



Memorandum Date: September 6, 2023

Meeting Date: September 19, 2023

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: County Administration/ Policy Division

PRESENTED BY: Matt McRae, Disaster Recovery Manager

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: DISCUSSION: Quarterly Holiday Farm Fire Recovery Update.

I. MOTION

Information and discussion only.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Staff will provide an update on multiple recovery topics:

- Updated permit figures
- Highlights of recovery planning and projects underway
- Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding for Planning, Infrastructure, and Economic Revitalization (PIER)
- Oregon Wildfire Recovery Summit in October co-hosted by Lane County and the University of Oregon School of Planning, Public Policy and Management.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

Since 2021, the Board has received regular updates from staff on Holiday Farm Fire recovery, including the number of Holiday Farm Fire survivors sheltering in hotels, number of permits issued, as well as updates on grants, planning, projects, and partnerships.

As of January 2022, Recovery updates have been scheduled quarterly. The last quarterly update to the Board of County Commissioners was June 27, 2023.

B. Policy Issues

There are no administrative or Board policy requests associated with this agenda item.

C. Board Goals

Strategic Priority #1: Safe, Healthy County

Strategic Priority #2: Vibrant Communities

Strategic Priority #3: Robust Infrastructure. Objective C- Build a culture of preparedness and operational readiness within the organization in coordination with community partners. Objective D- Develop disaster recovery plans, policies, and procedures.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

Staff will provide an update on the current uses of \$4.1M in wildfire recovery funds made available through an IGA with Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS).

Staff will provide an update on planning and prioritization for Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) funding for Planning, Infrastructure, and Economic Revitalization (PIER). These federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) funds are managed by OHCS.

Please see associated meeting materials for more details.

E. Health Implications

Health Determinant	
Employment and livelihood	Directly affected by Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) allocations and state Recovery funding
Family and Community Structure	Directly affected by CDBG-DR allocations and state Recovery funding
Goods and Services	Directly affected by CDBG-DR allocations and state Recovery funding
Housing	Directly affected by CDBG-DR allocations and state Recovery funding
Land Use	Directly affected by, and will affect, CDBG-DR allocations, state grant funds, and to what degree local recovery can occur.

Parks and Natural Space	Directly affected by CDBG-DR allocations and state Recovery funding
Transportation	Directly affected by CDBG-DR allocations and state Recovery funding

F. Analysis

See attachments

G. Alternatives/Options

None at this time. This item is for discussion only.

III. RECOMMENDATION

None at this time. This item is for discussion only.

IV. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

Lane County staff have been supporting recovery from the Holiday Farm Fire since it began in September 2020. Staff are actively administering wildfire recovery funds and coordinating with OHCS staff in preparation for CDBG-DR programs.

V. FOLLOW-UP

Staff will follow-up via a quarterly update as requested by the Board.

VI. ATTACHMENTS

Supplemental document attached:

Lane County Holiday Farm Fire Recovery Update: September 2023



Lane County Holiday Farm Fire Recovery Update: September 2023

INTRODUCTION

In September 2020, the Holiday Farm Fire burned over 170,000 acres in the McKenzie River Valley, taking one human life and destroying 517 homes and dozens of other structures. Recovery from a disaster of this scale requires a decade or more, and involves continued coordination with state and federal agencies, and community-based organizations.

RECOVERY AT A GLANCE

Total Number of Dwellings Destroyed:	517
Permits as of 9/6/23	
Dwellings Completed:	158
Permits in Process:	91
Permits in Review:	3
Total Dwelling Permits Issued:	252
Building and Planning Permit Fees Waived	\$1,628,806
Total properties affected:	600
Properties Sold as of 9/12/23:	195
RV Permits Issued:	89

PROJECT UPDATES: INFRASTRUCTURE

Blue River Wastewater

With support from state legislators, Lane County secured just over \$15 million to fund water and wastewater system repairs and improvements within the Holiday Farm Fire footprint, including a wastewater treatment system for Blue River.

