

COMPARISON OF THE MULTNOMAH FALLS FIRE (1991) AND EAGLE CREEK FIRE (2017)

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WEATHER... We consulted Mark Nelsen (East County weather guru and Chief Meteorologist for Channel 12). He pointed out that during the EC fire the weather was more humid than the MF which was about five weeks later in the fall so the dew point was much lower. The east wind in the MF fire blew at a higher rate during the EC fire, but the MF fire the wind blew for a much shorter time. The temperature was higher in EC fire (90s for high) as compared to the MF (lower 80s). And the MF fire had lower temperatures at night (40s in most areas). Interesting note, this writer observed a temperature of 86 at 0200 on 9/5/2017 at the Corbett Fire Station. Even though the EC fire was much larger (48,000+ acres) vs. the MF fire was only (1,200+acres) they both had a western extension of approximately Palmer Mill Rd.

EVACUATIONS... In the MF fire only Bridal Veil had to be evacuated, however in the EC fire the evacuations extended west to the area of the Women's Forum. The MF fire had few closures, but the EC fire resulted in the closure of the I-84 freeway (both directions), the railroad *tracks*, and traffic on the Columbia River was suspended.

FIRE FIGHTING... In the EC fire the personnel benefited from additional training in wildland firefighting techniques as well as the experience of responding to several conflagrations during the summer of 2017. Additionally, the department had purchased fire apparatus designed to deal with wildland fire. In the MF fire the only radio communication was the 154MHz system which had limited capabilities. This resulted in Incident Commanders having to carry three radios to communicate with different agencies. In the EC fire the responders had the flexibility offered with the 800 MHz radio system as well as cell phones. The result was much better communications.

SIMILARITIES... Both fires required the enactment of the Conflagration Act with multiple agencies, but the larger EC fire cost \$20 million to fight, both fires had few injuries to personnel, both fires saw the Multnomah Falls Lodge escaping destruction with outstanding firefighting, and both fires resulted in the loss of few structures.