

Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan

A Community Wildfire Protection Plan



2005

Document Prepared by

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Cover. The hundred year old historic Swauk – Teanaway Grange burning in 2004.

The building started as a country school and later became a Grange hall. Both as a school and as a Grange hall, it was also a community center where neighbors came together to laugh and to mourn. The fire started in the hall and completely destroyed it; however, the fire was kept from spreading to the nearby forest or the nearby Swauk Cemetery by volunteers from Fire District #7.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

Introduction

In the summer of 2004 the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the State Department of Natural Resources contacted local land owners in the Liberty area to determine interest in creating a Community Wildfire Protection Plan under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. Needless to say that in the middle of the severe wildfire season of 2004 there was an interest in creating such a plan.

Local people held two public meetings in the Liberty fire hall (still under construction) with participation by the local fire district, County Fire Marshall, County Sheriff, State Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management and local homeowners. Local homeowners not only volunteered to participate in the planning but agreed to write the plan with input from the government agencies.

The document that evolved from that process was more than just a plan to reduce wildfire risk, it is a plan to create a sense of community. Two thirds of the homeowners live on the west side of the state and may not appreciate the danger they face from wildfire. The plan contains descriptions of three recent wildfires to give all homeowners in the Swauk Basin a better appreciation of the risks from a wildfire in a national forest. The plan creates a sense of community where neighbors look out for neighbors. That is a challenge when so many of the homeowners are only in the basin part time. To do this the plan contains an extensive history of the region to help create a sense of community by sharing the history all have in common. Every homeowner will have a copy of the document whether they participate in the Firewise program or not.



Liberty Fire Hall. The community hall is still under construction in the summer of 2004 and was used for the initial public meetings to discuss the fire plan.

Photo by Wes Engstrom



June 22, 2004 Meeting at Liberty Fire Hall. Attendees at the meeting listened to government agencies explaining the purpose of a community fire plan.

Photo by Don Yantzer



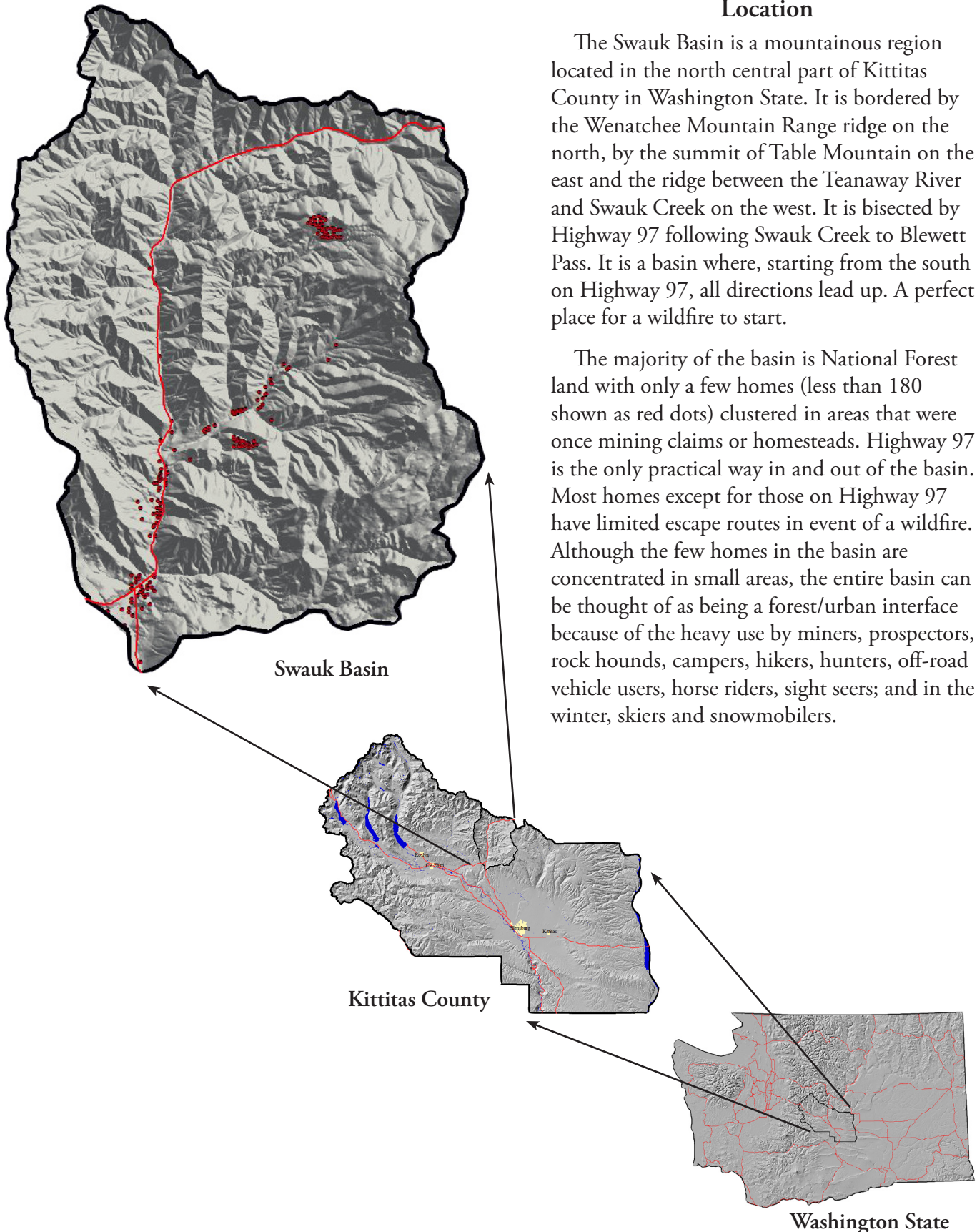
June 22, 2004, Meeting at Liberty Fire Hall. A Bureau of Land Management representative is explaining a new "Forest Stewardship" contracting concept.

Photo by Don Yantzer

Location

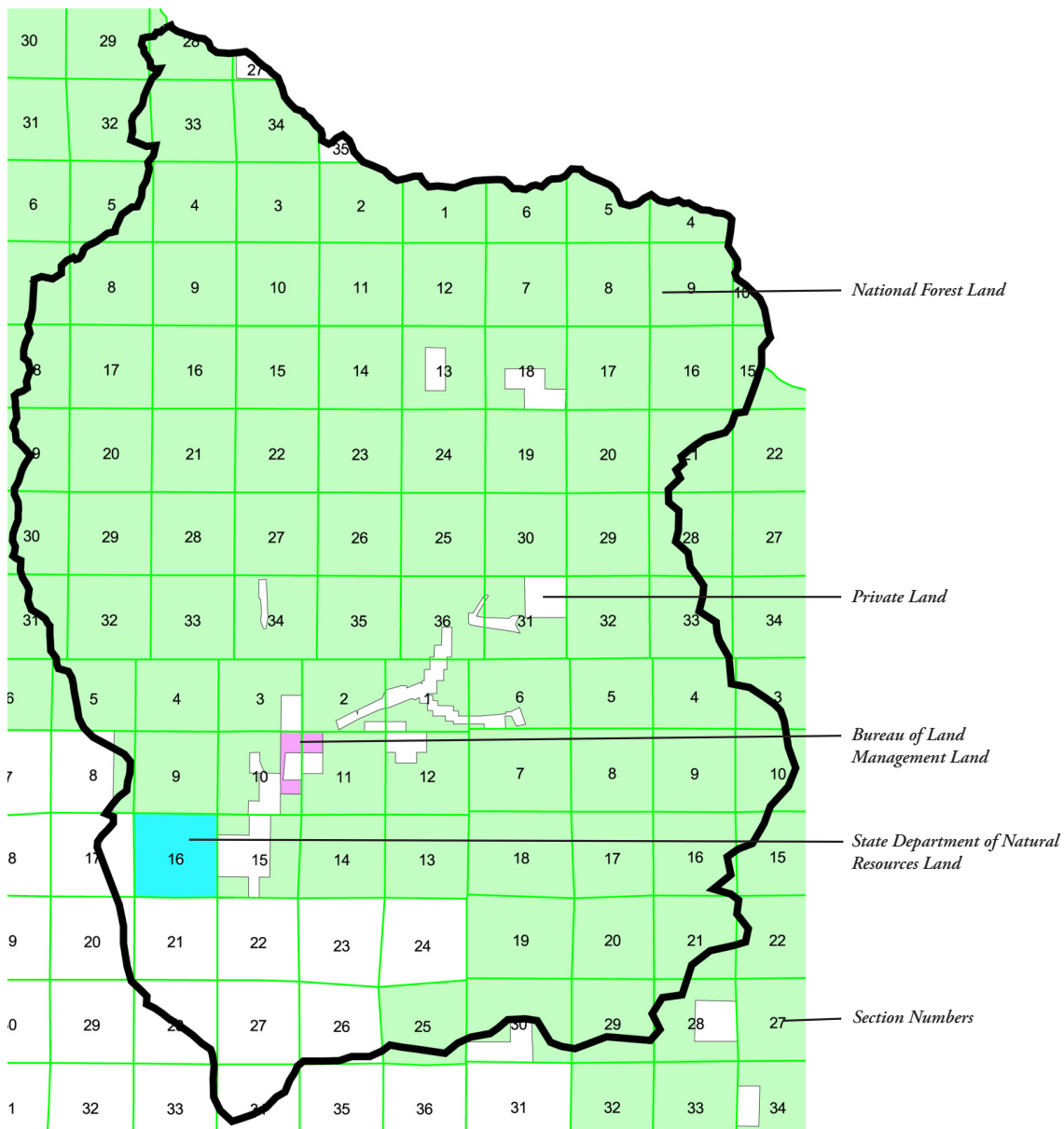
The Swauk Basin is a mountainous region located in the north central part of Kittitas County in Washington State. It is bordered by the Wenatchee Mountain Range ridge on the north, by the summit of Table Mountain on the east and the ridge between the Teanaway River and Swauk Creek on the west. It is bisected by Highway 97 following Swauk Creek to Blewett Pass. It is a basin where, starting from the south on Highway 97, all directions lead up. A perfect place for a wildfire to start.

The majority of the basin is National Forest land with only a few homes (less than 180 shown as red dots) clustered in areas that were once mining claims or homesteads. Highway 97 is the only practical way in and out of the basin. Most homes except for those on Highway 97 have limited escape routes in event of a wildfire. Although the few homes in the basin are concentrated in small areas, the entire basin can be thought of as being a forest/urban interface because of the heavy use by miners, prospectors, rock hounds, campers, hikers, hunters, off-road vehicle users, horse riders, sight seers; and in the winter, skiers and snowmobilers.

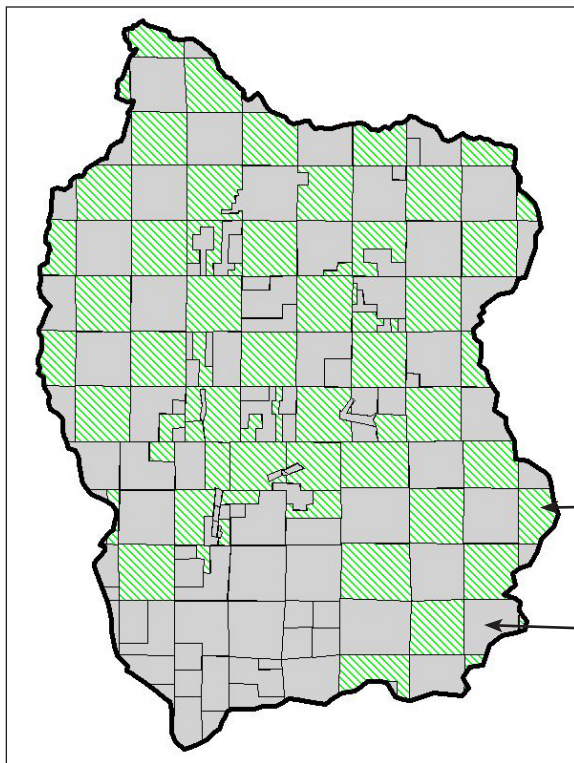


Land Ownership

The Swauk Basin includes just over 53,000 acres, ninety percent being National Forest, the balance divided into Bureau of Land Management, State Department of Natural Resources and private ownership. Most of the private land is owned by U.S. Timberlands. The remaining private land was originally patented mining claims or homesteads now divided into small residential lots, mostly less than five acres. The entire Basin is forested except for small clearings along creek bottoms. There is sheep grazing on the National Forest lands and cattle grazing on some of the private timberlands.



Comparison of Land Ownership—Past and Present

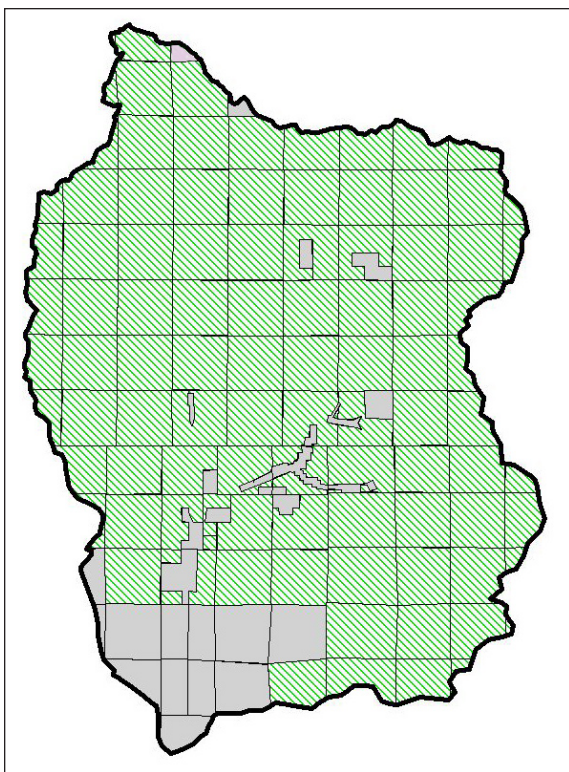


Land Ownership in 1934. In the late 1890's half of the land, all odd numbered sections, were granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad. There had also been homesteads and patented mining claims leaving only about 40 % of the land managed by the Forest Service.

Map based on Metsker's Atlas of Kittitas County, Washington, dated 1934

Government Land

Private Land



Land Ownership in 2004. Most of the private land in the Basin has been acquired by the Forest Service through exchange and donation.

Map based on Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State Department of Natural Resources and County Assessor data

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Summary

The Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan was written by homeowners for homeowners and combines the concerns of local people with existing plans of the Kittitas County Fire District #7, the Kittitas County Fire Marshall, Kittitas County Sheriff, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.

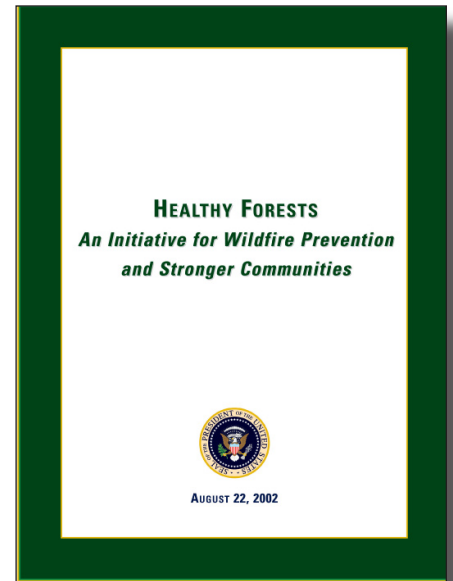
The Plan collects, in one document, a description of wildfires, a summary of how agencies will respond to wildfires, an organizing plan to prepare homeowners for a wildfire and advice on how to improve not only their chances of survival but also their home's chances of survival.

The Plan accomplishes this by: (1) describing possible wildfire behavior in the Swauk Basin; (2) presenting wildfire response plans of fire fighting agencies; (3) organizing homeowners into neighborhoods for action; (4) helping homeowners reduce risk and; (5) coordinating with government agencies for the mutual benefit of all. An extensive history of the Swauk Basin is contained in the appendix explaining how the Swauk Basin got to where it is today. It is a history shared in common by private landowners and government agencies.

