



# Oregon Water Utility Council (OWUC) Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU)

*House Committee on Water Hearing – Wildfires and Water*

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American Water Works Association  
**Pacific Northwest** Section





## Agenda:

1. OWUC and OAWU – Who We Are, What We Do
2. Wildfire Impacts to Drinking Water Providers – Scope and Impacts
3. Local response by Oregon Association of Water Utilities (OAWU)
4. Key Takeaways and Long-Term Considerations



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## OWUC

- American Water Works Association (AWWA) – international, nonprofit, scientific, educational
- Founded in 1881, largest organization of water supply professionals in the world
- OWUC is the Oregon section of Legislative advocacy
- OWUC memberships represents nearly 75% of Oregon's drinking water providers

## OAWU

- National Rural Water Association (NRWA)
- NRWA is one of America's largest and strongest voices for rural and small systems
- OAWU is nonprofit, independent association of water and wastewater utilities
- 450+ members – public and private water and wastewater systems such as municipalities, associations, districts, mobile home parks, schools, etc.



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# Medford Water Commission

- Serves 140,000 customers
- Increased monitoring for contaminants, treatment considerations after South Obenchain and Almeda Fires
- Partnering with local agencies for restoration
- Assisted neighboring communities with monitoring (e.g., VOCs from potentially damaged plastic pipes)