Lane County hired an engineering firm, HDR Inc., to conduct an engineering analysis of options for a community wastewater treatment system in Blue River. Hydrologic study results released this summer suggest a large-scale wastewater treatment system to serve all Blue River properties is not feasible. Lane County staff are now evaluating options for smaller scale wastewater treatment systems that would serve a smaller number of properties in Blue River.

Lane County is working in close partnership with the Blue River Water District and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Rob Woodard, Special Districts Project Manager, is the primary Lane County contact for this project.

Blue River Drinking Water

Blue River Water District, with support from Lane County and Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC), is overseeing the repair and replacement of the drinking water system in Blue River.

Engineering firm Civil West has completed an assessment of the water system and delivered a preliminary report in June 2023. The existing distribution system contains asbestos cement pipe installed in 1968 and much of the system will need to be replaced. The preliminary report estimates the cost of repairs and replacements at \$7,661,000.

Civil West was recently awarded the contract for engineering and construction services to conduct the system repairs. The project is anticipated to be completed in Summer of 2026.

Rob Woodard, Special Districts Project Manager, is the primary Lane County contact.

Blue River Retracement Survey



The Holiday Farm Fire removed all trace of fences and other unofficial landmarks commonly used to mark property boundaries. This means most, if not all, property owners will need to have their property boundaries formally surveyed before rebuilding.

Furthermore, replacement of drinking water infrastructure and the anticipated development of a collective wastewater treatment system in Blue River triggers the need for a survey to locate many road and utility rights of way in Blue River to facilitate accurate placement of utilities.

Lane County hired a survey team to conduct a “retracement survey” to mark all property boundaries and rights of way in “downtown” Blue River at no cost to property owners.

The field work for this retracement survey is complete and the project team has now moved to the documentation and mapping phase.

Mikeal (Jay) Blommé, County Surveyor, is the primary Lane County contact.

Holiday Farm Fire Property Surveys

Wildfire recovery funding has been used to support a retracement survey of properties in the downtown Blue River area as described above. In the interest of providing consistent support to all property owners affected by the Holiday Farm Fire, Lane County has committed wildfire recovery funds to help property owners across the entire fire-affected area cover the expense of property boundary surveys. Lane County has contracted with the McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group to distribute these funds and the program is expected to roll out over the next month.

Blue River Drive Design

Lane County staff have been working with the Blue River community to develop a vision – or design concept – for the future of Blue River Drive – to better support the rebuilding effort.

The design concept process has three stages:

The first phase involves exploring community needs, preferences and issues. That stage was conducted between January and March of 2023. Residents sent a clear message that they want safer walking and biking facilities, improved connectivity, and maximizing on-street parking in the downtown portion of Blue River Drive.

In the second phase, staff and community members explored alternatives for meeting those needs. During a June workshop (Photo at right), three design options were presented to solicit community input about preferences and concerns with the various design elements.



The final step is to confirm the community-preferred design. Staff are currently working on combining all of the preferred design elements into a single design. Staff will be sharing the results with the community over the next month, with plans to start the formal approval process this fall.

Becky Taylor, Senior Transportation Planner, is the Project Manager for this project.



Upper McKenzie Rural Fire Protection District

The Upper McKenzie Rural Fire Protection District is currently rebuilding the fire station in downtown Blue River (Photo at left). In summer 2023, Lane County finalized a \$250,000 grant to the UMRFPD that will support the rebuild and help equip the station.

PROJECT UPDATES: HOUSING

Lazy Days - Affordable Housing

Homes for Good, Lane County's housing agency, purchased and is now leading the development of the Lazy Days Manufactured Home and RV park, located just east of Blue River on Highway 126. Homes for Good is planning to locate approximately 30 dwellings on the property. Site work began in July 2023.