A Gold Discovery in 1873 Starts a Community

The Swauk Basin was first settled in 1873 when gold was discovered in Swauk Creek. Two mining camps were established, Swauk Camp and Williams Creek Camp. In 1882 Williams Creek Camp became Meaghersville and in 1892, when the Post Office was established, Swauk Camp became Liberty. In 1912 the Post Office moved from Liberty to Meaghersville and Meaghersville came to be called Liberty. The original Liberty, referred to as "old Liberty," gradually disappeared.

There was also a mining camp, the Peshastin Camp, on the north side of the Wenatchee mountain range, outside the Swauk Basin. Because of a canyon so narrow that wagons could not get through, all supplies and materials needed to build the Peshastin Camp had to come from Ellensburg or Cle Elum rather than from Wenatchee. At first pack trains were used following the Indian trails over the Wenatchee Mountains. In 1891 the trail was made into a wagon road by the miners in order to bring in the large equipment needed to develop the Peshastin mines. In 1892 the Blewett Mining Company bought a major interest in the Peshastin mines. They also assumed responsibility for the wagon road from the Swauk Basin to the mines, and in 1897 the United States Geological Survey named the old Indian pass "Blewett Pass" and the Peshastin Mining Camp became Blewett.



The Healthy Forest Initiative. President Bush proposed the Healthy Forest Initiative in August 2002. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act was passed in December of 2003 providing incentives for community planning for wildfire risk reduction.

Courtesy of web site www.fireplan.gov

In 1915 Washington State was establishing the Sunset Highway for automobiles from Seattle to Spokane. It had to go through Snoqualmie Pass and then Wenatchee because the only bridge over the Columbia River was in Wenatchee. Ellensburg interests planned for the highway go through Ellensburg and over Colockum Pass to Wenatchee. Cle Elum interests objected and raised money to pay for a survey for a competing route over Blewett Pass. The question was settled when the Forest Service offered to help pay for a road if it went over Blewett Pass. In the 1950's the highway was realigned to go over Swauk Pass, a few miles east of Blewett Pass. Locals kept on calling the new road "Blewett Pass highway" even though it now went over Swauk Pass. The State Highway Department eventually conceded and that is why today Highway 97, also called the "Blewett Pass Highway," goes through the center of the Swauk Basin rather than over the Colockum, and over Swauk Pass rather than Blewett Pass.

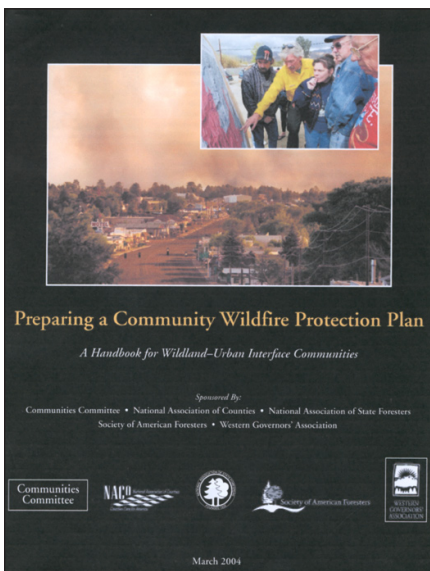
The Wenatchee National Forest was created in 1908, thirty years after the mining camps were first established and after many mining claims had already been "patented." In addition, homestead entries were made after the Wenatchee National Forest was established. Hence, the Swauk Basin today is a mix of private property surrounded by National Forest.

In 1970 the Forest Service attempted to evict the residents of Liberty claiming the community had never been properly set aside as a town site. The dispute was not settled until 1980 after a special interest bill was passed by the United States Congress and signed by President Carter selling residents title to their property. The paper establishing the town site was never found, but enough documentation was found to establish the Liberty Historic District listed on both the State and Federal Registers of historic places.

Portions of the Swauk Basin have been logged and there have been fires; however, the majority of the basin is heavily forested with a mix of old and new trees. There are far too many trees. All trees, old as well as new, are highly stressed and have stopped growing because there isn't enough water and nutrients for them all. There is root rot, tree disease, beetle infestation and an excess of fuels on the forest floor.

The Swauk Basin is heavily used for dispersed camping, motorized sports (jeeps, motorbikes, all-terrain vehicles), horse riding, hiking, hunting, gold prospecting and mining. And in the winter, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing.

As yet, no large or fatal wildfire has occurred in the Swauk Basin and that has led to complacency toward wildfire by many. The Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan focuses on both the risk and the prevention of such a wildfire. This planning document gives homeowners and forest



Community Wildfire Protection Planning Guidelines. Guidelines for preparing a plan that will meet federal requirements of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003.

Courtesy web site: www.safnet.org

visitors better knowledge to be able to make a more informed decision about their actions within the basin, both in preventing wildfire and in escaping one if necessary.

Unpredictable Wildfire Behavior

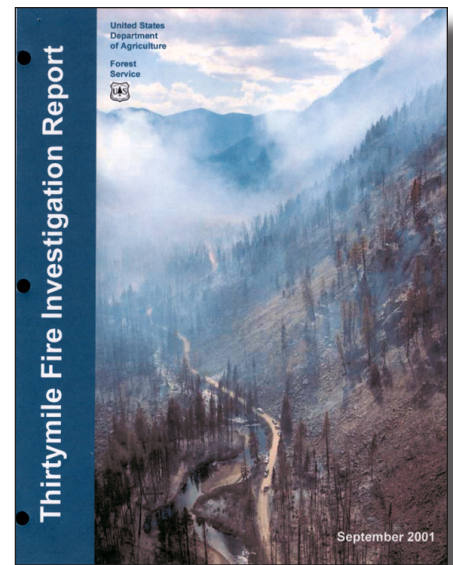
Many homeowners in the Swauk Basin have become complacent about wildfire risk because there hasn't been a bad crowning wildfire in recent history. Others have never had any experience with forest fires and don't appreciate the risks involved. The plan starts with a short introduction to wildfire behavior explaining the elements of a wildfire and especially the relationship between relative humidity and wildfire behavior.

Three wildfires are then described to illustrate fire behavior that could easily happen almost anywhere in the Swauk Basin. The Thirtymile Fire of 2001 illustrates the risk to both trained firefighters and forest visitors and the unpredictable nature of a crowning wildfire. Wildfires can be fatal. The Lauderdale Fire of 2004 illustrates that a wildfire can happen within the Swauk Basin and that fast action by homeowners and firefighters can save a forest. The fire was stopped within 300 yards of dense timber that would have turned the fire into a crowning fire that would not be stopped until it reached the top of Table Mountain. The Fischer Fire of 2004 illustrates what happens when a fire is not stopped and it does burn into dense timber. It also illustrates the financial liability a homeowner incurs if his actions, or inaction, results in a wildfire.

Hopefully, this section will provide enough information for a homeowner to be able to recognize the critical elements of a wildfire, and be able to make a correct decision—stay and protect his home or run as fast as possible to save his life.

Fighting a Wildfire

Responsibility for fighting a wildfire depends on who owns the property. A small portion of the private property within the Swauk Basin is being annexed to Kittitas County Fire District #7; however, most private property has no organized fire department for protection. Fire District #7 response time is measured in minutes, and they will respond to any kind of fire—structure, forest, grass or automobile—within their territory. They will not respond outside their territory except under agreement with the Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service to protect structures from a forest fire. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources fights wildfires on private and state land within the Basin. The Forest Service fights wildfires on federal land. The majority of the land within the basin is federal land. Response time of the Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service is



Final Report of the Thirtymile Fire. Four firefighters died in the Thirtymile fire of 2001. Such a fire could easily occur in the Swauk Basin.

From web site: www.fs.fed.us/fire/safety/investigations/30mile

measured in hours, and they will not respond to structure fires except to keep the fire from spreading into the forest. Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service fire fighters are trained to fight wildfires, not structure fires.



Liberty Cafe on Highway 97. The Liberty Cafe is one of only two commercial businesses in the Swauk Basin.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

Homeowners outside Fire District #7 have no one to fight structure fires except themselves and their neighbors—unless the structure is threatened by a wildfire. Then the Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service will pay fire departments to furnish equipment and men to protect the structure. Even then, not all structures will be protected. Those structures that present a significant risk to the fire fighters, i.e., have no defensible space, no escape route, poor access, etc., will not be protected.

A single incident commander is responsible for fighting a wildfire, and that command is transferred carefully between agencies when appropriate and between command structures within an agency as the character of the wildfire changes. Initial response to a fire will be handled by the Department of Natural Resources or the Forest Service having the nearest available fire fighting equipment. After it is determined whose land the fire is on, the incident command will be transferred to the responsible agency if necessary. As a wildfire grows in complexity, the incident command will pass to more capable fire fighting commands. That is from local, to regional to national commands, each with more resources for fighting a fire. After a fire is contained, the command will pass back down the command chain to the local level again. The incident command will also change to fresh fighting groups at the same level every fourteen days to rest the crews. There are strict rules for the length of time crews can stay on the fire line without rest. The safety of the fire fighters is the number one concern.

Evacuation is the Sheriff's Job

Whoever has the incident command of the wildfire, either the Forest Service or the Department of Natural Resources, can request the evacuation of the area and the County Sheriff will implement the order. Residents cannot be forced to leave their homes, but they can be prevented from returning to them if they do leave. The Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan helps homeowners make an informed decision that best protects their lives and property, i.e., stay home, seek a safe zone or get out.

Communication is the Sheriff's biggest problem in implementing an evacuation. If there is time, he will knock on every door to notify homeowners and would notify every miner, camper, hiker, hunter, off road vehicle user and sheep herder in the area. However, that is easier said than done. Most homeowners have telephone service but many

do not. Cell phone coverage is spotty at best in this mountainous area. Commercial radio and television reception is also spotty and cannot be relied upon to inform people in the Basin of an emergency evacuation order. The Plan improves the situation by establishing an informal two-way communication network among homeowners, mostly using telephones, cell phones and two-way radios, keeping homeowners informed and assisting the Sheriff's office in accounting for local residents.

Informing and accounting for nonresidents in the area is a serious problem. Forest visitors can be anywhere in the area and can be in harm's way without knowing it. The Plan creates a set of wildfire protection guidelines to be posted at various places within the Swauk Basin. The guidelines will inform visitors what danger elements to watch for, i.e., temperature, humidity, wind, dead-end roads, and will show possible safe zones and escape routes. Campers, hikers and others may have personal two-way radios, and the guidelines include listing frequencies used by local homeowners during emergencies. The guidelines also direct visitors to stop at evacuation check points to register, so needless search-and-rescue efforts are not done to find people already safely out of the area. The communication plan may save someone's life, but there is no guarantee that it will. Good advice can be ignored.

Information is Critical During a Wildfire

Where is the smoke coming from? Does an emergency situation exist? How do I find out? Three questions that come to mind at the beginning of a wildfire and there isn't any one place to get the answer. True, if you see a fire, clearly you need to report it to 911 in whatever method that works, either telephones or cell phones. For the less than an emergency situation the plan creates neighborhood networks to spread the alarm and keep people informed. Sirens, bells, whistles and the pony express, if necessary, will be used to spread the initial alarm. Telephones, cell phones, radio scanners and personal two-way radios will be used to gather and exchange information. The heart of the system is a "Know Thy Neighbor" directory for homeowners in the Swauk Basin. Names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, alternative emergency numbers and other pertinent information such as water sources will be included. The directory will be managed and kept up to date by volunteers in each neighborhood.

Homeowners Can Protect Themselves

There is much a homeowner can do to protect himself and his property from wildfire. Material has already been created offering advice such as: having a family emergency plan for evacuation and communication, using noncombustible building materials, clearing a defensible space,



Historic Liberty Town site. Liberty town site is in a 17 acre historic district in the center of the Swauk basin. It was named Meaghersville until 1912 when the post office moved from old Liberty and Meaghersville came to be called Liberty.

Photo in the Wes Engstrom collection



Liberty Mountain Development. Liberty Mountain is a development of vacation homes on the old Al Nicholson homestead three miles above Liberty. There is no power or telephone service to development.

Photo by Wes Engstrom



Sheep Grazing in Liberty. There are two sheep grazing allotments in the Swauk Basin. Sheep are trucked in for the summer and some landowners encourage grazing on their property to reduce noxious weed populations.

Photo by Wes Engstrom



New Development on Old Blewett Pass. There is a new development on a Section of land at the old Blewett Pass. Most of the development is in Chelan County except for one structure in Kittitas County. The old Blewett Pass Highway is the only escape route from the area.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

storing water and creating a buffer zone to knock down a crowning fire. The “Firewise” program provides grants to homeowners to do the physical work of clearing defensible space. In addition there are grants available to organizations to purchase needed equipment such as pumps, trucks, brush chippers, water storage. The Plan repeats some of the advice and directs homeowners to the various sources such as County Fire Marshall, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, U.S. Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service for more information and assistance. It also describes the procedures for applying for grants from government agencies for wildfire protection purposes. Most of these programs are administered by the Washington Department of Natural Resources.

Reducing Wildfire Risk

The risk of a severe uncontrollable wildfire is high in areas of overgrown unhealthy forest. When too many trees compete for a limited supply of water and nutrients, the forest not only dries out but also accumulates excessive fuels and is ready for an explosive crowning wildfire. Reducing wildfire risk requires creating a healthy forest. Creating a healthy forest throughout the Swauk Basin will take a long time considering the limited resources available to do the job. Therefore, available resources should be applied in a way to obtain the greatest benefit. Homeowners’ feel that the first priority should be building fuel breaks at the urban/forest edge where the risk is the greatest and as quickly as possible work into the forest by reinforcing natural fuel breaks, such as roads and ridges with shaded fuel breaks. A shaded fuel break is not a clear-cut but instead is the removal of excess fuels, and the removal of ladder fuels to reduce the likelihood of a crownfire, leaving old trees in place in an environment where they once again have water and nutrients to resume their growth. A fire can burn in a shaded fuel break, but the fire would be of low intensity, easily controlled, and do little damage. The web of fuel breaks would then be extended as quickly as resources permitted to create smaller and smaller blocks of forest at risk from a wildfire.

Number One Priority

Fuel breaks and shaded fuel breaks should be created around private property in the Liberty, Harkness Gulch and Liberty Mountain neighborhoods. An average 500 foot shaded fuel break around private property and a combination fuel break and shaded fuel break along the ridges and main roads around Liberty would reduce the greatest risk of wildfire in the Basin.

Number Two Priority

A 500 foot shaded fuel break on each side of Highway 97 would divide the Swauk Basin in half assuring that a wildfire could be limited to one side of the highway. The plan could be incorporated into the highway beautification concept by creating a drive through, park-like Swauk Basin instead of the existing drive through an overgrown and diseased forest.

The Liberty area has only one practical road for escape, and it goes through the most likely area for a fire to start. The Bureau of Land Management, rather than the Forest Service, is responsible for managing a critical 60 acres adjacent to the National Forest. The main road to Liberty goes through it as does the electric power and telephone lines. It is an undeveloped camping area used by jeep clubs, horse clubs, and individual campers. The area needs special attention to reduce the potential for a fire starting from dispersed campsites, and it needs special consideration to protect the main escape route for the east half of the Swauk Basin. The campground should be improved with fire rings and possibly even have a resident host person to monitor fire activity. Trees should be thinned to protect both the road and the power lines. The telephone lines and a fiber optic cable to Wenatchee are buried in that area and are already protected from fire except for the above ground structure housing the back-up power system.

County building officials should encourage building fire-safe houses in the urban/forest interface. Although there is little private property available within the Swauk Basin for new homes, those few land owners fortunate enough to have property to build on should be given a clear choice. Build a defensible house and expect protection from wildfire or build a house in a place and in a manner that makes it indefensible and don't expect protection from wildfire.



