensive assessment of fire danger in high-risk areas. This information will be used to prioritize resource allocation and enhance preparedness efforts.

4. Legal Precedent and Privacy

4.1 Fourth Amendment Considerations

The Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution protects individuals against unreasonable searches and seizures. The use of drones for surveillance must respect this constitutional right. Legal precedent from cases such as *California v. Ciraolo* and *Kyllo v. United States* highlight the importance of privacy and the limits of warrantless surveillance:

- *California v. Ciraolo* (1986): The Supreme Court ruled that aerial observation of a fenced backyard did not constitute a search requiring a warrant because it was conducted from public airspace. However, the ruling emphasized that the observation must be conducted from a legal altitude.
- *Kyllo v. United States* (2001): The Supreme Court held that the use of thermal imaging technology to detect heat patterns inside a home constituted a search under the Fourth Amendment, requiring a warrant.

In light of these rulings, our drone program will ensure that surveillance activities are conducted in compliance with legal standards. Drones will operate at altitudes and in manners that do not infringe on reasonable expectations of privacy, and any surveillance of private properties will be conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

4.2 Privacy Considerations

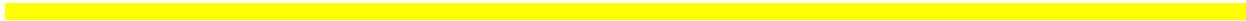
To address privacy concerns, the program will implement strict protocols for data collection, storage, and usage. Drones will not record or transmit data unrelated to the program's objectives. Additionally, regular audits will be conducted to ensure compliance with privacy standards.

5. Resource Allocation

The program will require an initial investment in drone technology, training, and personnel. Funding can be sourced from federal grants, state budgets, and partnerships with private organizations. An efficient resource allocation plan will be developed to ensure the program's sustainability and effectiveness.

6. Interagency Communication

Effective interagency communication is critical for the success of the program. A centralized communication platform will be established to facilitate real-time information sharing among fire



departments, law enforcement, social services, and other relevant agencies. Regular meetings and joint training exercises will be conducted to ensure coordination and collaboration.

7. Training

Comprehensive training will be provided to all personnel involved in the drone program. This will include:

- Drone Operation: Training on the operation, maintenance, and troubleshooting of drones.
- Data Analysis: Instruction on interpreting data collected by drones, including thermal imaging and geographic information systems (GIS).
- Legal and Ethical Standards: Education on legal precedents, privacy considerations, and ethical standards related to drone usage.
- Emergency Response: Training on emergency response protocols and interagency communication procedures.

8. Conclusion

The proposed drone program represents a proactive approach to managing high-risk areas for forest fires and homeless camps. By leveraging advanced technology, enhancing interagency communication, and prioritizing legal and ethical considerations, the program aims to improve public safety, resource allocation, and overall community well-being.

9. Next Steps

- Approval and Funding: Seek approval from relevant authorities and secure funding for the program.
- Technology Procurement: Acquire necessary drone technology and equipment.
- Personnel Recruitment: Hire and train personnel for drone operation and data analysis.
- Pilot Program: Implement a pilot program in a designated high-risk area to evaluate effectiveness and make necessary adjustments.
- Full-Scale Implementation: Expand the program to cover all high-risk areas within the jurisdiction.

By adopting this proposal, we can take a significant step toward reducing the risk of forest fires, ensuring the safety of vulnerable populations, and enhancing our overall disaster preparedness and response capabilities.

23

Hi,

I apologize if you already have this in the queue. Here is my suggestion

How about coordinating and scheduling "call in campaigns"? One to call the US Attorney to act on the citations written for illegal camping, garbage dumping, and illegal fires on BLM and USFS land as well as campaigns for both Senator Wyden and Senator Merkley's offices. We need to get them involved.

Thank you for the good work.

Brooks Eilertson

24

Development of a volunteer wildlife stewardship program.

This program of volunteers would be a sworn in member of the Forestry Service or Deschutes Cty Sheriff with the goal of performing a 2 -4 hour a week in person monitoring/patrol of a specific assigned BLM, US Forest, private forest (w owner approval) area. Goal is to identify camping personnel, trash and debris as well as target areas for control burn priority. The Camps would be identified by photograph and latitude and longitude. These personnel would be trained, wear a coordinated clothing (a uniform of sorts), not carry a weapon, have identification on their vehicle (magnet sign that is removeable when not patrolling), provide education to camps on the laws, fire safety and fire extinguisher distribution/ training, and a radio for emergency's and back up.