In July 2023, Lane County and Homes for Good finalized an intergovernmental agreement for \$230,000 to help fund the wastewater treatment system at Lazy Days. These funds come from a \$15 million 2021 legislative allocation of ARPA funds to repair and replace water and wastewater systems within the Holiday Farm Fire footprint.

For more information: <https://homesforgood.org/about/real-estate-development/projects/lazy-days-rv-and-mobile-home-park>

The Homes for Good team is led by Steve Ochs, Real Estate Development Director, and Spencer McCoy, Project Developer.

Matt McRae, Disaster Recovery Manager, is the Lane County contact.

McKenzie Community Land Trust project – Blue River

Founded as a non-profit in November, 2022, the McKenzie Community Land Trust (CLT) seeks to provide affordable home ownership opportunities for families that wouldn't otherwise have home ownership options in the area. The McKenzie Community Land Trust, in partnership with DevNW, is developing multiple affordable single-family housing units on a single lot in downtown Blue River.

In July 2023 a grant agreement between Lane County and DevNW was finalized that will provide \$800,000 to support property purchase and predevelopment costs for this project. This commitment from Lane County is matched by a Local Innovation and Fast Track (LIFT) grant from Oregon Housing and Community Services for \$1,085,000.

Lane Tompkins is the Chair of the McKenzie Community Land Trust.

PROGRAM UPDATES: INDIVIDUAL ASSISTANCE

McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group of Lane County (MVLTRG)

In the wake of a disaster, FEMA recommends the establishment of a Long-Term Recovery Group to secure and then distribute donations and resources that can provide extended assistance to individuals and families as they navigate their recovery.

Community leaders in the McKenzie River Valley established the McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group of Lane County in 2021.

In 2022, Lane County awarded the MVLTRG \$400,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to be distributed to wildfire survivors. Over the last year, Lane County passed \$188,000 in Municipal Wildfire Assistance Program (MWAP) funds to the MVLTRG to support staffing capacity. In summer 2023, Lane County allocated an additional \$400,000 in Wildfire Recovery funds to the MVLTRG to distribute to wildfire survivors.

Devin Thompson is the Executive Director and the primary contact for the McKenzie Valley LTRG.

PROJECT UPDATES: PLANNING

Blue River Transportation Growth Management

The purpose of the Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) planning process is to create a Blue River Community Plan and amend (1) the Lane County Rural Comprehensive Plan, and (2) the Lane County Zoning Ordinance to implement the Blue River Complete Community Plan. These amendments must comply with OAR Chapter 660, Div. 22, the “unincorporated communities rule.”

In May 2023, the TGM project published a [Density Feasibility Memo](#) describing the potential for changes in density in Blue River. In June 2023, the project team published an [Evaluation Memo](#) describing the policy landscape, relaying stakeholder interests, and outlining wastewater treatment options in Blue River.

Project consultants have been drafting Community Plan Alternatives but have been awaiting the completion of Wastewater Feasibility Study that contains critical information necessary to finalize the Community Plan Alternatives.

With the completion of the Wastewater Feasibility Study over the summer, the project team can now finalize the draft Community Plan Alternatives and share them with the Project Management Team (PMT), the Project Advisory Committee (PAC), and the general public, for feedback. The Project Management Team met with DEQ staff at the end of August to discuss wastewater options and how they should inform the Community Plan Alternatives.

On September 11, 2023, postcards were mailed to all Blue River property owners/residents notifying them of the project and sharing a link to a short informational survey. In early October the PMT will review the three draft Community Plan Alternatives proposed by project consultants. The draft alternatives will be reviewed and edited by the PAC and then presented to the community and the Lane County Planning Commission for feedback in late fall of this year.

After a preferred community plan alternative is selected, the next step is to draft the Blue River Complete Community Plan, including proposed code amendments. After the draft plan is presented to the PAC and community for feedback, edits will be made and the adoption package will be presented to the Lane County Planning Commission and then the Board of County Commissioners.