Wire Crystalline Gold. Liberty is well known throughout the world for its rare wire crystalline gold. It can be found in most major mineral collections and miners still search diligently for the specimens.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

Simple Rules to Follow

- Be especially careful when the humidity is low—when relative humidity is below 15 percent, a small fire can explode into a crowning wildfire quickly.
- Run from a crowning wildfire—a crowning wildfire cannot be stopped and is unpredictable.
- Know where you are—during fire season dead-end roads are traps waiting for a victim.

Wildfire Behavior

An understanding of wildfire behavior is essential to knowing when to fight a fire and knowing when to run from it, as fast as you can. Trained firefighters watch many indicators to let them judge how a wildfire is going to behave. These indicators can be reduced to a few that an untrained person can recognize. The most critical conditions to watch for are those that support a crowning wildfire—high temperature, low relative humidity and a heavy fuel load on an up slope. These conditions support a crowning wildfire even without wind because a crowning wildfire creates its own unpredictable wind. Add a natural wind to the conditions and it becomes even more dangerous. The Thirtymile Fire of 2001 is used as a benchmark for a crowning wildfire. Nature was in complete control.

Conditions for a more normal wildfire, that is—lower temperature, higher relative humidity, less fuel load and less slope—may produce a wildfire that can be fought. The Lauderdale fire of 2004 is an example of such a fire.

The Swauk Basin has all the elements necessary to produce a fatal wildfire. Being able to recognize the critical elements may save your life.

Elements of a Wildfire

There are three components needed for ignition and combustion to occur. A fire requires fuel to burn, air to supply oxygen, and a heat source to bring the fuel up to ignition temperature. After combustion occurs and a fire begins to burn, there are three factors that determine how the fire spreads. These factors are fuel, weather and topography. Depending on these factors, a fire can quickly fizzle or turn into a raging blaze.

Fuel

Wildfires spread based on the type and quantity of fuel that surrounds it. Fuel can include everything from trees, underbrush and dry grassy fields to homes. The amount of flammable material that surrounds a fire is referred to as the fuel load. Fuel load is measured by the amount of available fuel per unit area, usually tons per acre. Small fuel materials, also called flashy fuels, such as dry grass, pine needles, dry leaves, twigs and other dead brush, burn faster than large logs or stumps. Different fuel materials take longer to ignite than others. But in a wildfire, where most of the fuel is made of the same sort of material, the main variable in ignition time is the ratio of the fuel's total surface area to its volume. Since a twig's surface area is not much larger than its volume, it ignites quickly. By comparison, a tree's surface area is much smaller than its volume, so it needs more time to heat up before it ignites.

As the fire progresses, it dries out the material just beyond it—heat and smoke approaching potential fuel causes the fuel’s moisture to evaporate. This makes the fuel easier to ignite when the fire finally reaches it. Fuels that are somewhat spaced out will also dry out faster than fuels that are packed tightly together, because more oxygen is available to the thinned-out fuel. More tightly-packed fuels also retain more moisture, which absorbs the fire’s heat.

Weather

Weather plays a major role in the birth, growth and death of a wildfire. Drought leads to extremely favorable conditions for wildfires, and winds aid a wildfire’s progress—weather can spur the fire to move faster and engulf more land. It can also make the job of fighting the fire even more difficult. There are three weather ingredients that can affect wildfires: temperature, wind and moisture.

Temperature has a direct effect on the sparking of wildfires. The sticks, trees and underbrush on the ground receive radiant heat from the sun, which heats and dries potential fuels. Warmer temperatures allow for fuels to ignite and burn faster, adding to the rate at which a wildfire spreads. For this reason, wildfires tend to rage in the afternoon, when temperatures are at their hottest.

Wind probably has the biggest impact on a wildfire’s behavior. It is also the most unpredictable factor. Winds supply the fire with additional oxygen, further dry potential fuel and push the fire across the land at a faster rate. Not only does wind affect how the fire develops, but fires themselves can develop wind patterns. When the fire creates its own weather patterns, the patterns can feed back and change how the fire spreads. Large, violent wildfires can generate winds called fire whirls. Fire whirls, which are like tornadoes, result from the vortices created by the fire’s heat. When these vortices are tilted from horizontal to vertical, you get fire whirls. Fire whirls have been known to hurl flaming logs and burning debris over considerable distances. Fire whirls can also burst forward into what’s called hairpin vortices or forward bursts. These are quite common in crown fires. Forward bursts can be 60 feet wide and shoot out 300 feet at a speed of 100 mph. These bursts leave a scorched region and lead to fire spread. The stronger the wind blows, the faster the fire spreads. The fire generates winds of its own that are as many as ten times faster than the ambient wind. It can throw embers into the air and create additional fires, an occurrence called spotting. Wind can also change the direction of the fire and gusts can raise the fire into the trees creating a crown fire.

While wind can help the fire to spread, moisture works against the fire. Moisture, in the form of humidity and precipitation, can slow the

fire down and reduce its intensity. Potential fuels can be hard to ignite if they have high levels of moisture, because the moisture absorbs the fire's heat. When the humidity is low, meaning that there is a low amount of water vapor in the air, wildfires are more likely to start. The higher the humidity, the less likely the fuel is to be dry and ignite. Since moisture can lower the chances of a wildfire igniting, precipitation has a direct impact on fire prevention. Rain and other precipitation raise the amount of moisture in fuels, which suppresses any potential wildfires from breaking out.

Topography

The third big influence on wildfire behavior is the lay of the land, or topography. Although it remains virtually unchanged, unlike fuel and weather, topography can either aid or hinder wildfire progression. The most important factor in topography as it relates to wildfire is slope. Fires travel uphill much faster than downhill. The steeper the slope, the faster the fire travels. Fires travel in the direction of the ambient wind, which usually flows uphill. Additionally, the fire is able to preheat the fuel further up the hill because the smoke and heat are rising in that direction. Conversely, once the fire has reached the top of a hill it must struggle to come back down because it is not able to preheat the downhill fuel as well as the uphill. The Thirtymile fire serves as a benchmark example of how the elements of a fire can come together in a fatal way.

Fire Behavior Related to Relative Humidity

Relative humidity, which you can judge for yourself, and the Fire Danger Rating, which is posted in many places for you to see, are two of the best indicators of possible fire behavior. Temperature is also an important consideration but normally low relative humidity only occurs with high temperature so a low relative humidity implies a high temperature. The Fire Danger Rating considers more than just relative humidity. Relative humidity changes rapidly during a day while the Fire Danger Rating refers to the hottest part of the day and the sign posted at Forest boundaries changes only day to day.

The following table relates the relative humidity ranges to the Fire Danger Ratings and a description of fire behavior for the situation. You may not have the ability to measure relative humidity when in the forest but there are many indicators you can observe. When twigs and small branches snap easily and pine needles sound like rice crispies when you walk on them, be aware and be careful, the relative humidity is low.

Relative Humidity Related to Fire Behavior	
Relative Humidity	Fire Danger Rating and Fire Behavior
Greater than 60 percent	Very little ignition; some spotting may occur with winds above 9 mph.
45 to 60 percent	LOW - Fires are not easily started. Fuels do not ignite readily from small firebrands. A more intense ignition source, such as lightning, may start many fires in duff or punky wood. Fires in open cured grassland may burn freely a few hours after rain. Fires burning in forested areas spread slowly by creeping or smoldering and burn in irregular fingers. There is little danger of spotting.
40 to 45 percent	MODERATE – Fires start easily and spread at a moderate rate. Fires can start from most accidental causes, but with the exception of lightning fires in some areas, the number of starts is generally low. Fires in open-cured grassland will burn briskly and spread rapidly on windy days. Woods fires spread slowly to moderately fast. The average fire is of moderate intensity, although heavy concentrations of fuel may burn hot. Short-distance spotting may occur, but is not persistent. Fires are not likely to become serious and control is relatively easy.
25 to 40 percent	HIGH – Fires start easily and spread at a fast rate. All fine dead fuels ignite readily and fires start easily from most causes. Unattended campfires are likely to escape. Fires spread rapidly and short-distance spotting is common. High-intensity burning may develop on slopes or in concentrations of fine fuel. Fire may become serious and difficult to control unless they are hit hard and fast while small.
15 to 25 percent	VERY HIGH – Fires start very easily and spread at a very fast rate. Fires start easily from all causes, spread rapidly and intensify quickly. Spot fires are a constant danger. Fires burning in heavy fuels may quickly develop high-intensity characteristics, such as long-distance spotting and fire whirlwinds. Direct attack at the head of such fires is rarely possible after they have been burning more than a few minutes.
Less than 15 percent	EXTREME – The fire situation is explosive and can result in extensive property damage. Fires under extreme conditions start quickly, spread furiously, and burn intensely. All fires are potentially serious. Development into high-intensity burning will usually be faster and occur from smaller fires than in the very high danger class. Direct attack is rarely possible and may be dangerous, except immediately after ignition. Fires burning in heavy slash or in conifer stands may be unmanageable while the extreme burning condition lasts. Under these conditions, the effective and safe control action is on the flanks until the weather changes or the fuel supply lessens.

The Thirtymile Fire Incident

The Executive Summary from the *Thirtymile Fire Investigation Report* follows:

On July 10, 2001 four Forest Service fire suppression personnel were killed after they became entrapped and their fire shelter deployment site was burned over by the Thirtymile Fire in the Chewuch River Canyon about 30 miles north of Winthrop, Washington.

The fire, an escaped picnic cooking fire, was detected on Monday, July 9th. Initial suppression activities began that evening. In addition, the Libby South Fire was already burning about 50 miles south of this area, and exceeded 1,000 acres. The Northwest Regulars #6 (NWR #6), a 21-person Type 2 crew from the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, was dispatched to the Thirtymile Fire in the early morning hours of July 10th. They arrived about 9:00 a.m. to relieve the Entiat IHC crew who had been working on the fire overnight.

The area was enduring a lengthy drought and the moisture levels in large fuels were very low. The Energy Release Component, a measure of potential fire intensity, was near historic high levels for this time of year. Temperatures on July 10th reached nearly 100°F and the humidity was very low (less than 10%). Although there was no dramatic shift in weather that would have created high winds, such as a dry cold front, up-canyon breezes were present to aggravate burning conditions. Fire conditions were potentially extreme.

By the late afternoon the fire advanced from its perimeter east of the Chewuch River toward the top of the east ridge. At this time the NWR #6 was suppressing fires between the road west of the Chewuch River and the river itself. They were attempting to confine the fire to the east of the road. There were no personnel east of the river at that time since it had been determined that suppression activities there were fruitless. The NWR #6 crew took a break in mid-afternoon to eat, sharpen tools, and rest. About 4:00 p.m., they responded to a request from an engine crew for help on a spot fire ¼ mile north of their position. They sent two squads to assist.

In the moments immediately prior to the entrapment, one of the squads and the crew boss trainee (a total of seven people) were working in association with a fire engine and its three person crew when a spot fire erupted right next to the road. The seven NWR #6 crew members and the engine crew immediately got in their vehicles and drove south past the fire along the east edge of the road to safety. While driving they radioed the remaining 14 crew members who were working north, further up the river, of their dangerous situation.

The remaining 14 crew members (the Incident Commander and two NWR #6 squads) were actively suppressing spot fires between the river and the road about 1/4 mile north of the first squad when they were informed of the worsening situation that threatened their escape route. Immediately, 10 of the 14 got in the crew van and began to drive south. The other four preceded the van on foot. The van was driven past these four and approached the fire that was now burning across the road. The Incident Commander (IC) assessed the risk as too great to proceed.

He turned the van around, picked up the four crew members, all of the crew gear, and drove north upriver. The IC assessed different areas as potential safety



The plume dominated smoke column from the Thirtymile Fire. Such a plume indicates a massive crowning wildfire that is creating its own weather even on a calm day. Such a fire creates a strong surface wind on the ground toward the fire drawing air into the fire like a fireplace with an open damper. The wind was strong enough to blow mature trees down. The column structure is unstable and will lay down vertically creating fire whirls or simply collapse creating a strong down draft that blows the fire in unpredictable directions.

Photo from the Thirtymile Fire Investigation Report.



***The Thirtymile Fire Aftermath.** The Thirtymile fire had all the conditions present for a crowning wildfire; temperature of 100 degrees, relative humidity around ten percent, excessive dry fuel and a sloping terrain. Add a dead-end road and all the elements needed for a fatal fire were in place. After being trapped the firefighters and the two forest visitors found what would have been a safe zone with an ordinary fire. There was little vegetation, river on one side and a rock slope on the other. Unfortunately, it was not a safe zone for this particular crowning wildfire.*

Photo by Wes Engstrom



***A Tree Tells a Story.** This tree was near where the four firefighters died. It was baked on the up-canyon side, the side away from the direction the fire was moving. The hot gases had no oxygen left, the needles on the tree did not burn. It appears that a fire whirl curled over the site striking the firefighters from opposite the direction they expected the fire to come. The temperature of the gas was estimated to be 1200 to 1500 degrees.*

Photo by Wes Engstrom

zones or shelter deployment areas. Approximately one mile north the IC selected a site characterized by an extensive rock scree field above and west of the road. The Chewuch River and a sand bar were just east of the road. The site also had relatively sparse vegetation in the surrounding area. The NWR #6 crew unloaded and congregated on and above the road as they watched the fire. The van was turned around and parked on the side of the road next to the river.

Two civilians, a man and woman, arrived in their truck shortly after the crew. In the early afternoon they had driven to a campground near the road terminus about two miles beyond the deployment site. They had noticed the fire and suppression work while driving up the road to the trail head. Later in the afternoon while resting they saw the smoke and decided to leave the area. No fire shelters or information about shelter deployment were made available to them when they encountered the crew.

Although observers had noted the approach of the fire, the crew was not prepared for the suddenness with which it arrived. A rain of burning embers was followed by a rolling wave of tremendous heat, fire, smoke, and wind. Eight of the crew deployed their shelters on the road. The two civilians took shelter with one of crew members. One squad boss was high above the road on the rock scree observing the fire. He ran down towards the road, but could not get there before the fire arrived. He turned around and retreated back up the slope. Four crew members and another squad boss, who had been sitting on some large boulders above the road observing the approach of the crown fire, also retreated up-slope. These five deployed their shelters in the same vicinity as the squad boss. Four of the six people who deployed shelters in this rock scree field died.

The surviving squad boss and crew member (who had no gloves) both left their shelters at some point when the fire abated to non-lethal levels. The squad boss fled down the rock scree field to the road and jumped in the river. The other survivor sought shelter from the radiant heat behind a large boulder for a few minutes. He then fled to the safety of the crew van. The crew members and the two civilians that had deployed on the road eventually relocated to the river when conditions allowed their safe movement.

After the passage of the fire, all but four crew members were accounted for. The rescue party arrived approximately 35 minutes after the shelter deployment. One crewman with severely burned hands was evacuated to a hospital in Seattle while the remaining injured were treated locally and released.

All four deaths were caused by asphyxia due to inhalation of superheated products of combustion.

The Thirtymile Fire should be a lesson to us all. Even trained firefighters can be surprised by the unpredictable nature of a crowning wildfire, and such a fire can be fatal. We lost a friend from Cle Elum and we almost lost two neighbors from Thorp who were the forest visitors.