*Medford Water staff  
sampling in November*



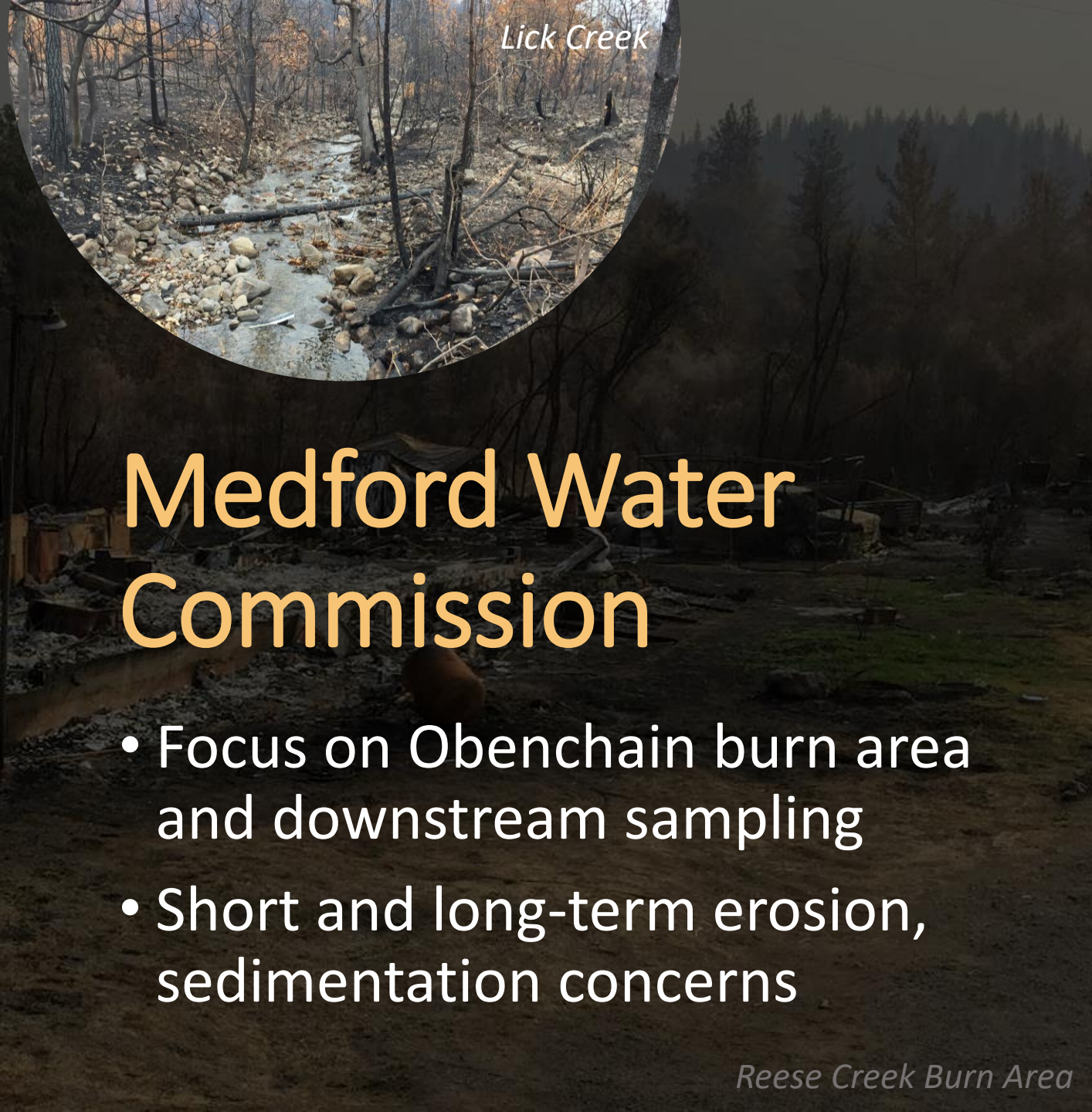
*Lick Creek*



# Medford Water Commission

- Focus on Obenchain burn area and downstream sampling
- Short and long-term erosion, sedimentation concerns

*Reese Creek Burn Area*







*Salem's Treatment Plant*



*Detroit Reservoir*

# City of Salem

- Serves 200,000 customers in Salem and surrounding area
- Lionshead and Beachie Creek Fires impacted most of watershed
- Increased monitoring for contaminants and treatment considerations
- Greater potential for cyanoHABs in Detroit Reservoir

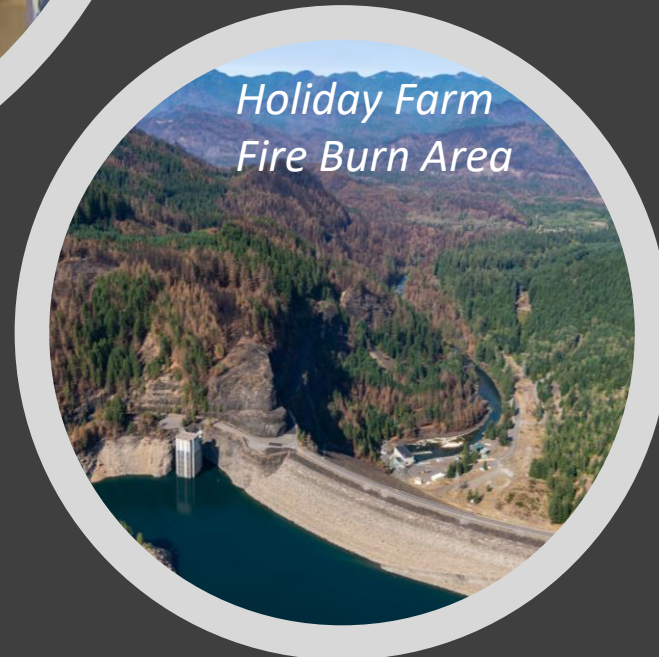


*Lionshead Fire*





*Analysis underway for  
plant adjustments*



*Holiday Farm  
Fire Burn Area*



*EWEB's Treatment  
Plant*

# Eugene Water and Electric

- Serves nearly 200,000 customers
- Water treatment plant adjustments made due to Holiday Farm fire
- Increased monitoring now and for the long-term
- Significant watershed restoration efforts underway with partners



# Eugene Water and Electric

- Ongoing treatment operations during wildfires
- 'First flush' following storm event





# Clackamas River Water Providers



Riverside Fire occurred in drinking water source for more than 300,000 customers



Increased monitoring for contaminants and treatment considerations; restoration partnerships underway



Some indication that upstream reservoirs may help minimize downstream impacts

*PGE's North Fork Reservoir Dam*



*Lake Oswego-Tigard Intake*



*Riverside Fire*



# City of Bend – August 5, 2020 Thunderstorm

- Heavy precipitation impacts to sediment run-off
- Partially due to lingering effects from 1979 Bridge Creek Fire
- Ongoing infrastructure investments to deal with resiliency needs in the face of climate change



