

By the numbers: Burdoin Fire rebuilding underway

By Emily Harris
and Swen Carlson
Uplift Local

In July 2025, the Burdoin Fire, which burned in the vicinity of White Salmon and Lyle in Klickitat County, spread to over 10,000 acres at its peak, destroying some 40 structures.

Now, one year later, within the National Scenic Area section of the county, 15 structures destroyed or damaged in the fire have been approved to rebuild, including six single-family homes and nine accessory buildings like sheds or barns.

At the July 14 meeting of the Columbia River Gorge Commission and in follow up conversations with Uplift Local, staff land use planners Joanna Kaiserman and Mackenzie Aamodt shared rebuilding numbers.

According to Kaiserman, 29 parcels of land in the National Scenic Area of Klickitat County lost at least one structure and owners of about two-thirds of those parcels have contacted the Gorge Commission about rebuilding.

Approved so far:

- Ten rebuilding applications, for a total of 15 structures, have been



Courtesy photo

Firefighting efforts last year included helicopters.

approved by the commission. (An application may include more than one building.)

- Six of the permits are for single-family dwellings. Of those, three are mobile homes and three are “site-built” homes.

Across all applications, roughly half are “like-for-like” replacements, meaning they use the same footprint as the original building and, under new post-disaster rebuilding rules, go through a streamlined process. The other half required a full National

Scenic Area review.

In the pipeline:

- Three more single-family dwellings and two more accessory buildings are currently being reviewed.
- Five applications are in early stages, with commission planners working with landowners to finalize before public notices of reviews are issued.

At the July 14 commission meeting, Kaiserman and Aamodt described working closely with applicants to complete the rebuilding applications,

including filling out forms for people who don’t have online access and doing site visits.

“I’m really happy to hear that this is the experience people are having,” Commissioner Laura Brennan Bissell said at the meeting, calling the help commission planners are providing property owners a “culture shift” compared to her own past experience seeking help with land permits. “I had a hard time even getting called back,” she recalled. “And then when I finally got on the phone with the planner, they pretty much

told me I needed to figure it out myself.”

Gorge Commission executive director Krystyna Wolniakowski also praised the hard work her staff has put in aiding people through the permitting process, sometimes spending hours at a time with a single household. She noted that “really, the application process is not as onerous as it might seem on the outside once we start walking through it.”

For more news stories from around The Gorge, visit UpliftLocal.news/Columbia-gorge.

News Briefs

String: A Musical on Bingen stage

Big Britches Productions presents String: A Musical at The Bingen Theater, 210 N. Oak Street in Bingen August 15. This uplifting story follows the three Fates after they are banished from Olympus and forced to live among mortals. When Atropos loses her enchanted scissors and falls for a human security guard, her attempt to change his fate threatens the balance of the universe. Performances are held Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., with Sunday matinees at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are \$23 for seniors and students and \$25 for adults. Recommended for ages 12 and older.

Free ScaleUp tourism marketing training series

The Skamania County Economic Development Council invites local businesses to participate in the free ScaleUp Tourism Marketing Training Series, offered in partnership with the Washington State Department of Commerce.

This four-week virtual course will cover target audiences, storytelling, short-form video, online visibility, Google Business Profiles and customer reviews. The first session starts on August 10.

Chamber sets Advocacy lunch for Sept. 2

Join the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce on Sept. 2, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Carson Hot Springs Elk Ridge Restaurant for our next Advocacy Luncheon on the topic of Forestlands: Why State Trust Lands Matter to Every Business. Speakers including representatives from WKO Lumber Mill and the American Forest Resource Council, will explain how forestland management decisions affect local jobs, public funding, infrastructure, and economic opportunities throughout Skamania County. Admission is \$25 and includes lunch. Prepaid registration is required by 5:00 p.m. on August 28.

MCEDD kicks off 2027 CEDS process in Skamania County

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) officially kicked off the development of the 2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) on July 23rd at the Hege-

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Free parenting workshops offer tools for families

By Karen Douglas
One Prevention Alliance

Parents and caregivers in Skamania County are invited to strengthen their parenting skills and connect with other families at two free workshops this fall, offered by One Prevention Alliance, a community coalition dedicated to reducing and preventing drug and alcohol abuse living within the Stevenson-Carson School District boundaries and beyond.