The Lauderdale Fire Incident

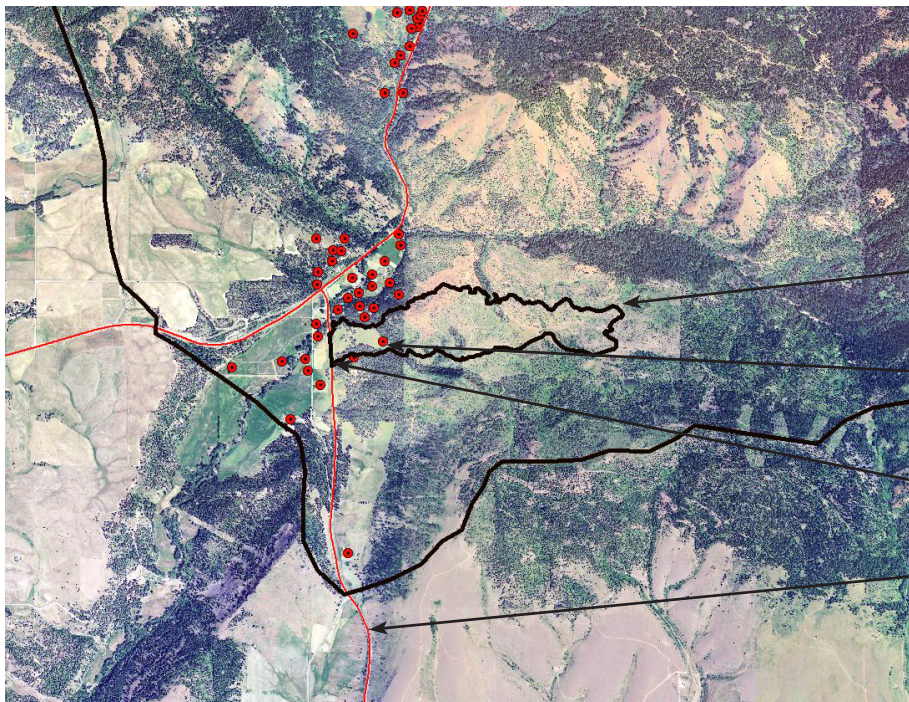
The Lauderdale fire of July 20, 2004, is an example of a fire occurring under conditions that almost led to a crowning wildfire but was contained before it reached heavy fuels. The temperature was 80 degrees, relative humidity was 28 percent and wind was 8 mph from the west. The fire burned into private timber land that had recently been selectively logged leaving widely spaced crowns. The fire stayed mostly on the ground where it could be fought. It was stopped just before it reached dense Forest Service timber that would have supported a crowning fire. The picture below illustrates how close the fire came to being a full fledged disaster. One cabin burned but if the wind had been blowing from the southwest instead of from the west, more homes would have been lost. If the fire had reached the dense timber on Forest Service land, the resulting crowning fire probably would not have been stopped until it reached the summit of Table Mountain. The fast response from the State Department of Natural Resources and Kittitas Fire District #7 saved the day.

The following descriptions of the fire by our neighbors in the Swauk Basin give a sense of what a wildfire may look like to us when a fire again occurs in the Swauk Basin.



The Thirtymile Fire Memorial to Four Dead Firefighters. May such a memorial never be needed in the Swauk Basin.

Photo by Wes Engstrom



Lauderdale Fire of 2004. The fire started along Highway 97 and spread rapidly uphill, it was stopped just short of dense forest that would have carried the fire to the top of Table Mountain.

Fire footprint provided by Department of Natural Resources

From a Newspaper Reporter's Point of View

Firefighters Save Homes and Lives in Lauderdale Fire
By Janie McQueen (A Swauk Basin Homeowner)

It was a hot, dry Sunday afternoon at the home of Paul and Lynnea Thibodaux just off Highway 97 near the Lauderdale junction. The couple had considered going to Seattle, but instead opted to stay and enjoy their home nestled among the poignant pines at the southern tip of the Wenatchee National Forest. At approximately 3:00 p.m. Lynnea went outside and noticed the fire racing wildly toward their home from the direction of Highway 97. "The second I saw it, I raced up to the house" recalls Lynnea. Though stunned by the reality, she ran quickly to the phone where the DNR fire report number is handy. "I keep that number right by the phone in BIG PRINT," said Lynnea, "so I don't have to waste time hunting for my glasses!" She is now planning to put the DNR fire report number in LARGE letters on the outside of her house! "Just in case I can't get inside in time." A motorist passing by the scene also called 911 and reported the fire. The Thibodaux's said it was only a few minutes from the time of their call when they heard the sound of helicopters and sirens. "It's amazing how many people got here so fast," said Lynnea. The couple's home was spared, as firefighter's worked to control the fire.

"When the fire got to the dead branches of a tree," Paul said, "the whole thing just exploded!" Paul Thibodaux is happy to point out that they did extensive "fire clean up" on their property some time ago. It created a "park like" appearance, but was essential to trim all the dead branches clear up each tree, and remove the debris from the property. They also cleaned out the area surrounding their house and outbuildings. "We couldn't do anything about the grass," said Paul, "but, without the heavy ground fuel, it could be stopped." This kind of residential fire fuel management works, and may have been a key help in saving the Thibodaux's home.

The fire started along State Route 97 near SR 970 around 3:00 p.m. Sunday, July 25, its cause is yet to be determined. As of Sunday, according to Kittitas County Sheriff Clayton Myers, the tragedy includes the loss of one home, two structures, and no injuries or known livestock deaths. One cattle owner has 80 pairs (cows with calves) ranging in that area and the fire threatens not only the animal's lives, but their food supply lays in ashes.

Officials advised evacuation of the upper Green Canyon and Elk Springs residents as the fire was continuing to move in a southeast direction, and there are about 20 to 30 cabins in each one of those areas. State Route 97 from Highway 10 near Ellensburg to the junction at SR 970 remained closed during the fire fighting efforts.

From a Homeowner's Point of View

On the morning of July 25, 2004, we (Paul and Lynnea Thibodaux) had gone up on the Gator with a chain saw to remove three fallen trees we had discovered blocking the “logging road” that parallels U.S. Timber’s property to the east of our land. It is important to maintain all possible means of access in case of fire, rescue or any other emergency situation, or just routine patrols or moving of livestock.

At approximately 2:45 p.m. I walked into the barn to check on Paul’s progress on a project. A moment later I emerged from the barn, which is located a couple hundred feet from Highway 97, and saw a wall of smoke and flames approaching the structure. I yelled “we’re on fire here” to Paul and then jumped on the ATV to race up to the house to call DNR. At that time we were terribly afraid that we were going to lose the barn and possibly the house. (I remembered later that I had DNR’s number also in my cell phone, but a land line is probably a clearer connection when available.) I told them our location, they confirmed that they knew the location and would dispatch immediately, and then I raced back to the barn where we were getting hoses out. One was already engaged at the hydrant inside the barn. Good Samaritan passers-by on Highway 97 had stopped to help, manning hoses through the west windows of the barn. Within moments we could hear the helicopters and then fire trucks arrived with fast-moving crews from District 7, DNR and U.S. Forest Service. I was later told that my call came in at 2:50 p.m. Bob Marshall, DNR, said he got the call right away and was en route immediately.

The wind was raging (35 mph?) from the west/southwest. The fire raced toward our barn structure and then continued behind the barn up the draw and then up the hill to the Braniff cabin, which was totally destroyed. It continued on from there.

I got our two kids—the Aussie dogs—to jump into my truck as my first thought was to get them off site and hopefully find the Burkes’ dog pen empty for our kids. That it was. I left them safe at the Burkes’ (who were not home at the moment although I encountered Pat and Jed homeward bound on Burke Road and told them they had two arfing guests waiting for them). I then raced back across the highway to our place to do what I could. Mary Burke handed me a camera as she drove up the highway, very happy and relieved to see that we were safe and that Doc and True were fine.

By then there was major fire-fighting activity well in progress, including Paul with chain saw in hand to clear access paths. It was a most frightening experience—one that will never be forgotten and one that has prompted us to take more measures to protect our loved ones and property and neighbors.

The dry grassy burned area at the highway at which it was obvious the fire started was cordoned off and an investigation took place on Sunday night.

Power was restored after the P.U.D. replaced burned down power poles on Tuesday. Lines were not actually energized until the crew cut some tree branches which were in close proximity to power lines on our property. They accessed high limbs with their boom truck lift. Thank you, P.U.D.!! Then telephone service was back in service late Tuesday after Ellensburg Telephone gear that had burned was replaced by their crews.

In the initial fracas when I returned from the Burkes', there was a man among the onlookers with a very professional looking camera recording images of the fire. I walked up to him, told him I was the owner of the property without a camera and asked for his name and number so that I could make contact to obtain photographs later if he would be so kind. He then said a prayer asking that our house be spared from the flames. I recorded his information in my cell phone (a handy note recording device when paper is not at hand!) at that time and have left two calls for him—one on Wednesday and the second yesterday. He has not yet returned my call. I will follow up on this tomorrow.

This afternoon (August 1) while we were outside working, Ritch Wood (one of the area chiefs assigned here from Forks) of the DNR stopped by and said there were still several units assigned to the Lauderdale Fire and would be around here until probably Wednesday, 8/4. He said there is now a reward (\$5,000?) initiated by a private party in Cle Elum, I believe he said, for info leading to conviction of the arsonist.

Several days after the wildfire, I was quite puzzled to be asked by someone who has had a recreational cabin over here for twenty (20!!!) years, "How did you know that you were supposed to call DNR?" and "How did you find their number?" It is obvious one cannot assume that people moving here or those who are here only a few days out of the year for recreational purposes know what to do. We have had DNR's number handy since we moved here as our initial questions had to do with what resources were available for fire fighting.

Folks who come here only on an irregular basis with hurried urban lives may not take the time to do the work to protect their properties. They enjoy their retreat's surroundings in their "natural state" in contrast to their everyday neighborhood which probably has fire hydrants on every corner. Are they oblivious to the danger? Are they not putting their neighbors at risk as well, because of the potential of setting trees on fire (if ladder fuel is not cleared) and thus causing raging tree fires to transmit fire longer distances, jumping over whatever fire breaks may exist?

From a Passerby's Point of View

My brother and I (Dan and Warren Sanders, homeowners on Liberty Mountain) were in the third car on the scene of the First Creek fire that started just east of the SR97 and SR970. The KC-7 firefighters arrived 15 minutes after we called it in with the cell phone. It was only 1/4 acre when we first got there, but was three acres in size when the first pumper arrived and about 10 acres before they started fighting it with the first response chopper about 45 minutes later. There was nothing that we could do to stop it because of the high winds—other than stomping it with our feet, which proved ineffective.

Here are the lessons that I learned from witnessing the front end of the fire:

1. Time is of the essence when the wind is blowing.
2. The first pumper truck arrived with only one volunteer firefighter and was therefore useless. The crew is equally important as the truck and equipment.
3. Passersby are not allowed to help fight fires, even in emergency situations in remote areas like the Swauk Prairie. We were all asked to vacate the area once WASP arrived (they took an hour to get there).
4. These fires grow FAST when there is a high wind present. Even if the first truck had a full crew, it still would not have been able to put a dent in the fire. Real progress wasn't made until the chopper began dumping water.

I really like the idea of somehow teaming Liberty with KC-7 Fire District in some way. Those guys have the right equipment and people to work these fire situations.

I can talk to you more about the details of what we saw at the fire scene last week if you are interested. I understand that it was the tenth arson fire in area over the past year or so—that is a scary thought.

From a Department of Natural Resources' Point of View

At 1450 hours I (Bob Marshall) overheard a page-out for a smoke report on Highway 97 in the Lauderdale area from Kittitas County Dispatch (KITTCOM). I left the Cle Elum DNR work center at 1451 hours taking Airport Road to the East. As I approached the 90 degree corner on Airport Road I could see the smoke column to the East. I asked for the two local DNR Engines and a DNR Helicopter. I turned Eastbound on Highway 970 at 1454 hours I made a call to South East (SE) Margheim on my cell phone. At 1500 hours I came around the corner on Highway 970 at Hidden Valley Road I could see the column had changed in size and color. I asked to have SE Berndt notified. I arrived on the Lauderdale Incident Highway 97 at 1506 hours and assumed Initial Attack Incident Command.

Olympic Wood arrived a few minutes later and was assigned Fire Operations; Rotor 341 arrived and set down in the field West of Highway 97 off Burke Road. Air Attack assigned to Helitack Stein.

1515 hours Fire District #7 Bloom arrived he was assigned structure protection.

Fire moving up slope off Highway 97 to the East in grass, brush and scattered timber. The fire size at this time was estimated to be around 30 acres. Multiple structures threatened on the South flank and one structure in the fire. Operations Wood ordered two dozers with dozers bosses.

SE Brown arrived at 1520 hours. Brown, Wood and Marshall divided up the incident with two divisions, South and North. Additional resources were ordered, type 1 helicopter, 3-20 person hand crews and a strike team of engines.

At 1523 hours IC 543 was notified of one structure on fire, the structures had no occupants at this time, many more structures still threatened.

1540 hours County Law Enforcement on scene began working on evacuation of structures.

1547 hours Operations Wood ordered two more dozers and four dozer bosses. Type 1 helicopter in route with 20 minute ETA.

1557 hours radio traffic from KITTCOM of a possible new start on Highway 10 North of Highway 97 junction. CWICC dispatched two local DNR engines.

1606 hours Operations Wood estimated fire size to be 60 acres. Lauderdale fire is moving up slope now in forest slash and heavy timber burning onto multiple landowners.

SE Reed arrived and transition of Incident Command happened at 1610 hours. SE Marshall assigned South Flank Division. SE Duck assigned North Division. SE Brown working with DNR dozer began a dozer trail on South Division just east of structures address 16992 Highway 97.

1613 hours SE Duck arrived at incident.

Lauderdale incident 543 burning in Easterly direction headed towards First Creek to the North and Green Canyon to the Southeast. South flank supported by dozer trail and hand trail around structures. Fire size estimated to be 150 acres. Type 3 incident structure in place will transition into type 2 team at 1100 hours 7/26/04.

The Fischer Fire Incident

The Fischer fire was started on August 8, 2004, by a young person riding a motorbike without a spark arrestor. What started as a small fire between Peshastin and Dryden that should have been easily put out became a wildfire that burned for 20 days and blackened over 16,000 acres and cost \$15 million to fight. It forced the evacuation of hundreds of people from rural canyons between Cashmere and Chumstick Valley and was uncontrolled until the weather turned cold and rainy, enabling firefighters to bring the blaze under control. At times the fire became a crowning wildfire, generating its own weather and forcing the firefighters to back off and watch as the fire did whatever it wanted to do.

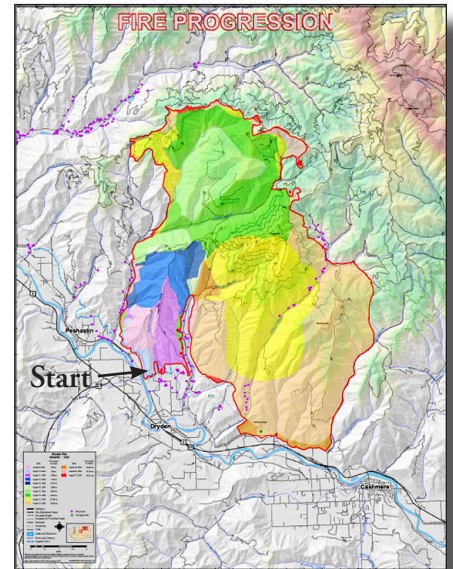
A national fire fighting team was called in and set up headquarters in Leavenworth. At its peak there were 1800 people involved in fighting the fire and it was one of the more successful wildfire fighting efforts. Although hundreds of people were evacuated, there were no fatalities, only one home was lost and only three firefighters injured. It was a good campaign. The Forest Service has presented the eighteen year old motorbike rider a bill for \$10 million, the Forest Service's share of the cost of fighting the fire.

The fire was only 15 miles north of the Swauk Basin in terrain very similar to that in the Basin—a mix of public and private land with many houses dispersed through the area. The fire started in an area that was not heavily forested. Unlike the Lauderdale fire in the Swauk Basin, the Fischer fire was not put out by the initial response crews, and it did reach dense National Forest timber and became a crowning wildfire. The Swauk Basin has even denser stands of timber and more up-slopes to carry a crowning fire. A Fischer fire could easily occur in the Swauk Basin. We each must make certain we do not start such a fire and receive a \$10 million bill from the Forest Service.



Fischer Fire on August 15, 2004. The picture taken from the Safeway parking lot in Leavenworth, 4 miles away, shows a plume dominated fire that is making its own weather. A very dangerous fire that is impossible to fight and one to stay away from.

