

Blue Creek Fire

Natural Resources

Recovery Guide

This document will be frequently updated
- If you wish to add information, please
contact: Lisa Stearns at
lisa.stearns@wwccd.net

In an Emergency, Call 911

This publication is intended to provide public information and resources for natural resources and agricultural rehabilitation only.

BE PREPARED!

The fire has increased the risk of flash floods, so keep an eye to the sky. Know what the weather is doing around you and be prepared to move to higher ground if necessary. Have an emergency kit ready in case it becomes necessary for you to leave your home in a hurry. Be sure you have enough medications, water, clothing and non-perishable food to last 7 days. For information about how to prepare an emergency kit go to www.ready.gov or wwemd.info, or contact Walla Walla County Emergency Management at **509-524-2900**

If your home survived the fire, it is highly recommended that you obtain National Flood Insurance Program home insurance from FEMA. Speak with your insurance agent for details.

Blue Creek

and Other Walla Walla Area Wildfires

Quick Landowner Assessment

Was your **property within the burn zone** or nearby?



Consider obtaining FEMA National Flood Insurance Program insurance to protect assets against flash flooding. Prepare for possible flash flooding. Contact your insurance agent for more details. Other applicable programs are listed in this booklet.

Did you have **structural or other damages** to your property?



Check with your insurance agent about your applicable home, farm and other insurance that may cover part of the damages.

Are you an **agricultural producer** (make money from livestock or crop production)?



Check with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to determine if any of their emergency assistance programs may apply. **See pages 10 and 11.**

Are you a **small forest landowner**?



Contact the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Small Forest Landowner Office for advice and assistance. **See page 8.**

Do you have **wildlife concerns or conflicts**?



Contact the WA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife for advice. **See pages 14 and 15.**

Would you like assistance with basic site evaluation and guidance on appropriate treatments or available funding assistance?



Contact NRCS, **See pages 7, 8, and 9.**

Does your property **share a border with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management**?



Contact the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for advice and assistance. **See page 12.**

Does your property **contain fish-bearing creeks**?



Contact the Walla Walla County Conservation District and/or WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for possible technical assistance. **See pages 7, 12, 13, 14.**

Do you plan to do **work in or near a wetland, stream or river**?



Contact the Walla Walla County Planning Office, Army Corps of Engineers and the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for approvals/permits before beginning work. Expedited HPA permits for in-stream work are available through the WA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. **See page 14.**

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Walla Walla County Conservation District

Contact: Lisa Stearns (509) 522-6340 x.3_

lisa.stearns@wwccd.net

Programs:

- **Clearinghouse** for landowners to report natural resource and agriculture infrastructure damage and post-fire resource concerns. Reports will be used to seek funding for cost-share grants to assist landowners with post-fire recovery actions
- **Site visits** for landowners to determine resource needs and appropriate actions. Conservation planners will evaluate each site's suitability for potential financial assistance.
- **Emergency Watershed Protection** - landowner cost-share for the most critical areas. Two parts: immediate threat to life and property, and longer-term recovery.

Washington Department of Natural Resources

Contact: Tom Schoenfelder (509) 607-6204

thomas.schoenfelder@dnr.wa.gov

www.dnr.wa.gov

Programs:

- **Technical assistance** - Assessing tree loss and likelihood of survival, guidelines for salvage logging and adjustments in value of timber. Forest Practice application, logging permits.
www.dnr.wa.gov/BusinessPermits/Topics/SmallForestLandownerOffice/Pages/fp_sflo_overview.aspx
- **Eastern WA Cost-share program** - 50% funding for fuels reduction, thinning, pruning and brush removal. Requires site visit and pre-approval.
www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp_sflo_fs_ewcostshareapp.pdf
- **Technical Assistance** - wildfire risk assessments

National Weather Service

Contact: Marilyn Lohmann (541)276-7832

Marilyn.lohmann@noaa.gov

Programs:

- Provides weather and river forecasts and issues watches and warnings for potentially hazardous weather or flash floods. Also have a post-fire/weather/ flash flood webpage. Can also provide technical assistance to place early warning rain gauges and assess flash flood risk.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Farm Services Agency

Contact: Walla Walla County FSA (any staff can assist)
(509)522-6347 Ext 2

325 N 13th Ave Walla Walla <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>

Programs:

