

# Eugene Springfield Fire Chief & SBNA Group Leaders

May 26, 2020 via Zoom

## Video of the Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/wtdJH5L0rDxIGlnRx3HDAggKBlq1X6a8hHMdqPsKyhkg74wy2kUyhtCcc14IAF5j>

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## Notes & Comments

**Attendees:** (Maureen McClain, Kerry Silvey, Kathy Sherwood, Sarah Cantril, Mike Speiser, Tracy Tessler, Sarah MacArthur) met for presentation by Interim Fire Chief Chris Heppel & Deputy Chief / Fire Marshall Amy Linder (who focuses on education)

### Most Likely Time and Direction of a Forest Fire

In the summer, with low humidity and high temperatures, the wind most often comes from the north (NNE or NNW). This would be a fire coming to our area from town. (They also tend to travel uphill because of preheating the uphill fuel.)

### Fire Districts - Who Responds?

SBNA is in the Eugene 15 fire station district, thus the first fire station to respond to our area is Station 15, on 33<sup>rd</sup> by the post office, followed by the University Station and the downtown station. Eugene Fire has automatic aid agreements with Oregon Department of Forestry & Lane Fire located on McBeth and Fox Hollow. Eugene 1 has a three-person engine, structural protection, & a large urban interface brush rig. It has a higher wheel base, 4 wheel drive, and is more maneuverable.

Eugene Fire deals with structural protection; ODF protects wildland.

In case of a forest fire, Eugene Fire, ODF, and Lane Fire all respond. Other fire departments can be activated. Also, there is a contracted helicopter at the Eugene airport. ODF has aviation for water drops for this area, however, agreements need to be made in advance with land owners for ODF to access water from ponds or other sources on a homeowner's property.

Average response time is 12 minutes.

We are in Ambulance service area # 4, which is also Eugene/Springfield fire. The Medic unit is usually 3 – 5 minutes behind 1<sup>st</sup> apparatus.

Primary purpose of 1<sup>st</sup> unit is life threat stabilization. Medics prepare for transportation to hospital of choice if available.

### Available Water in Case of Fire:

The SBNA Park has a 10,000 gal tank. Mike Speiser will see about getting it checked. There is also a 5,000 tank at the fire station at McBeth and Fox Hollow.

Large ponds should be mapped in the area. The fire department needs to have consent from property owner to map and have access to pond in a fire situation. Ponds are typically difficult to access by fire trucks, however:

- Can put in a dry hydrant with pipe to pond so water can be sucked out of pond from a place where truck has access. When Mike was on Fire board, they looked at putting in 5 distributed underground tanks.
- Large ponds can be used by helicopters for dipping. Need prior agreement with homeowner.

A while ago, Eugene 1 discussed putting in underground tanks in distributed locations.

### Accessibility for Emergency Vehicles:

Driveway regulations are per Lane County code (which is currently under revision). Driveways must be at least:

- Width: 12'

- Height 13 6" clearance from branches
- Surface appropriate for heavy rig such as gravel or concrete
- Length such that rig would be able to get out or good turn around area

New homes get evaluated by the fire department for access and materials used.

The county is currently writing up code for safety and it would be to our benefit to write to our commissioner how much we would appreciate fire prevention, i.e. money for brush clearing etc.

Phone the Fire Marshall's office to request a driveway assessment. Ph: 541-682-5411. [FMOAdmin@ci.eugene.or.us](mailto:FMOAdmin@ci.eugene.or.us).

### **Evacuation:**

In the event of a forest fire, the sheriff will alert residents if you need to evacuate including which direction to go. Lane County Emergency Alerts (Alert Me!, powered by AlertSense) will also provide that information in an evacuation.

[https://lanecounty.org/government/county\\_departments/lane\\_county\\_emergency\\_management/sign\\_up\\_for\\_emergency\\_notifications](https://lanecounty.org/government/county_departments/lane_county_emergency_management/sign_up_for_emergency_notifications)

### **What is the Recent History of Big Forest Fires in Our Area?**

Two or three times each year the Lane County Base 1 is activated by the Lane County Fire Defense Board which is composed of chiefs from all the local agencies. The last time – in Cottage Grove, maybe 80 acres – got 35 rigs & about 100 personnel there in 1 hour – 1-1/2 hours.

### **What is Being Done in our Area to Prevent Forest Fire?**

Fuel reduction work is being done by BLM, BPA (for power lines). The main issue is who owns the land. They have no say on private property, no matter how bad the fuel load is. (Cost is also an issue.)

Last summer – there were some roving chippers & NW Youth Corps that helped in some areas out here. That funding is now gone.

The city has done fuels reduction in city parks. They did not know specifically what has been done in Spencer Butte park.

Their education program ideas were:

Contact with FireWise

Could reach out to urban forester

What if people in city limits want to decrease their fire risk but don't have the \$\$\$ for it.? City does not have a program to aid homeowners.

### **What Else Can We Do?**

- Firewise: People can create or join a firewise community, which is a way for land owners to be prepared. The fire department will be aware that the home has a defensible space, but it will not affect how they respond to a fire. Joining firewise also helps ODF leverage resources and apply for grants so that ODF can get funding to help clean up people's land at low or no cost to the land owner. Check with your insurance carrier – might decrease your homeowners rate if your neighborhood group meets firewise requirements.

*Contact your SBNA group leader to see if there is a firewise group for your area. Work within that group to lower your risk.*

- Contact legislators to legislate Fuels mitigation and/or a defensible space requirement for new homes, e.g. County Commissioners, State legislature.

- Receive alerts from Alert Me! (Alert Sense) <https://public.alertsense.com/SignUp/public.aspx?regionid=1087>