Photo by Wes Engstrom



The Fischer Fire Progression. The Fischer fire started as a small fire burning up-slope to the north (shown in very light blue). Weather turned it to the southeast and it would have gotten to the outskirts of Wenatchee if a rain hadn't stopped it.

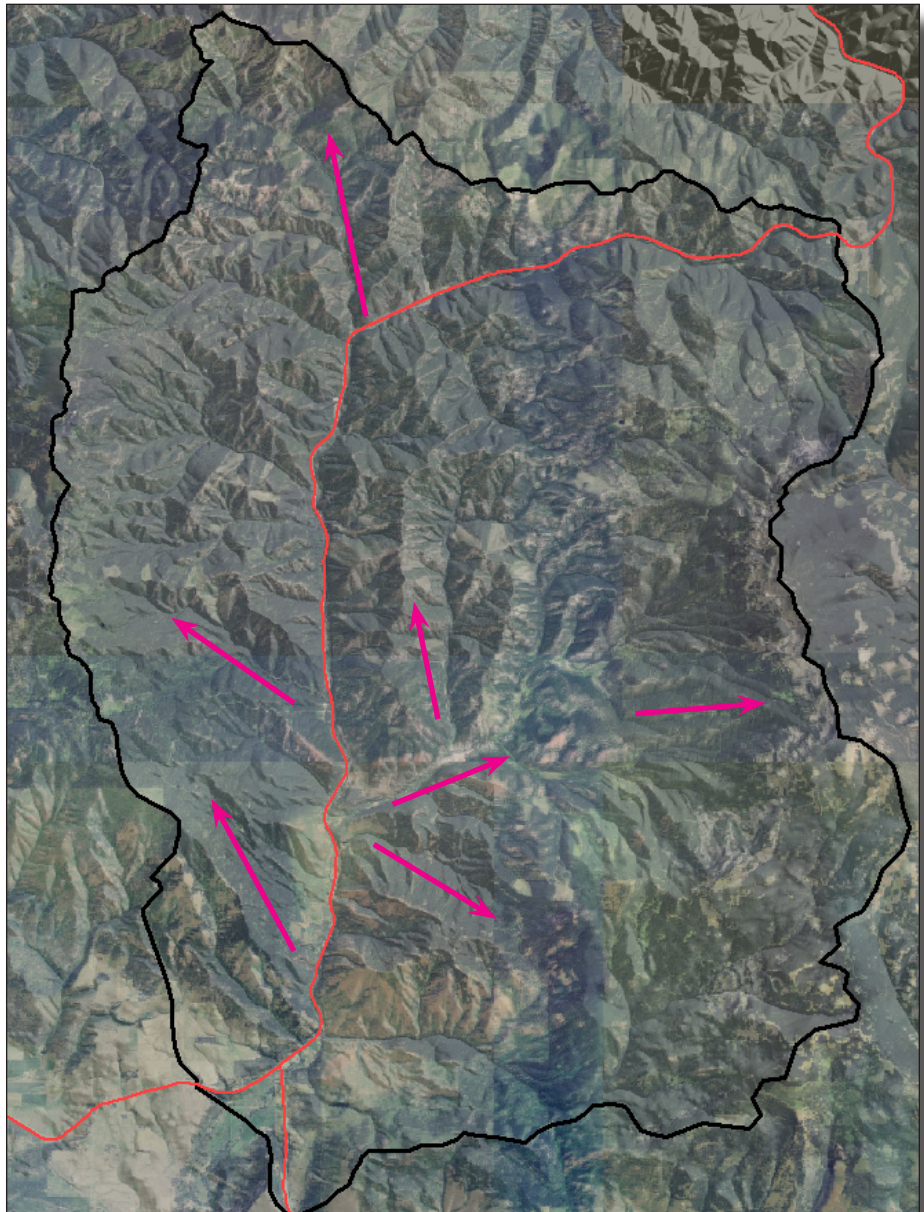
Map courtesy of the Incident Management Team 3

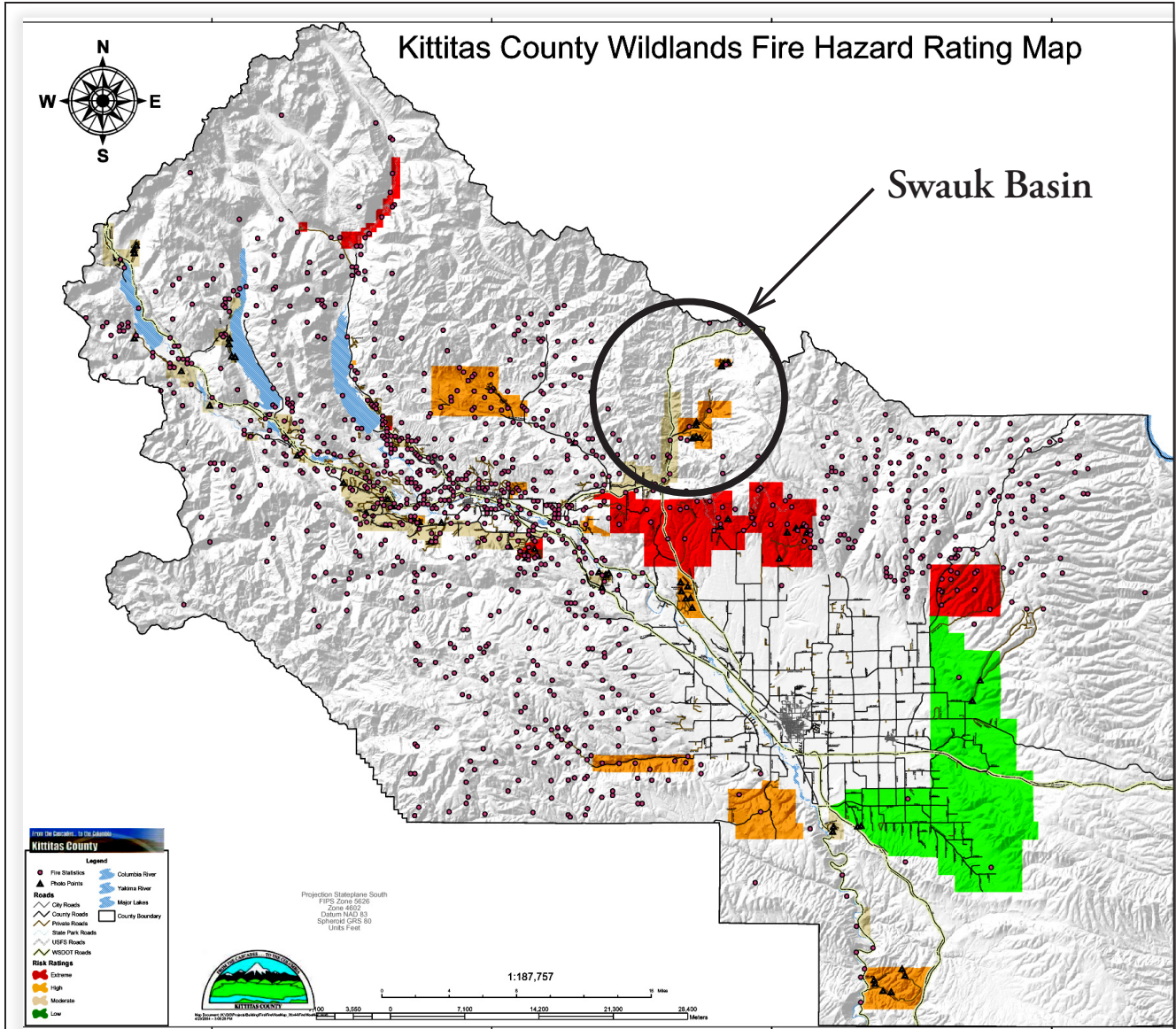
Swauk Basin Terrain

The Swauk Basin terrain is in the shape of a large bowl with Highway 97 bisecting it. The highway is at an elevation of 2000 ft. at Lauderdale rising to 4100 feet at Blewett Pass at the summit of the Wenatchee Mountain Range. To the east it rises to 6,000 ft. at the rim of Table Mountain. The entire area is forested with many slopes having old growth surrounded by dense ladder fuels, a combination that will support crowning wildfires. Another way to look at the risk in the Swauk Basin is the Kittitas County Wildlands Fire Hazard Rating Map which uses national standards to assess the risk to homes from a wildfire. It does not assess the risk to forests from a wildfire, only the risk to homes.

*An Ortho Photograph of the Swauk Basin.
The aerial photograph provides a graphic image of the forested nature of the Swauk Basin. The darker green areas on the up-slopes are the areas where dangerous crowning fires would occur. The arrows show just a few of the bad areas. Many of them point right at the neighborhoods where the houses are located.*

Map was made by draping a colored ortho photograph on a shaded relief map both provided by the Department of Natural Resources





*Kittitas County Wildlands Fire Hazard Rating Map. The Kittitas County wildlands fire hazard map shows the Liberty, Harkness Gulch and the Liberty Mountain areas as being high risk for a wildfire. The area along Highway 97 is in the moderate risk area. The map is drawn to the national standards for designating wildland fire hazard ratings. The Swauk Basin is within the circle drawn on the map.
 Map supplied by Kittitas County Fire Marshall*

Simple Observations

- A quick response is most effective—five gallons of water may stop a fire now that will take a million gallons to stop later.
- Firefighters must follow many rules—the number one priority is protecting firefighter's lives.
- Homeowners are not welcome in the middle of a wildfire—fire fighting is a dangerous job and firefighter's want properly trained and equipped people beside them.

Fighting a Wildfire

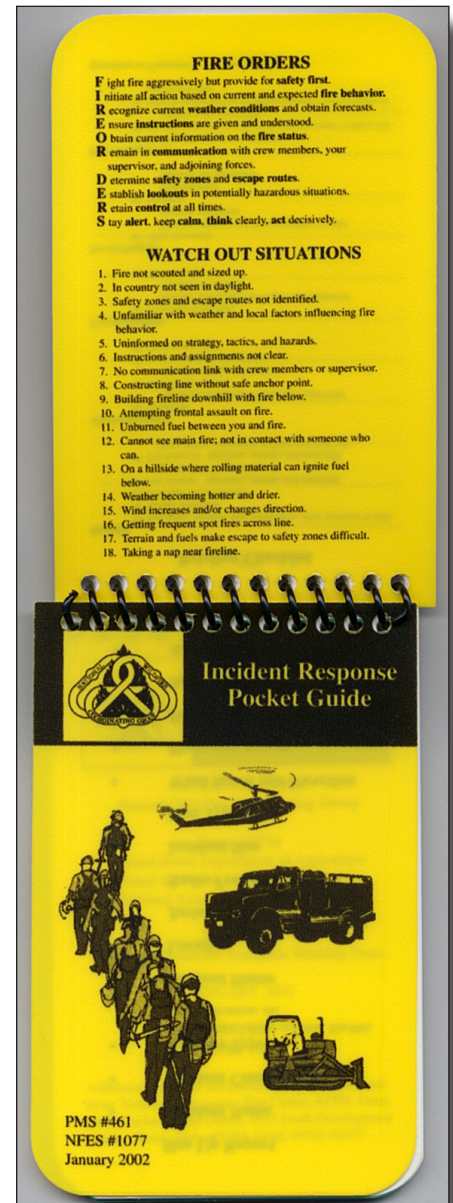
Homeowners in the Basin need to know what will happen when a fire starts so they can be prepared. Command responsibility for fighting a wildfire is involved and the rules firefighters must follow are many. The Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan makes no attempt at changing fire fighting protocol, it only explains to homeowners what to expect. It also explains how to report a fire in the forest.

Fire Fighting Agencies

There are two agencies that could be in charge of fighting a wildfire in the Swauk Basin, the Department of Natural Resources (state) and the Forest Service (federal). County Fire District #7 as yet does not include any area within the Basin but is involved because of agreements with the Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service for structure protection in the event of a wildfire. They respond under the command of Department of Natural Resources or the Forest Service.

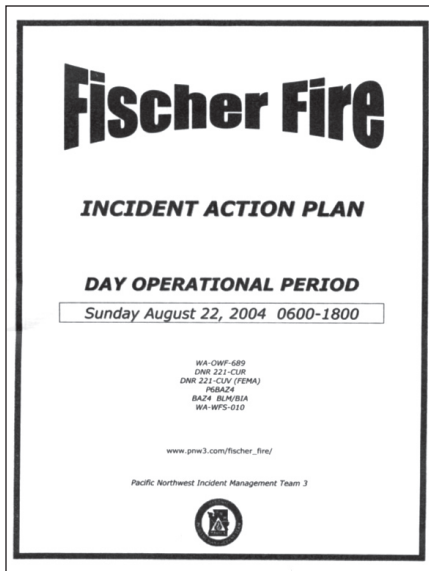
The Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service have a mutual aid agreement and have established a joint communication center in Wenatchee (Central Washington Interagency Communication Center) to coordinate fire fighting activities. When a fire is reported to the center it will dispatch the closest fire fighting units, either Department of Natural Resources or Forest Service, to attack the fire regardless of whose land the fire is on. If the initial attack does not put out the fire, then the command responsibility for fighting the wildfire goes to whichever agency is responsible for the managing the land the fire is on—the Department of Natural Resources, if the fire is on state and private land, and the Forest Service if the fire is on federal land within the Basin. Whichever agency that assumes command responsibility for the incident controls all aspects of fire fighting including having Fire District #7 protect structures from a wildfire.

There are priorities established for responding to a wildfire in the urban/forest interface. The first priority is safety of the firefighters, the second is protection of human life, third is protection of structures from wildfire, and the fourth is protection of resources (trees, grass and endangered species). The Department of Natural Resources prioritizes protection of resources before protection of private structures. It sounds simple to state the priorities but putting them into practice is not. There is a 450 page federal guideline, Fireline Handbook NFES #0065 (The Red Book), covering every aspect of fighting a wildfire that must be followed by federal agencies. The Department of Natural Resources does not have an equivalent handbook but usually follows the federal guidelines. Each person who supervises other firefighters carries a 100



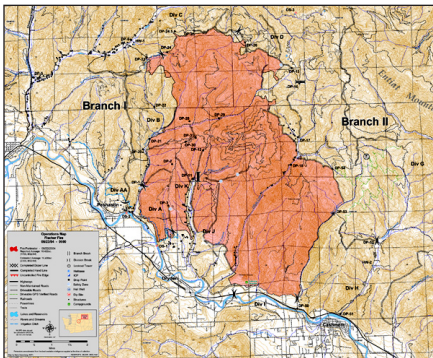
Incident Response Pocket Guide. Every person in position to direct others in fighting a wildfire is to carry this 92 page pocket guide. The guide is a condensed version of the 450 page Fire line Handbook (the Red Book) that covers all the rules to be followed in fighting a wildfire.

Guide courtesy of the Forest Service



An Incident Action Plan. An action plan for a major fire is published twice a day, once for the day shift and once for the night shift. The Fischer Fire plan for August 22, 2004, was 35 pages and directed the actions of 1800 people. Every person has access to a copy of the plan.

Plan courtesy of Incident Management Team 3



Organizational Map of the Fischer Fire. Maps are created daily and show the location of each unit involved in fighting the fire. The units are organized like an army with Branches, Divisions and Crews. Each person knows exactly where they fit into the plan and what their assignment is for the day.

Map courtesy of Incident Management Team 3

page pocket guide, Incident Response Pocket Guide, NFES #1077, containing the main points of the larger federal guideline. A six page Incident Organizer Report (OR9210-1) must be filled out and a briefing held for all firefighters before fire fighting efforts begin. If a wildfire continues to spread, more resources are assigned and responsibility is transferred to more capable and better equipped incident command teams. If the fire spreads to other jurisdictions, a unified command may be created. The 2004 Fischer Fire in Chelan County grew to 16,000 acres with 1,800 people fighting it, all under a single Incident Commander. A similar fire could occur in the Swauk Basin.