Those interested in this project can learn more and sign up for project updates at:
https://www.lanecounty.org/government/county_departments/public_works/land_management_division/land_use_planning_zoning/blue_river_complete_community_plan_project

Lindsay Eichner, Principal Planner, is the Lane County Contact

Laura Buhl, is the Land Use and Transportation Planner and the project lead for Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)

PROJECT UPDATES: FUNDING

Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR)

The US. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) approved Oregon Housing and Community Services' (OHCS) CDBG-DR Action Plan in September, 2022. Implementation of the Action Plan will include three broad programs:

Home Ownership Program (HOP), a new homeownership program for fire survivors who were renters and displaced by the fires. This fund is \$119 million statewide, with no county-specific set aside.

Homeowner Assistance and Reconstruction Program (HARP), a housing replacement program for homeowners who lost homes to the fires. This fund is \$204 million statewide, with no county-specific set aside.

Planning, Infrastructure, Economic Revitalization (PIER), a fund to support local priority projects to repair or replace infrastructure, conduct planning activities, and support economic revitalization. This fund is \$42 million statewide including \$7.8 million set aside for the Holiday Farm Fire. Lane County staff have been convening a group of community stakeholders to evaluate and prioritize uses of these PIER funds.

More information here: <https://www.oregon.gov/ohcs/housing-assistance/disaster-recovery/pages/reoregon.aspx>

<https://www.lanecounty.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=3585881&pageId=19733226>

Matt McRae, Disaster Recovery Manager, is the Lane County contact.

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) Wildfire Recovery Grant

During their 2021 session, the state legislature allocated significant funding for recovery, including \$150 million statewide to be distributed by OHCS. These funds have supported several recovery projects and programs in the McKenzie River Valley. Lane County has signed an IGA with OHCS for \$4.1 million to be used for Holiday Farm Fire recovery.

The current planned uses of these funds are listed in the table below. Lane County staff are convening community stakeholders to prioritize uses for the remainder of these funds.

Matt McRae, Disaster Recovery Manager, is the Lane County contact.

Holiday Farm Fire Recovery - Wildfire Recovery Projects – OHCS IGA

Project Name	Recipient	Project Summary	Estimate	Partner or contractor
Infrastructure				
Blue River Drive Engineering	Lane County	Initial design for Blue River Drive and full engineering plans for the “downtown” 1/4 mile of Blue River Drive.	\$250,000	KPFF Consulting Engineers
Blue River Retracement Survey	Lane County	Blue River retracement survey.	\$100,000	Avery Land Surveying, LLC
McKenzie River Area Property Surveys	Lane County	Provide additional funding for property surveys outside of “downtown” Blue River.	\$400,000	McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group
Blue River Fire Station Replacement	Upper McKenzie Rural Fire Protection District	Fill the funding gap to complete construction of new fire station in “downtown” Blue River	\$250,000	Upper McKenzie Rural Fire Protection District
Communications Conduit	Lane County	Install conduit to accommodate high speed communications while utility work is occurring in the right of way within the McKenzie Valley.	\$500,000	
Staffing				
Recovery Project Management	Lane County	Additional county staffing to implement recovery projects.	\$320,000	
Recovery Finance Management	Lane County	Continue funding Disaster Recovery Finance Program Coordinator for 18 months.	\$200,000	
Housing				
Affordable Housing	DevNW, McKenzie Community Land Trust	Pre-Development costs for affordable housing project.	\$800,000	DevNW, McKenzie Community Land Trust
Individual Assistance				
Individual Assistance	McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG)	Funds to support household recovery will be granted to the LTRG who will distribute to families and individuals at or below 120% Area Median Income.	\$400,000	McKenzie Valley Long Term Recovery Group
Individual Assistance	Lane County / DevNW	Additional funds for the Wildfire Recovery and Resilience Account program – providing resources to assist recovery for households at or below 80% of Area Median Income	\$400,000	Lane County Health and Human Services, DevNW
Total: \$3,620,000				