- **Tree Assistance Program (TAP)** - provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.
- **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)** - provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occur due to a natural disaster.
- **Emergency Conservation Program** - provides emergency funding and technical assistance to agricultural producers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for implementing emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Includes fencing, irrigation, stock water systems.
- **Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)** - provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses for covered livestock on land that is native or improved pastureland planted specifically for grazing. Also provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that suffered losses on rangeland managed by a Federal agency if the producer is prohibited from grazing the normal permitted livestock on the managed rangeland due to a qualifying fire.
- **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)** - provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by weather.

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Contact: Ed Teel

Ed.teel@wa.usda.gov

www.nrcs.usda.gov

Programs:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** - Special Signup. Potential assistance for agricultural producers to replace conservation practices that burned and are not otherwise eligible for the Emergency Conservation Program through the Farm Service Agency (FSA).

U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Contact: Erik Ellis (509) 665-2141 edellis@blm.gov www.blm.gov

Programs:

Partner on the **Fire Adapted Communities** program www.fireadapted.org

- **Community Wildfire Protection Plan** - assistance to communities to prepare for wildfire

Walla Walla County Noxious Weed Control Board

Contact: Dave Maiden (509) 524-2688

weedsww@co.walla-walla.wa.us

Programs:

- Seeking funding to assist landowners with weed treatment for non-crop and grazing ground to reduce weed infestations post-fire. Example: Yellow Star Thistle and Rush Skeleton Weed
- Technical assistance - noxious weed identification and control information

Trout Unlimited

Contact: Justin Bezold 509-881-5464.

jbezold@tu.org

www.tu.org

Programs:

- Seeking funding to assist landowners with irrigation efficiency projects designed to allow more water in-stream for fish.

WA State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife

Contacts:

In-stream work and permitting:

Emergency HPA (Permit) Hotline: (360) 902-2537

Asotin, Columbia Garfield and Walla Walla Counties: Tom Schirm 509-382-0266 Tom.Schirm@dfw.wa.gov

Walla Walla and Mill Creek Basin: Dave Karl 509-527-4138

Dave.Karl@dfw.wa.gov

Forest Management: Sara Ashiglar - Sara.Ashiglar@dfw.wa.gov

Wildlife Management: Paul Wik - 509-758-3972, Paul.Wik@dfw.wa.gov

Wildlife Feeding/Conflicts: Scott Rasley - 509-429-4584, Scott.Rasley@dfw.wa.gov

Programs:

- Emergency HPA in-stream work permitting
- Wildlife welfare and conflict questions and recommendations
- Assistance and coordination of range permit transfers and infrastructure improvements.

Washington Department of Ecology

Contact: Chad Atkins (509) 329-3499

catk461@ecy.wa.gov

www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wqhome.html

Programs:

- **Water Quality Grant Program** - grant program for water quality projects, including riparian restoration. Contact Chad Atkins or other local entities for assistance with grant application process.

Mule Deer Foundation

Contact: Dan McKinley (509) 995-0819_

dan@muledeer.org

www.muledeer.org

Programs:

- Landowner assistance with wildlife-related management questions.
- The mission of the Mule Deer Foundation is to ensure the conservation of mule deer, blacktail deer and their habitats. MDF works with state and federal wildlife agencies, conservation groups, businesses and individuals to further the MDF mission. We're also on the front lines in Washington, D.C., supporting or challenging issues that affect mule deer populations. MDF also believes that promoting the hunting heritage is a key ingredient to furthering our conservation objectives.
- Education programs, such as our M.U.L.E.Y. Youth Camps, (Mindful Understanding Legal Ethical Youth) are aimed at educating the public on hunting, wildlife management and overall respect and enjoyment of our natural resources.
- Habitat Restoration on both Public and Private Lands.