*Typical Bend Water Intake Water Quality*



*Intake Post-Storm, August 5*



# OAWU Local Response

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- OAWU instrumental in providing assistance during and after the wildfires for water and wastewater
- Critical updates to Oregon Office of Emergency Management
- ‘Boots on the ground’ for many utilities





# City of Detroit – OAWU Response

*Damaged Drinking Water Reservoir and Hydrant*



# City of Detroit

- OAWU assisted Detroit's staff in flushing water system
- Collecting VOC samples afterwards
- VOC's are "volatile organic compounds"
- Heat from wildfires can release VOCs from plastic pipes







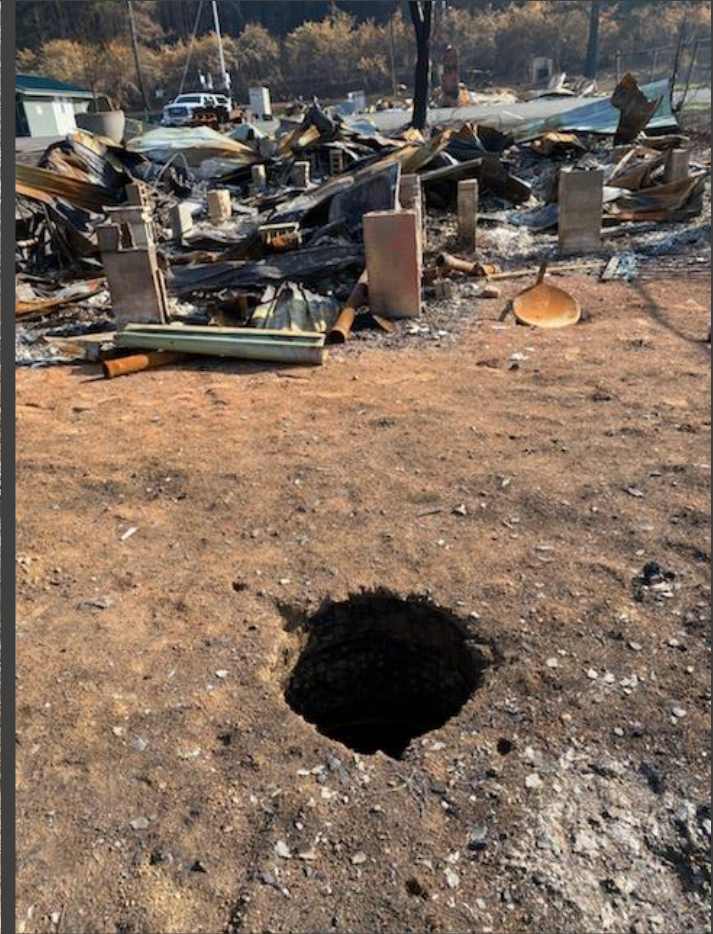
# City of Detroit

- OAWU staff finding and fixing service line leaks caused by wildfires
- Inspecting damaged drinking water intake



# City of Detroit

- Assessing damage to “Breitenbush Pump Station”
- Burned-out septic tank lid






# City of Gates

- OAWU staff provided support during the fires
- Closing valves during main line leaks to get City's reservoir filled for fire fighters





A photograph showing two men standing on a concrete platform next to a large, black industrial valve. The man on the left is wearing a black t-shirt, blue jeans, and a purple baseball cap. The man on the right is wearing a tan shirt and green cargo pants. They appear to be inspecting the valve. The background consists of a dense forest of evergreen trees, with mountains visible in the distance under a cloudy sky. A semi-transparent circular overlay is on the right side of the image, containing text.

## Blue River Water District (McKenzie River)

- OAWU staff assisting staff with damage assessment





# Panther Creek Water District (Otis, OR)

- On-site to help assess major damage and get system operational
- Damage to control room and treatment facilities
- System 'back-on' Sept 22







# Echo Mountain Water System (Otis, OR)

- Power knocked out, well house destroyed
- OAWU aided in getting generator on-site for system





# Key Takeaways & Long-Term Considerations



Over one million people experienced wildfires in their drinking water source – providing safe water and public health protection is what we do, 365 days a year



We're stewards of the environment, working with various partners on restoration, protection, and shared issues (e.g., cyanoHABs) to address our communities concerns



Ongoing infrastructure investment (built and natural) and impacts to operational costs are critical, as well as local decision-making capability







Thank You!



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