All of the above applies to fighting wildfires within the basin—not structure fires. Department of Natural Resources and Forest Service firefighters are trained and equipped to fight wildfire—not structure fires. They have no obligation to fight a structure fire, they only have an obligation to protect a structure from a wildfire and for the most part they hire local fire departments to do that.

If your house in the Swauk Basin catches on fire, no one is obligated to help you put it out. You are on your own. The Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service may respond to your house fire but only to keep it from spreading to the forest and becoming a wildfire. In addition if it does spread to the forest, you may be billed for the cost of fighting the wildfire. In fact under civil law, if your neighbor's house burns down because a fire spreads from your property because you have done nothing to control such a fire, you may be sued by your neighbor for his loss. Fire District #7 has an annexation plan for property in the Lauderdale portion of the Swauk Basin. If that is approved, some homeowners in the Basin will have structural protection, most will not. Fire District #7 responds to all fires, structure, grass and forest, within their district.

Even when the threat to a structure is from a wildfire, not all structures will be protected, only those with a reasonable chance of survival will be protected. Firefighters will only be deployed to structures that can be protected safely, and then only to those structures that can be protected successfully under the circumstances. When firefighters are deployed to structures, their first job is to decide which structures will have fire fighting resources assigned to them. If there is no safe zone for the firefighters or if there is no escape route, chances are no attempt will be made to save the structure. If there isn't any defensible space around the house or the structure isn't built with fire resistant materials, chances are fire fighting resources will not be assigned but instead will be used to protect structures that stand a better chance of being saved.

There are no hard and fast rules for deciding which structures to protect, it all depends on the circumstances at the time. If there is plenty

of time and resources, the incident commander may choose to clear space around a structure. The incident commander may also choose to use a helicopter to save a structure but only if the helicopter isn't needed for a more urgent use. If structural protection has been deployed to protect your structure and circumstances change which threatens firefighters, the incident commander will pull all firefighters. If you have elected to stay to protect your home, you will be alone with no support of any kind. The incident commander controls all access to the area.

It is also the incident commander's job to call for evacuations when necessary. It then becomes the County Sheriff's job to carry out the evacuation. Under ideal conditions the evacuation will be in an orderly fashion going from a Level 1 to a Level 3.

Level 1—Persons are warned that current or projected threats from hazards associated with the approaching fire are severe. This is the time for preparation and precautionary movement of persons with special needs, mobile property, and pets and livestock. If conditions worsen, every attempt will be made to contact you. An attempt may be made to contact you by phone.

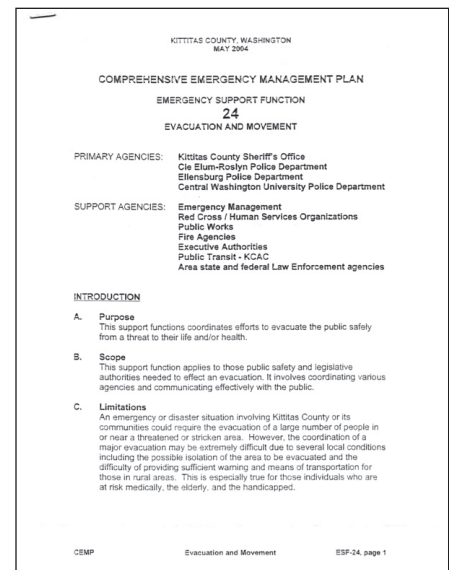
Level 2—Conditions indicate a good probability that hazards associated with the approaching fire will severely limit the ability to provide emergency service protection. Dangerous conditions exist that may threaten your residence or business. You must prepare to leave at a moments notice. Fire and law enforcement personnel in the area will provide specific information about when to leave and the route to take.

Level 3—Current conditions present specific and immediate threat to the life and safety of persons within the area. You are advised to evacuate immediately. Fire and law enforcement personnel will provide information about the route to take. You may choose to stay and protect your property but if you choose to ignore this advisement, you must understand that emergency services may not be available. Volunteers will not be allowed to enter the area to provide assistance. Roadblocks and 24-hour patrols will be established in the area. Residents will not be allowed to return until conditions are safe.

Obviously, there will be situations when the only notice you get, if any, will be a notice to evacuate. You will have to make a decision on the spot as to what to do, stay and try to save your house or run to save yourself. Your life may depend on that decision.

Reporting a Forest Fire

State law (RCW 76.04.445) requires that any fire on forest lands must be reported to the Department of Natural Resources. KITTCOM is the organization that receives a 911 call and is the dispatch service used to



Kittitas County Evacuation Plan. The County evacuation plan covers many emergencies, including wildfires, and is general in nature. The Sheriff will do his best under the circumstances to notify everyone at risk but there can be no guarantee that he will have time to do so.

Plan courtesy of the Sheriff's office.



KITTCOM Control Center, Ellensburg. The only number you need to report a fire is 911 which will connect you directly to this control center.

Photo courtesy of KITTCOM web site.

dispatch services for the Kittitas County Sheriff, Central Washington University Police, Ellensburg Police, Ellensburg Fire, Kittitas County Hospital District 2, Cle Elum Police and Fire, Kittitas Police and Fire, Roslyn Fire, South Cle Elum Fire and Fire Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. A 911 call to report a fire on Forest Service or DNR land not covered by a fire district will be immediately forwarded by KITTCOM to the Central Washington Interagency Communications Center in Wenatchee. The Communication Center is not manned 24 hours a day. When the center is not open, the call will be forwarded to an answering service who will notify on-duty personnel for proper response.

Reporting illegal camp fires in the Swauk Basin has presented another challenge to homeowners. Both the Department of Natural Resources and the Forest Service have the authority to issue citations for illegal campfires and say to call the Central Washington Interagency Communications Center, 1-800-826-3583, for any kind of fire. However, the County Sheriff is responsible for enforcing burn bans in the County and says to call 911 to report such a fire. If a homeowners doesn't consider the situation an emergency, then call the non-emergency KITTCOM number—509-925-8534.

There is cell phone service in the higher elevation portions of the Basin. These are the areas primarily used for recreation and are generally in the National Forest part of the Basin. KITTCOM is installing the capability to determine the geographic location of a cell phone call so that any call from a cell phone to 911 to report a forest fire could be located on a map and the appropriate agency, Department of Natural Resources, Forest Service, the Central Washington Interagency Communication Center or the County Sheriff, would be notified to respond.

If in doubt about who to call for any type of fire, simply call 911 and KITTCOM will notify the appropriate agency.

Organizing Homeowners for Action

The first step in organizing Swauk homeowners is a mailing to each homeowner explaining what is being planned and soliciting their participation in either the Firewise programs or the telephone network or both. A list of homeowners has already been purchased from the County Assessor and is included in this plan. There are 168 homes in the Swauk Basin of which 49 are occupied full time. Two thirds of the homeowners live somewhere else, mostly on the west side of the state and may not know about the fire plan.

The second step in the plan is to organize the Basin into neighborhoods and have a number of volunteers in each to be the core of a communication network. The network would use telephones and the internet for normal communications and two-way radios, sirens, pony express or whatever works for emergency communications. The Basin has been divided into five logical neighborhoods. The neighborhood networks are also the logical means for gathering information useful for firefighters and law enforcement personnel in event of a wildfire.

The third step is to promote the implementation of Firewise measures to help homeowners make their properties as safe as possible from loss during a wildfire. This not only means distribution of available information about Firewise programs but also applying for grants for financial assistance. Work parties will be organized to help homeowners who are unable to help themselves and to work on common areas that no individual feels responsible for. A Firewise grant has been obtained by the County Fire Marshall for part of the Swauk Basin although no work has been done as yet on the ground.

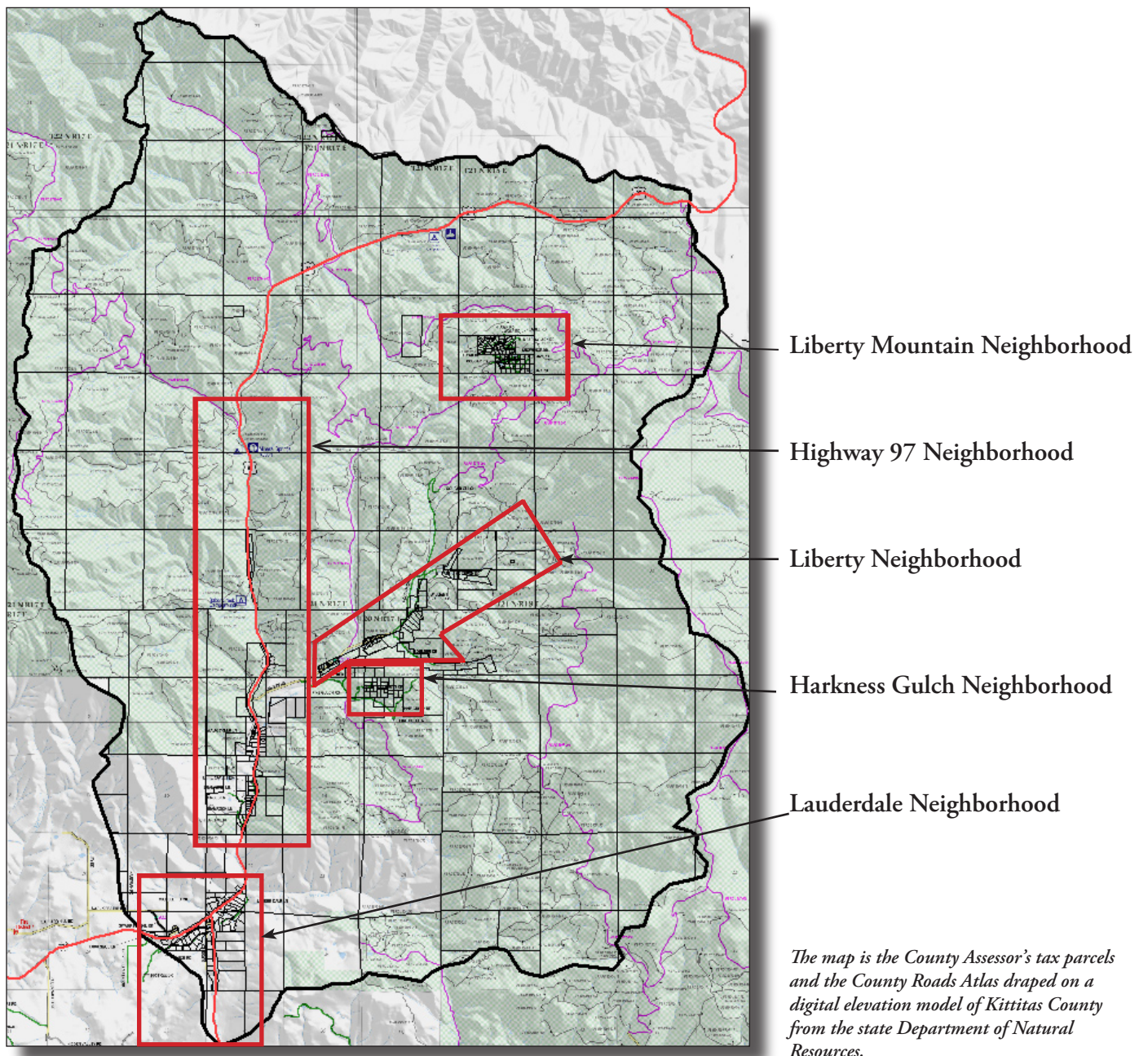
The Historic Liberty Homeowners Association and the Liberty Mountain Ownership Association are the only two formal organizations in the Basin that could apply for assistance from Firewise programs. It may be possible for these associations to obtain equipment such as brush chippers, sirens, brush trucks or water trucks. Such a course of action will be encouraged.

Timeline for 2005

- January—Obtain approval of the Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan.
- February—Create a website for the dissemination of information about the Swauk Basin and the Wildfire Protection Plan.
- March—Mailing to each Swauk Basin homeowner with a CD copy of the Wildfire Protection Plan and an option to participate in the phone network or the Firewise Program or both.
- April—Coordinate with Department of Natural Resources to implement the existing Firewise grant to assist Liberty area homeowners create defensible space.
- May 1—Discuss the Wildfire Protection Plan at the Historical Liberty Homeowners Association annual meeting.
- May 14—Discuss the Wildfire Protection Plan at the Liberty Mountain Ownership Association semi-annual meeting.
- June—Create a directory of participating homeowners.
- July—Community meeting to discuss the Wildfire Protection Plan and raise funds to continue the plan.
- August—Neighborhood work parties to clean up common areas.
- September 10—Discuss the Wildfire Protection Plan at the Liberty Mountain Ownership Association semi-annual meeting.
- November—Revise the plan for 2006 to emphasize what has worked and change what hasn't worked.

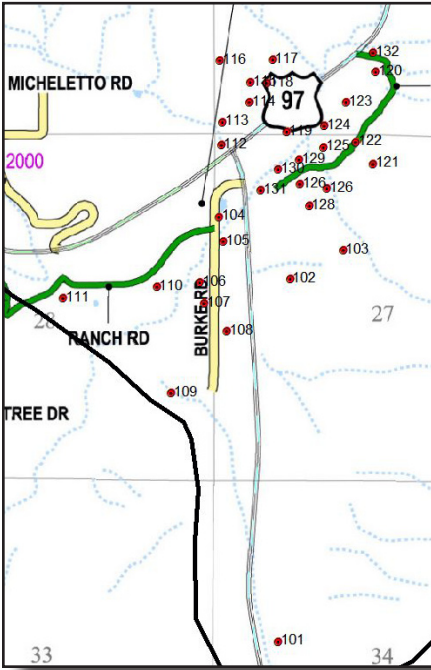
Swauk Basin Neighborhoods

The Swauk Basin is organized into five neighborhoods for establishing phone networks. County tax assessor records have been used to identify all tax parcels in the basin having improvements on them. The list of homeowners will be the starting point to make a mailing to each explaining the fire plan and asking them to participate in either or both the FireWise programs and the telephone network to be established. If a homeowner chooses to not participate, his house and name will continue to be listed in the plan but no additional information, such as his phone number and details about his house, will be.

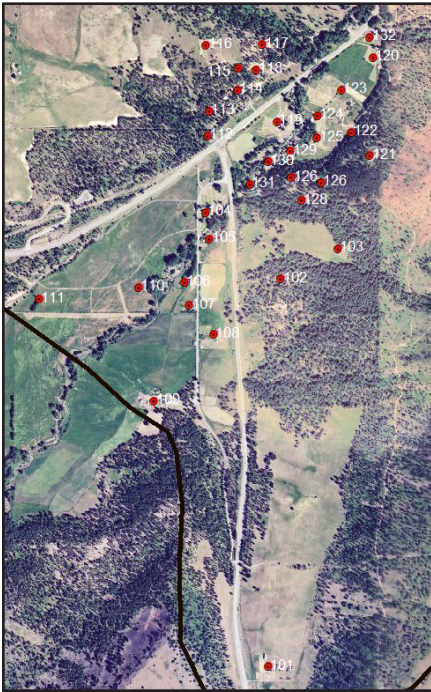


Lauderdale Neighborhood

The Lauderdale neighborhood has historically been an important junction of the roads from Ellensburg, Cle Elum and Wenatchee. It was originally called McCallum and had the first store and post office west of Ellensburg in 1884. It later became known as Virden, who homesteaded in the area and mined in Liberty. In the 1920's the name changed to Lauderdale when the Lauderdale Lodge and service station was built there. Today it doesn't have a name on maps. It is just the junction of Highways 97 and 970. Lauderdale Lane on today's maps was the original wagon road to Liberty and Blewett Pass. There are 32 structures in the neighborhood including 12 full-time residences.