Whether raising young children or navigating the middle school years, these evidence-based programs offer practical strategies to build stronger relationships, improve communi-

cation, and create calmer, more connected homes.

Registration is now open for “Incredible Years” and “Guiding Good Choices,” two nationally recognized parenting programs that support families at different stages of a child’s development. Both courses are offered at no cost, and meals are provided to make participation easier.

Incredible Years is designed for parents and caregivers of young and elementary-age children and will be facilitated by parenting educator Vickie Stolle, founder of Dragonfly Paradigm.

The series focuses on practical, everyday strate-

gies to help families establish healthy routines, set clear expectations, support learning at home, and promote children’s emotional well-being.

Lunch will be provided at each session. The class meets on Thursdays from Sept. 3 through Nov. 19, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the Hegewald Center in Stevenson.

For families with youth in grades 4-8, Guiding Good Choices offers a five-session workshop to strengthen family bonds, set clear guidelines, manage conflict, increase family involvement, and help young people develop strong decision-making skills.

ESD 112’s LINKS (Life-giving Integrated Network of Key Supports) program will provide instruction for one of the Guiding Good Choices series. Dinner will be provided, and childcare will be available to remove barriers that often make it difficult for families to attend.

Sessions will be held on Wednesdays from Sept. 9 through Oct. 7, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., at the Hegewald Center.

David Bower, the lead family coordinator for the LINKS Program at ESD 112, said both workshops are designed to equip parents with practical skills and to remind families that

they don’t have to navigate parenting challenges alone.

“Every parent wants the best for their child, but parenting doesn’t come with a handbook,” Bower said. “Guiding Good Choices offers families practical, research-based strategies they can apply immediately to strengthen relationships, improve communication, and help young people make healthy decisions.”

Families who have completed Incredible Years and Guiding Good Choices consistently report meaningful changes at home. Many say the courses helped them establish simple routines

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Are foothills of St. Helens the place for copper mine?

By Swen Carlson
Uplift Local

For over 20 years, the Cascade Forest Conservancy (CFC), a conservation nonprofit based in Vancouver, WA, has worked to keep mining out of Skamania County’s Green River Valley, located in the foothills of Mount St. Helens. The group has twice successfully sued to cancel permits for exploratory drilling, but now a new mining attempt has surfaced from Canadian-based Cambria Gold Mines.

This time, the CFC is seeking a more permanent solution.

CFC’s executive director Molly Whitney and policy manager Ashley Short attended the June 30 meeting of the Skamania County Board of Commissioners to ask elected officials for a statement of support “in



Image courtesy Bryn Gray-Harding for Cascade Forest Conservancy

The Green River Valley, as seen from nearby Strawberry Mountain. The Cascade Forest Conservancy opposes an exploratory copper mine in the area, saying it would threaten this protected ecosystem.

protecting this area from an open pit mine.”

The group has two main

goals: Growing their base of roughly 100 local entities who’ve stated their opposi-

tion to mining operations in the area and advocating for a permitting process that is

transparent and allows for public input.

However, Skamania County’s commissioners questioned the local benefits of preventing the area from being mined.

Commissioner Rob Ferris raised concerns that restricting this mine for environmental reasons could shut down other economic opportunities. “You get one action in, you get your foot in and then where’s it going to stop?” he said.

Commissioner Asa Leckie had more specific feedback for the conservancy. He noted that a large portion of the county’s land is federally-owned, already putting heavy limitations on how resources can be extracted from the area.

“What other options, besides resource extraction,

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Aug. 12–15
Skamania County Fairgrounds

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This day in history

1858	First transatlantic telegraph cable completed.
1861	Abraham Lincoln imposes first federal income tax.
1914	German assault on Liege begins first battle of World War I.
1962	Marilyn Monroe is found dead in her home in Los Angeles.
1963	Nuclear Test Ban Treaty signed.