This document is a work in progress. If you have corrections or further information that should be included in this document, please contact Lisa Stearns (509)522-6340 ext 116

lisa.stearns@wwccd.net

Blue Creek Post-Fire Rehabilitation Treatments

Landowners affected by the fire may continue to struggle with post-fire impacts and rehabilitation on their property. Landowners are encouraged to CAREFULLY walk their properties to assess the damages and potential risks. Potential problems resulting from fires may include:

- Safety issues along property boundaries, roads and buildings.
- **Significant increase in sediment delivery to stream channels**
- **Surface and gully erosion on slopes and possible debris flows down draws**
- Loss of vegetation and forest cover which reduces grazing for livestock & wildlife, degrades habitat, and increases the risk of weed infestations
- Hazards from insect infestations in the fire killed and fire stressed trees

When walking your property, look for items that may potentially plug stream channels and/or culverts, particularly at road crossings. Keep in mind that things that don't normally float (concrete blocks, barbeques, propane tanks, lawn furniture, potted plants, etc.) can float in the event of a flash flood or debris flow. Additional runoff may cause channels to shift, creating additional erosion.

- **Check and remove debris in and near draws and/or in and near culverts. This includes rocks, grass clippings, decking, structures, vegetation, fences across draws, etc.**
- **Secure and/or anchor outdoor items. Move lawn furniture, barbeques, propane tanks, pool covers, etc. inside.**
- Stream work and salvage removal may require special permitting. Please contact the Department of Natural Resources and Department of Fish and Wildlife for more information.

It may be difficult to visualize the rebirth of a forest or rangeland following a wildfire. However, nature is well equipped for regenerating some fire resistant species such as ponderosa pine trees and shrub-steppe species. You may already notice some grasses and plants recovering on the landscape. Revegetation of burned areas is also imperative for restoring the health of the ecosystem. Some possible treatments include:

- Grass seeding (quick establishment, weed suppression, and forage)
- Forest tree planting (primarily ponderosa pine)
- Riparian plantings along stream corridors

The Walla Walla Conservation District is available to assist with site specific questions and provide assistance for landowners as they begin to restore the landscape following the fire. Please contact us at (509)522-6340 ext. 3 for more information.

Restoration Needs for Lands Impacted by Blue Creek Fire

Landowners looking for assistance with restoration of their lands should contact the Walla Walla Conservation District. The District is acting as a clearinghouse for private landowners seeking assistance with issues such as restoration of grazing lands, repair of fences, repair of irrigation systems, restoration of riparian trees and shrubs, general reseeded, or erosion control. In the forested areas, issues may also include removal or chipping of burned materials, erosion control and replanting.

At this time, there are limited funds available; however, the District is actively working together with the groups/agencies listed in box below to locate additional sources of both technical and financial assistance for private landowners. This group will likely grow as sources of assistance are located. **Receiving requests from landowners will help to focus the search for funding.**

Landowners seeking assistance should be prepared to provide the following information:

Name

Contact information (phone and e-mail)

Address

Tax Parcel # (if known)

Description of the damage

Number of acres affected

Describe conditions before the fire (trees, shrubs, grass?)

Agricultural infrastructure impacts (irrigation systems, fences)

Livestock Impacts (loss of grazing lands or loss of livestock)

Concerns about soil erosion (both by wind and water)

Concerns about forest conditions (fire hazards, dead and dying trees, etc.)

Walla Walla County Conservation District

Address:

325 N 13th Ave.
Walla Walla, WA
99362

Contact:

Lisa Stearns

(Although all staff answering phones at the number below can take your information)

Phone:

(509)522-6340 ext 3

E-mail:

lisa.stearns@wwccd.net

Agencies working together with the Walla Walla County Conservation District include: Washington Conservation Commission, Walla Walla County Emergency Management, USDA Farm Service Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Walla Walla County Noxious Weed Board, Washington Department of Ecology, Washington Department of Natural Resources, Mule Deer Foundation, etc.

Blue Creek Fire 2015 Request for Assistance

Name:	
Mailing Address:	
Phone:	E-Mail:
Property Address:	
Tax Parcel #:	
Number of Acres (total property & burned):	
Are you an agricultural producer (make \$\$ from livestock or crop production)?	
Did you have damage to ag infrastructure (fences, irrigation system, etc.)? Be specific about damages.	
Description of property before fire (eg. Forestland, shrub-steppe, rangeland, pastureland, types of vegetation, etc.):	
Description of post fire conditions and resource concerns/needs:	
<i>Name of staff taking report:</i>	
<i>Date and Time of Initial Report:</i>	