Lauderdale House Locations

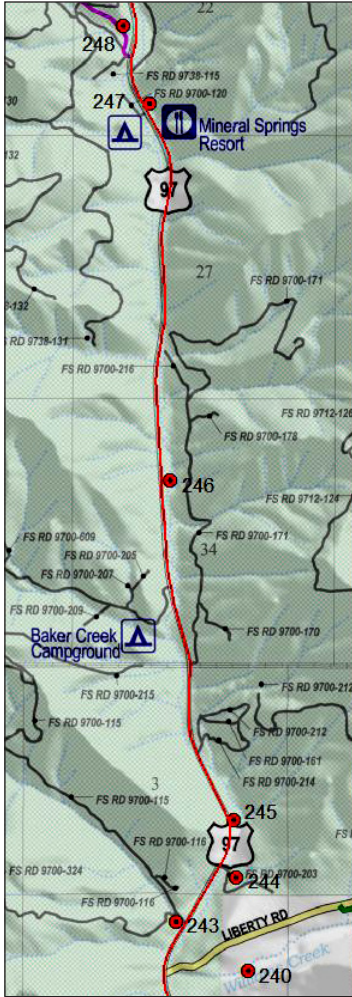


Participation List Lauderdale Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
101	Hwy 97	Barn	Patrick Burke	980 Burke Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
102	16990 Hwy 97	Part Time	David A. Nelson & Paul E. Thibodaux	16878 SE 59th St Bellevue, WA 98006		
103	16994 Hwy 97	Part Time	K. A. Braniff	4901 NW Eldorado Blvd Bremerton, WA 98312		
104	230 Burke Rd	Full Time	Luella Mae Pappé & Albert W. Waller	PO Box 511 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
105	370 Burke Rd	Full Time	Fred E. Chapman	370 Burke Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
106	501 Burke Rd	Part Time	Bradley Bogart	7560 California Ave SW Seattle, WA 98136		
107	661 Burke Rd	Part Time	James A. Hanson	1300 Swauk Prairie Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
108	790 Burke Rd	Full Time	James M. Elmore	790 Burke Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
109	980 Burke Rd	Full Time	Patrick Burke	980 Burke Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
110	430 Ranch Rd	Full Time	Janet M. Korsmoe & David M. Stambaugh	430 Ranch Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
111	712 Ranch Rd	Part Time	Eric Wulf	13732 217th Ave SE Issaquah, WA 98027		
112	Hwy 97	Phone Sub-station	Ellensburg Telephone Co. Attn: Jana Manterola	305 N Ruby Ellensburg, WA 98926		
113	Hwy 97	Part Time	Delbert E. Saylor	14118 107th Ave NE Kirkland, WA 98034		
114	17301 Hwy 97	Full Time	Loren R. Wright	17301 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
115	17303 Hwy 97	Part Time	Thomas C. Godfrey	17384 SE 133rd St Renton, WA 98059		

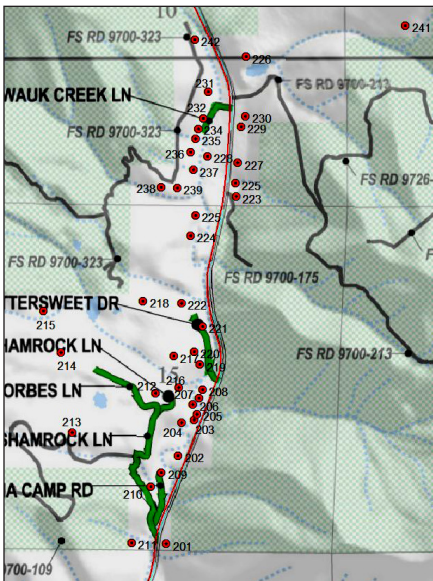
Participation List Lauderdale Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
116	17305 Hwy 97	Full Time	Roy L. Rogers	17305 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
117	17307 Hwy 97	Full Time	James C. Harrison	17307 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
118	17309 Hwy 97	Full Time	Michael Rogers	17309 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
119	17490 Hwy 97	Full Time	Michael Rogers	17309 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
120	131 Lauderdale Ln	Full Time	Jay J. Johnson	131 Lauderdale Ln Cle Elum, WA 98922		
121	400 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Maurice L. Martin	39917 SE 53rd St Snoqualmie, WA 98065		
122	402 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Leslie H. Ehle	12505 237th Ave Ct E Buckley, WA 98321		
123	541 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Cynthia M. Westendorf	12908 SE 218th Pl Kent, WA 98042		
124	681 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Steve Moergeli	29853 232nd Ave SE Black Diamond, WA 98010		
125	730 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Lloyd D. Everard	15824 SE 296th Kent, WA 98042		
126	732 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Lysle E. Esmay	PO Box 59264 Renton, WA 98058		
126	734 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Steve Moergeli	29853 232nd Ave SE Black Diamond, WA		
128	861 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Steven L. Sanislo	13001 444th Ave SE North Bend, WA 98045		
129	1001 Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Norman F. Mattioda	26503 134th SE Kent, WA 98042		
130	1061 Lauderdale Ln	Full Time	William D. Strain	1061 Lauderdale Ln Cle Elum, WA 98922		
131	? Lauderdale Ln	Part Time	Bruce E. Gilsdorf	23107 SE 40th Ct Issaquah, WA 98027		
132	17870 Hwy 97	Part Time	Robert Cronk	PO Box 1234 Bellevue, WA 98009		

Highway 97 Neighborhood

The Highway 97 neighborhood includes all properties above Lauderdale accessed from Highway 97. The properties were originally patented mining claims except for one homestead claim. Highway 97 started as the Swauk – Peshastin pack trail and then became the Swauk – Peshastin wagon road when miners in 1890 improved the pack animal trail into a wagon road in order to haul the large equipment needed for the Peshastin mining camp. The camp and the pass over the Wenatchee Mountain range later came to be called Blewett when the Blewett Mining Company bought the major interest in the mines and assumed responsibility for maintaining the road. There are 43 houses in the neighborhood, including 16 full-time residences and the only two commercial businesses in the Basin, Liberty Cafe and Mineral Springs restaurant.



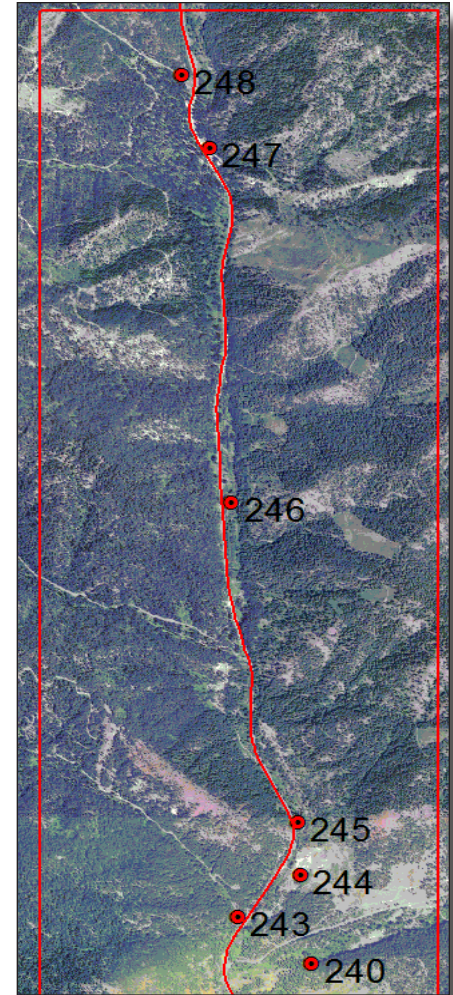
Upper Highway 97



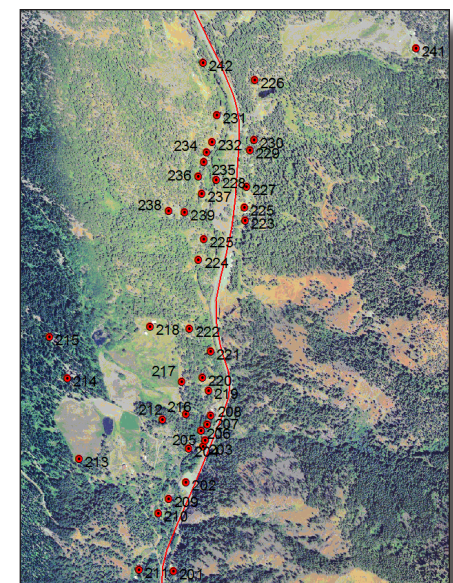
Lower Highway 97

Participation List Highway 97 Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
201	19160 Hwy 97	Part Time	Brad Knerr	19160 State Route 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
202	19601 Hwy 97	Full Time	William Snyder	81 Swauk Creek Lane Cle Elum, WA 98922		
203	19771 Hwy 97		Martha May Detwiler & Ronald E. Smail & Charles H. Smail	1175 A St SE #3 Ephrata, WA 98042		
204	19771 Hwy 97	Full Time	Ronald E. Smail	199771 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
205	19831 Hwy 97	Part Time	Alfred Andenes	2821 NW 96th Seattle, WA 98117		
206	19893 Hwy 97	Part Time	Fredrick L. Horst	16405 34th Ave S Sea Tac, WA 98188		
207	19891 Hwy 97	Part Time	David W. Horst	16810 34th Ave S Sea Tac, WA 98188		
208	19981 Hwy 97	Unoc- cu- pied	Donna M. Lynch	130 Shamrock Lane Cle Elum, WA 98922		
209	70 China Camp Rd	Full Time	Bruce M. Johnson	70 China Camp Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
210	72 China Camp Rd	Part Time	Karl Daviscourt	3876 Bridge Way N #302 Seattle, WA 98103		
211	101 Forbes Ln	Part Time	Bryan Hieronymus	PO Box 1600 Kingston, WA 98346		
212	? Forbes Ln	Part Time	Thomas J. Palmesano	PO Box 70441 Seattle, WA 98107		
213	991 Forbes Ln	Full Time	Irene Siepmann & Harry H. Siepmann	991 Forbes Lane Cle Elum, WA 98922		

Participation List Highway 97 Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
214	1261 Forbes Ln	Full Time	Renee DeWitte	1261 Forbes Lane Cle Elum, WA 98922		
215	1501 Forbes Ln	Full Time	Gary Heesacker	PO Box 1537 Ellensburg, WA 98926		
216	130 Shamrock Ln	Part Time	Annie Y. Sweeney	5600 Greenwood Ave N Seattle, WA 98103		
217	290 Shamrock Ln	Part Time	Gary W. Heesacker	PO Box 1537 Ellensburg, WA 98926		
218	750 Shamrock Ln	Part Time	Annie Y. Sweeney	5600 Greenwood Ave N Seattle, WA 98103		
219	131 Bittersweet Dr	Full Time	Brian Rawcliffe & Colleen Slowey	131 Bittersweet Dr Cle Elum, WA 98922		
220	211 Bittersweet Dr	Part Time	Timothy Erskine	8310 189th Ave E Bonney Lake, WA 98390		
221	240 Bittersweet Dr	Part Time	Lynn Seaward	701 N 47th Ave Yakima, WA 98908		
222	350 Bittersweet Dr	Full Time	Gary J. Kelly	391 Bittersweet Dr Cle Elum, WA 98922		
223	20800 Hwy 97	Full Time	Robert A. Repin	20800 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
224	20801 Hwy 97	Part Time	Wesley G. Christianson	3235 NW 59th Seattle, WA 98107		
225	20801 Hwy 97	Full Time	Jane E. McQueen	20801 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
226	20960 Hwy 97	Full Time	Donald E. Farrer	20960 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
227	? Hwy 97	Part Time	Mark D. Eide & Kenneth M. Eide & Angela V. Moore	29214 13th Pl S Federal Way, WA 98003		
228	21071 Hwy 97	Part Time	Burt E. Pickering	615 6th St #209 Kirkland, WA 98033		
229	21514 Hwy 97	Part Time	Leo J. Mangan	5415 180th St SE Bothell, WA 98012		
230	21554 Hwy 97	Part Time	Patrick E. Mc Keown	4910 157th Ave SE Snohomish, WA 98290		
242	21814 Hwy 97	Part Time	Donald R. Johnson	1063 Curlew Lane Burbank, WA 99323		
231	81 Swauk Creek Ln	Full Time	William J. Snyder	81 Swauk Creek Lane Cle Elum, WA 98922		
232	171 Swauk Creek Ln	Part Time	Bryant & Perrins	15406 SE 136th Renton, WA 98056		
234	173 Swauk Creek Ln	Full Time	Margaret L. Allen & Robert G. Thedens	173 Swauk Creek Ln Cle Elum, WA 98922		
235	213 Swauk Creek Ln	Full Time	Marlin J. Guse	213 Swauk Creek Lane Cle Elum, WA 98922		
236	? Swauk Creek Ln	Part Time	Peter Bernauer	4426 94th Dr SE Snohomish, WA 98290		
237	330 Swauk Creek Ln	Part Time	Eugene E. Petrick	PO Box 75 Duvall, WA 98019		



Upper Highway 97

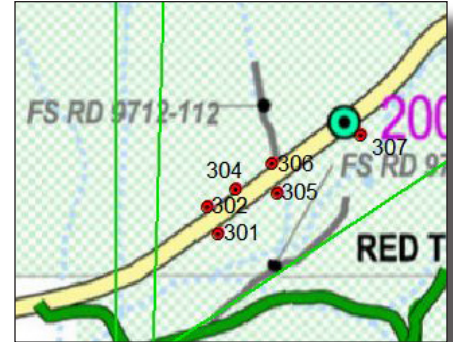


Lower Highway 97

Participation List						
Highway 97 Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
238	352 Swauk Creek Ln	Part Time	Linda L. Lewis	3210 36th Ave S Seattle, WA 98144		
239	354 Swauk Creek Ln	Part Time	Douglas G. Wensen	14515 82nd Ave E Puyallup, WA 98375		
240	21810 Hwy 97	Part Time	Dale A. Abbott	1001 Pinebrook Dr Chewelah, WA 99109		
241	21812 Hwy 97	Part Time	Lloyd Moler	PO Box 1408 Woodinville, WA 98072		
242	21933 Hwy 97	Part Time	Dale A. Abbott	1001 Pinebrook Dr Chewelah, WA 99109		
247	27510 Hwy 97	Full Time	Mineral Springs Dan & Cindy King	27510 Highway 97 Cle Elum, WA 98922		
248	? Hwy 97	Part Time	Log Cabin			
243	? Hwy 97	Full Time	Forest Service Camp			

Liberty Neighborhood

The Liberty neighborhood is composed of patented mining claims, some that date from 1896, and two homestead claims. The Liberty Historic District is in the center of the neighborhood and includes the Liberty town site. The Historic District is on both the National and State registers of historical places. The Basin's only paved road, other than Highway 97, extends from the highway to the Liberty town site. Liberty Road and Highway 97 are the only practical escape routes from the area. All other roads from Liberty reach higher into the National Forest, eventually reaching the Wenatchee Mountain Range summit or the top of Table Mountain. There are 42 houses, including 14 full-time residences, in the neighborhood.



