

My name is Bob Stai, and I am a Beachie Creek wildfire survivor. Our home was in rural Marion County, outside of Lyons. Thank you for giving survivors an opportunity to share their experiences. I am not certain what exactly you want to hear or intend to do with the information, so I will keep my comments brief and to the point. To begin, I want to acknowledge some blessings:

Blessings:

- We made it out in time due in part to pounding on our front door from a Marion Co. deputy sheriff.
- Our neighbors survived. One neighbor sustained severe burns after running 4 ½ miles before a good Samaritan community member rescued him.
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- We lost our home, but our detached garage/shop survived which has provided us a base to rebuild our home.
- Great insurance – Safeco.

My Experiences:

- Initial feeling of relief that not all was loss.
- Anger that first responders had not knocked on neighbors doors when the threat was imminent (we were only at level one).
- Anger at myself for not being more aware of risks.
- Anger that survivors were prevented from returning to their properties after the wildfire.
- Helplessness that I could not do more to help neighbors.
- Helplessness with building material and construction costs.
- Impressed with local government (Marion Co., Linn Co., North Santiam Watershed Council) response.
- Appreciation for ODOT fire damaged tree removal, even though it could have happened sooner.
- Grateful for friends, neighbors and strangers who have helped.
- Grateful for legislation on property tax relief.
- Grateful for God's hope & faith that as a community we will be fine.

Suggestions:

- Infrastructure – Need cell coverage in North Fork area & better internet connectivity.
- Road system – North Fork Road SE (Marion County) between mileposts 5 to 6 needs to be properly rebuilt.
- Private road systems – Many of the little neighborhoods have small gravel roads that survivors maintained. The wildfire, recovery efforts and rebuilding has damaged these road systems.
- Watershed – access to native plants and trees that can be planted to help address erosion.
- Investigative probe and/or establishment of a reporting line regarding allegations of unscrupulous practices of businesses associated with the rebuilding of our communities.

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Bob Stai

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