Shortages hamper efforts to keep Dixie Fire at bay

BY MAX SILVERSON

Firefighters on the Dixie Fire in Idaho County have had to contend with a national shortage of crew members, heavy equipment and other firefighting equipment. With limited means to fight the 20,000-acre fire directly, firefighters have focused on protecting communities, including Dixie, Comstock and Willow Creek as well as ranches along the Salmon River, fire officials said.

Many ranches and aircraft that historically have been more available to support fires in Idaho have been dispatched to fires in Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado and other states.

The Dixie fire is the largest of the Fire Perkins-Casper National Forest and has a high priority, but other fires like the 107,000-acre Snake River Complex about 70 miles to the west have drawn crews and aircraft.

See SHORTAGE, Page 2

Dixie Fire grows to 29,000 acres and spreading

BY TOM GROTE

The lighting caused Dixie Fire above Mountain Home to grow to about 2,300 acres of Tues-day morning in the north of the federal land and along the Salmon River. Controlled burning conducted last week created a buffer between the community of Dixie and the fire, and firefighters continued to negotiate containment lines with residents and DOE.

Firefighters between Comstock and Willow Creek are spraying retardant drops around the perimeter. Containment lines near Dixie and Comstock have been holding the fire to the east of those communities, but the fire could grow to the south of Comstock and in the northeast portion of Mackay and Allison Ranch.

See DIXIE, Page 2

U of I researchers dig at Salmon River ranch of Polly Bemis

BY RALPH BARTHOLOOM

Researchers found a small dump where food from the garden kept by Bemis and her husband, Charlie. Researchers found a small dump where food from the garden kept by Bemis and her husband, Charlie.

The team, directed by U of I Professor Mark Warner and led by doctoral student Renee Campbell, will clean, analyze and document the artifacts this fall for eventual display in the reconstructed cabin of Bemis (1853-1933).

About 400 artifacts linked to Chinese immigrant and Idaho pioneer Polly Bemis have been unearthed by University of Idaho archaeologists and will be displayed in a reconstructed cabin of Bemis.

Researchers found a small dump where Bemis likely disposed of her trash, including food cans and bottles that tell about the commercial products that made their way up to remote parts of the Salmon River.

Also discovered were personal items including a tobacco tin used by the smoking Bemis as well as fragments from a stoneware crock probably used to store

See BEMIS, Page 3

The 5th of July precipitation in McCall was 0.6 inches. The high temperature was 88 degrees. The weekly precipitation was 0.05 inches. The weekly temperature was 71 degrees.

The 26.1 million gallons pumped week of June 26-July 2

BY DREW DODSON

The City of McCall sent a record amount of water to its customers during June as the current heat wave held the city supplied.

The city treated and distributed a total of 26.1 million gallons of water, the most ever in the month of June, according to city records.

Demand peaked the week of July 4, when the water system pumped a total of 26.1 million gallons of water.

See WATER, Page 2
Salmon River, 44 miles east of Riggins.

Feeling good after health care needs are met

Meghan Caves, right, remove sod before starting excavation at the Polly Bemis Ranch on the Salmon River, 44 miles east of Riggins.

Bemis

Census showed her living with saloon owner Charlie Bemis (1848-1922). She eventually gained her freedom from her Chinese owner, and the 1880 U.S. Census showed her living in California. She was taken from San Francisco to Portland and eventually the Idaho Territory to the mining community of Warrens, now Warren. Where she worked in a saloon.

Bemis took in laundry from miners and ran a boardinghouse. Charlie was almost killed during a gum dipping incident in 1888 when he was attacked by the cheek, but Polly nursed him back to health.

Bemis was also a great seamstress and taught sewing at the Idaho State Capitol in Boise. Eventually she and Charlie bought a 158-acre ranch 17 miles north of Warren on the Boise River. She purchased 40 acres with the site’s natural and built features. That back up to existing homes on Fox and Fox Ridge Lane. An application has not been submitted to the city.

The McCall City Council last month designated the 158 acres an "area of critical concern," which allows the city to forgive a detailed study of the area before accepting applications. The results of the study are expected to guide the application for Pine Creek Ranch. McCall City Planner Brian Parker said the public comment period would follow the release of the study. The timelines for completion of the study is dependent on the developer. Parker said. A draft scope of work released by the city would be a "comprehensive analysis of the natural and built environment" associated with Pine Creek Ranch, a subdivision planned by Donnelly resident Craig Groves.

Weed

The assessment would be a "comprehensive analysis of the natural and built environment" associated with Pine Creek Ranch, a subdivision planned by Donnelly resident Craig Groves. Groves plans to build single family homes, duplexes with three bedrooms and 2.5 bathrooms, and townhomes on 158 acres as an "area of critical concern," which allows the city to forgive a detailed study of the area before accepting applications. The results of the study are expected to guide the application for Pine Creek Ranch. McCall City Planner Brian Parker said the public comment period would follow the release of the study. The timelines for completion of the study is dependent on the developer. Parker said.

The City of McCall is seeking public comment on what to include in a study of the McCall Comprehensive Plan. The public comment period closes on July 31. Comments can be emailed to plan@cityofmccall.id.us.

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