Someone at the meeting suggested use of drones. Drones could be a part of this program. Those using drones, would have additional training in the legal requirements. All the data collected from these teams would be used as the resource mentioned at the meeting that is so desperately needed.

This is the idea I wanted to mention at the meeting but by the time my name was called the meeting was starting to get out of hand and I just didn't want to get into the details at that point.

Thank you for all you folks are doing. I would be happy to be a part of this volunteer group in the organization and coordination.

Tom Sutton

25

Kathy,

Sorry for the delay.

Regarding bio-waste: illegal campsites on federal/county/city owned lands do not have a septic system to dump their black or grey tanks tanks. So where does that waste go? Sure some

Might have the ability to tow their rigs to a dump site (like where you would drain your tanks when leaving a State Park). If not, it stands to reason that a pit/hole is being dug, filled, then covered up and abandoned when full. That's an item of contention because most of us have to pay thousands of dollars for permitting and septic systems. On Federal Lands, SF299's (their application form) are probably not being filled out, land use studies (NEPA for example) are not being done.

Currently sites where logging camps, old pull top beer cans, and other man-made things are considered cultural artifacts. Fast forward 50 years... what does this mean for well-meaning legal land users like utilities?

Regarding fuel reduction, the areas around La Pine have been overgrown and fire hazards for decades. I was a little girl when mills were closing, and I remember 'old guys' back then commenting about how thick the forest would be on 30 or 40 years if it wasn't logged and managed. Well, here we are. 40 years

later and areas that have not been managed are thicker than ever, burning hot, and more destructive than anyone could have imagined.

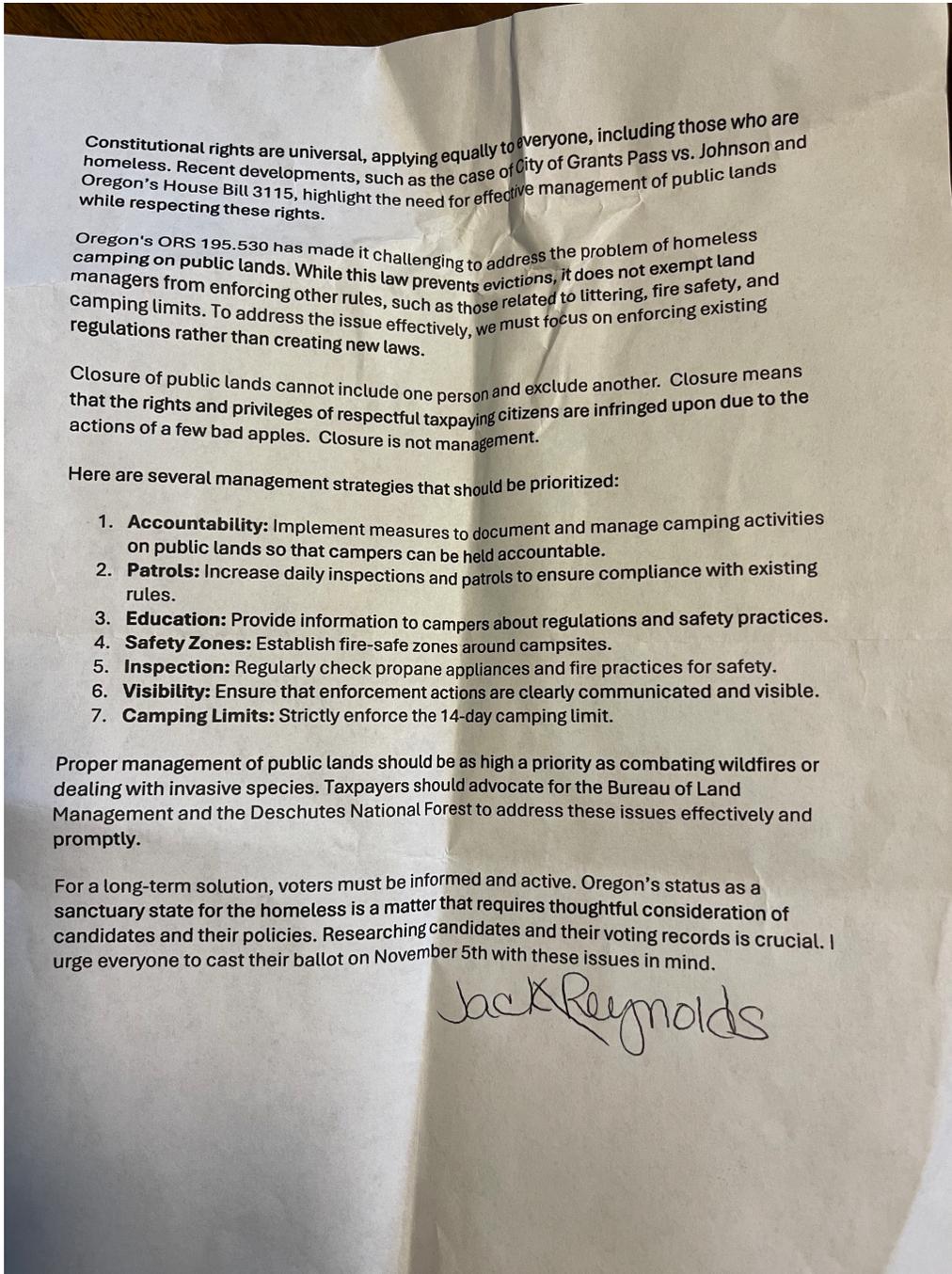
If the timber is considered unmarketable, why not let wood cutters come in and harvest?

I am concerned that the lack of Federal action is going to lead to deaths. And fire does not discriminate.

Again, thank you for all you do.

Becky Mackel

26



Since you couldn't see the sheriff report it was a 100lb Rottweiler that came onto our property multiple times and our neighbors (caught on multiple cameras) and I have a very pregnant high dollar quarter horse and we have two tiny dogs. These transient tenants after being told by text and in person to please contain the dogs in less than 6 hours I heard something outside on our patio and woke my husband and he went outside (armed-legally) and was met by the Rottweiler that growled and lunged at him. My husband was scared in the dark and could only make out the large dog outline and in self defense fired and struck the dog in the leg. We are animal lovers and this was deeply traumatic. The sheriff reported that the owner admitted the dog was extremely large and aggressive. The following day the transient neighbors a different one had his pitbull running on our street and he chased it onto our adjacent neighbors property.

This pitbull also growled at us on our property about 3 months ago when it was loose.

We have tried being amicable and expressing our concerns but it's reached a point when a 4th Motorhome arrived and the comings and goings of people and volatile dogs reached a breaking point. Other neighbors filed complaints about the property months and months ago and no action has been taken by County. We finally decided our approach and actions were not effective and we need help with removing these RV's the waste generated by these transients living there and the rubbish. These transients find value in broken items, bald tires and other materials that a logical minded person would not hoarde. I do not believe the property owner "Jo White" is aware of what her property looks like since her "family" arrived. I don't even know about her personal welfare status because Rose and Mary are her granddaughters and they live onsite with various male callers coming and going and a couple full time males living with them.

Rose had her 10-11 year old son living in a tent outside while she and her boyfriend lived in the motorhome. We could hear him coughing during fall-winter and they moved his tent into a tarp like material shed. The actual house is only a 2 bedroom 1 bathroom and we do not know who lives inside with Jo she is elderly and we're told she broke her neck and that is the excuse for her children and grandchildren being there. She had told us before her accident that her children and grandchildren were not welcome at her property because they were drug users. They were never there she was alone until she sustained her injury. Rose informed me that they have legal rights to live there because they are caring for Jo. I do not believe these rights to reside there include not having sewer service and the garbage.

Currently there are 3 children I have seen on the property and I hear one of them crying a lot. It may be that social services could check on the children.

Thank you again — Sarah Erickson