Liberty Road below Liberty Town site

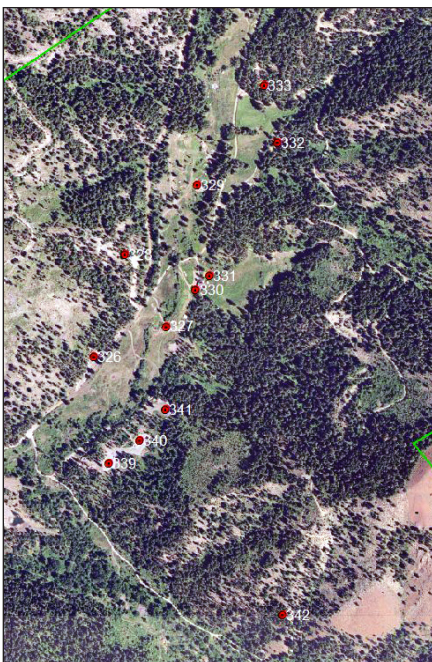


Liberty Town site

Participation List Liberty Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
301	1620 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Del L. Holter	1620 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
302	1641 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Del L. Holter	1620 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
304	1653 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Mary Jane Pickard	1653 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
305	1680 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Dennis L. Banker	640 N Miller St Wenatchee, WA 98801		
306	1693 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Dale L. Kisler	PO Box 583 Warden, WA 98857		
307	2000 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Billy Fulleton	2000 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
308	2701 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Wesley C. Engstrom	2701 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes
309	2731 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Wesley C. Engstrom	2701 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes
310	2750 Liberty Rd	Part Time	James W. Behnke & James W. Behnke Jr. & John H. Behnke	13204 168th Ave SE Renton, WA 98056		
311	2770 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Mike D. Gosson	2770 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
312	2771 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Russell W. Bettes	24015 NE 43rd St Redmond, WA 98053		
313	2811 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Elsie W. Marchand	707 Holly Coulee Dam, WA 99116		
314	2820 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Wesley C. Engstrom	2701 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes
315	2841 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Bill Burwell	2841 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes
316	2850 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Alfred J. Mc Inturff	2850 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes

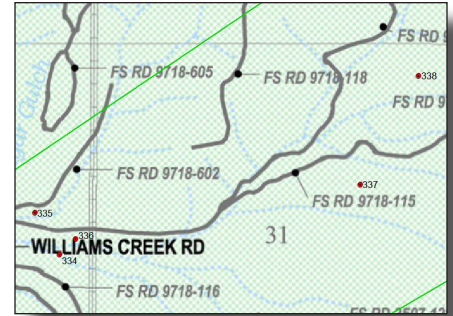


Williams Creek above Liberty Town site

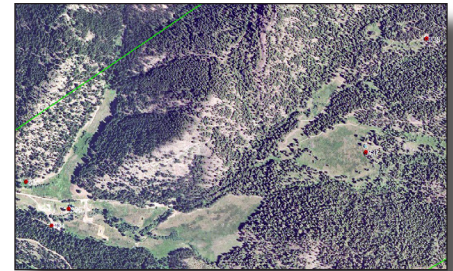


Participation List Liberty Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
317	2860 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Donald J. Yantzer	2860 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes
318	2901 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Bruce S. Osgoodby	2860 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
319	2870 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Rod C. Ullery	210 106th Place NE Bellevue, WA 98004		
320	2911 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Rod C. Ullery	210 106th Place NE Bellevue, WA 98004		
321	2921 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Hollis W. Tweed	2921 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
322	2930 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Rod C. Ullery	210 106th Pl NE Bellevue, WA 98004		
323	2981 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Stephen L. Wirt	2981 Liberty Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
324	2990 Liberty Rd	Full Time	Paul G. Compaan	PO Box 494 Snoqualmie, WA 98065		
325	3081 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Richard Pelkey	23417 108th St Court E Buckley, WA 98321		
326	3531 Liberty Rd	Part Time	Jon F. Fitterer	7261 Highway 10 Ellensburg, WA 98926		
327	40 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Leilani K. Fruehling & Kenneth W. Fruehling	3916 N 10th Tacoma, WA 98406		
328	81 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Susan T. Ulric	13315 184th Ave NE Woodinville, WA 98072		
329	81 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Bernard P. Knoll	2005 Dry Creek Rd Ellensburg, WA 98926		
330	140 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Gerald R. Peltola	830 Rader Rd Ellensburg, WA 98926		
331	? Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Steven A. Minalia & Karen R. Minalia	23738 262nd Pl SE Maple Valley, WA 98038		
332	610 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Fredrick L. Knoll	27221 121st Ave SE Kent, WA 98031		
333	640 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Timothy M. Knoll	640 Williams Creek Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
334	1350 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Gary D. Parker	12435 Gregory Ln NW Silverdale, WA 98383		
335	1361 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time				
336	1540 Williams Creek Rd	Full Time	William E. Bonnell	1540 Williams Creek Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922	Yes	Yes
337	2750 Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Charles Shelton & Roger Shelton & Joan S. Broeckling	21316 SE 20th St Sammamish, WA 98075		
338	? Williams Creek Rd	Part Time	Mark Dickison & Craig Dickison	1235 238th Ave SE Sammamish, WA 98075		
339	141 Boulder Creek Rd	Part Time	Mark K. Jones	710 S Mc Kinney Rd Othello, WA 99344		

Participation List Liberty Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
340	143 Boulder Creek Rd	Part Time	Larry A. Smith	216 N 5th Ave Yakima, WA 98902		
341	145 Boulder Creek Rd	Part Time	Fred Ringer	5909 223rd Ave NE Redmond, WA 98053		
342	721 Boulder Creek Rd	Part Time	Gloria A. Schatz	PO Box 313 Dryden, WA 98821		

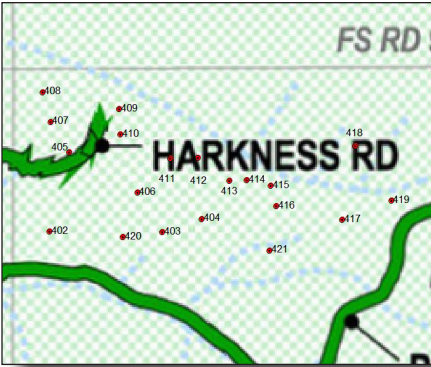


Williams Creek above Cougar Gulch



Harkness Gulch Neighborhood

The Harkness Gulch neighborhood is located on a 140 acre patented mining claim that has been subdivided into residential lots. It is on a forested ridge with a steep road to it and is surrounded by heavily timbered forest land that would be susceptible to a crowning type forest fire. There are 21 houses and includes 7 full-time residences.



Harkness Gulch

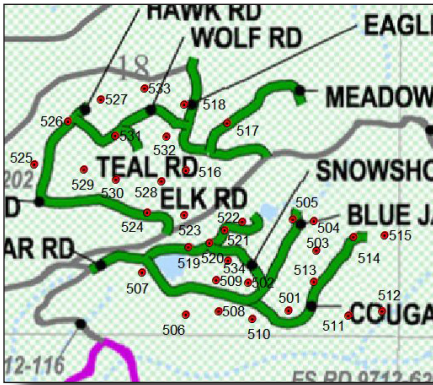


Participation List Harkness Gulch Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
402	220 Harkness Rd	Full Time	Jimmy Kenworthy	220 Harkness Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
403	500 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Joseph M. Dahl	8991 Highway 24 Moxee, WA 98936		
404	502 Harkness Rd	Full Time	Helen L. Day	502 Harkness Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
405	601 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Gary D. Reeves & Denise M. Pierce	10449 11th SW Seattle, WA 98146		
406	700 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Berta E. Provine & James L. Provine	20727 231st St SE Maple Valley, WA 98038		
407	741 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Scott Christy	3306 NE 185th Lake Forest Park, WA 98155		
408	743 Harkness Rd	Full Time	Janice R. Naragon	743 Harkness Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
409	745 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Christina R. Malm	PO Box 105 Roslyn, WA 98941		
410	800 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Barbara C. Clark	25120 98th Pl S #A 108 Kent, WA 98030		
411	850 Harkness Rd	Full Time	Jack Evans	850 Harkness Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
412	900 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Dale R. Kenworthy	PO Box 111 Hobart, WA 98025		
413	950 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Donald P. Loseff	2202 N 44th St Seattle, WA 98103		
414	1120 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Ernest E. De Leo	7014 S 115th Seattle, WA 98178		
415	1121 Harkness Rd	Full Time	Jeffery Loehndorf	1121 Harkness Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		
416	1170 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Andrea De Majewski	541 Temple Pl Seattle, WA 98122		
417	1260 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Stephen L. Hamilton & William J. Whipkey	7016 181st E Sumner, WA 98390		
418	1450 Harkness Rd	Full Time	Raymond L. Knight	1450 Harkness Road Cle Elum, WA 98922		

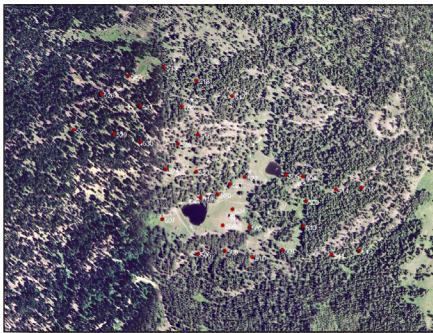
Participation List Harkness Gulch Neighborhood						
Num- ber	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
419	1451 Harkness Rd	Part Time	Robert Boddy	PO Box 643 Ellensburg, WA 98926		
420	1991 Pine Gulch Rd	Part Time	Donald C. Satnik & Carolyn B. Thurston	213 W 4th Ellensburg, WA 98926		
421	1993 Pine Gulch Rd	Full Time	James H. Johnson	1993 Pine Gulch Rd Cle Elum, WA 98922		

Liberty Mountain Neighborhood

The Liberty Mountain neighborhood is situated at the 4300 ft. elevation on the old CCC constructed Liberty – Beehive road. Beehive being over the Wenatchee Mountain Range ridge and near Mission Ridge Ski Resort. Liberty Mountain was originally the homestead of Al Nicholson, a long time Liberty resident who had filed on the land before 1905. The homestead was purchased by Al Eberhart in the 1960’s and divided into vacation lots. There are no power or telephone lines to the area and the only access in the winter is by snowmobile. It is a forested site surrounded by heavily timbered national forest. There are 32 houses, none of which are full-time residences. The neighborhood is already very aware of their risk from a wildfire. They have an alerting system and evacuation plan that has been developed by the owners. It is included after the participation list.



Liberty Mountain



Participation List Liberty Mountain Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner’s Name	Owner’s Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
501	60 Blue Jay Rd	Part Time	Leroy E. Annis	4227 Alturas St W Tacoma, WA 98466		
502	101 Blue Jay Rd	Part Time	David L. Rabbers	7720 142nd Way SE Newcastle, WA 98059		
503	270 Blue Jay Rd	Part Time	Richard A. Buck	24002 SE 253rd Pl Maple Valley, WA 98038		
504	340 Blue Jay Rd	Part Time	Tom Moloney	821-C 142nd Pl SE Bellevue, WA 98007		
505	341 Blue Jay Rd	Part Time	William F. Thorpe	201 W Helena Ellensburg, WA 98926		
506	100 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Daniel G. Sanders & Warren Sanders	16905 24th St Ct E Sumner, WA 98390		
507	120 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Columbia Cascade Land Co	PO Box 597 Ellensburg, WA 98926		
508	180 Cougar Rd	Part Time	William T. Leif & Lise D. Anderheggen-Leif	6804 47th Ave NE Seattle, WA 98115		
509	221 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Terry G. Perkins	PO Box 246 Seahurst, WA 98062		
510	280 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Charles F. Pitz	229 Percival St Olympia, WA 98502		
511	430 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Ralph W. Bell & Deniel M. Morrison	1242 W Sunset Dr Burbank, WA 99323		
512	432 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Dennis Mc Inteer	2405 SW 151st St Seattle, WA 98166		
513	531 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Eugene M. La Force	PO Box 554 Buckley, WA 98321		
514	731 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Russell Johnson	248 Umatilla St Port Townsend, WA 98368		

Participation List Liberty Mountain Neighborhood						
Number	House Address	Type Use	Owner's Name	Owner's Address	Participate	
					Fire Wise	Phone Net
515	831 Cougar Rd	Part Time	Michael S. Wozniak	2836 342nd St SW Federal Way, WA 98023		
516	? Eagle Rd	Part Time	James T. Pinkerton	3718 204th Court NE Sammamish, WA 98074		
517	330 Eagle Rd	Part Time	James T. Pinkerton	3718 204th Court NE Sammamish, WA 98074		
518	431 Eagle Rd	Part Time	Jeffrey L. Martin & Nancy E. Hawman	865 NW 73rd St Seattle, WA 98117		
519	91 Elk Rd	Part Time	Terry Shaw	11521 26th Ave SW Seattle, WA 98146		
520	121 Elk Rd	Part Time	Herby V. Mc Keever % Sam Mattingly	18909 197th Ave NE Woodinville, WA 98072		
521	181 Elk Rd	Part Time	Gilbert T. Mc Ewen	827 Alvord Ave N Kent, WA 98031		
522	281 Elk Rd	Part Time	John S. Lamb Jr.	22032 5th Ave W Bothell, WA 98021		
523	60 Hawk Rd	Part Time	Stephen C. Zabransky	22119 Meridian Ave S Bothell, WA 98021	Yes	Yes
524	62 Hawk Rd	Part Time	Terry G. Perkins	PO Box 246 Seahurst, WA 98062		
525	561 Hawk Rd	Part Time	Kenneth M. Prestrud & Lois E. Prestrud	8622 39th Ave SW Seattle, WA 98136		
526	721 Hawk Rd	Part Time	Vanja A. Holm	4309 34th Ave W #304 Seattle, WA 98199		
527	791 Hawk Rd	Part Time	Stan N. Keen	206 San Juan Dr Sequim, WA 98382		
528	100 Teal Rd	Part Time	Donald C. Petersen	7207 Olympic Dr Everett, WA 98203		
529	70 Wolf Rd	Part Time	Kent R. Bishop & Richard J. Marsh	823 W Fulton St Seattle, WA 98119		
530	110 Wolf Rd	Part Time	James B. Bushyhead	629 37th Ave Seattle, WA 98122		
531	171 Wolf Rd	Part Time	Margo Schultz	1510 Sunlight Dr Cle Elum, WA 98922		
532	350 Wolf Rd	Part Time	Dennis Johnson	1008 6th Ave SW Puyallup, WA 98371		

Liberty Mountain Ownership Association Emergency Alerting Plan

The membership of Liberty Mountain Ownership Association consists of a group of recreational landowners located approximately 5 miles northeast of the town of Liberty. The association is comprised of 69 lots (of which 37 contain structures), 3 common areas, 2 water retention ponds and 51 voting memberships at present. The area has no power or phone service and only limited cell phone reception.

Due to the fact of no power or phone service and that it would be unknown which members are actually on the premises at any given time, other methods will be needed to alert the members of an emergency situation. Because of the high fuel loads within the area and the possibility of rapid wildfire progression, evacuation, as opposed to any extinguishment, should take first priority. The following methods can be used by the membership.



A Defendable Liberty Mountain House. This Liberty Mountain house has been protected with defensible space created around it. Slash piles are ready to burn on New Years Eve.

Photo by Steve Zabransky

Even with the limited cell phone reception available to the members, an informal “cell phone tree” can be utilized. Some members can get reception because of the location of their property. Other members have installed extended cell phone antennas, which give nearly constant reception. This method can be the first tier of a notification system. A similar system could be used with the small public frequency radios now available. This would require the acquisition of these radios by the members, an established frequency, and more coordination involved. The use of these radios would probably prove more useful if turned on by the members after being alerted by one of the other methods.

If time permits, members can contact each other personally because the distances involved are not great. This method would require a good assessment of the situation before attempting because it would delay the evacuation of those who are notifying the other members.

A good audible warning system can be utilized with the use of portable marine air horn canisters. As soon as any member is aware of an emergency situation, they can grab the air horn and give warning sounds with three short bursts followed with a short pause and continued with three more bursts, pause etc. This method can continue to be utilized as the members themselves are exiting the area. The window of the vehicle should be down and the warning signals can be given while continuing to drive out of the area. Any members hearing this warning should in turn start giving their own warning signals. In this way, the entire Association could be notified in a very short time. This method of alerting may be the most useful warning system for our particular situation.

The previous methods can be implemented immediately. A final option can be explored with the use of a manual or battery operated siren located centrally and in an open area. We have such an area surrounding our

lower pond. This siren can be located on a slightly elevated platform and a signal given on first notice of an emergency. A member would have to operate this, so again, a good assessment of the situation would dictate its use because of some delay in evacuation to the member giving the alarm. This would be a loud warning siren that could also notify the membership in a very short time frame.

These are all practical methods that can be used at present. Modification of other warning methods can be continually assessed and added later as needed. Any system requires widespread knowledge among the membership to be effective. This knowledge will be passed onto the members during membership meetings and through mailings. Practice drills can be set up and followed to assess the effectiveness and to familiarize the membership with the alerting system.

This plan, incorporated within the Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan, will go a long way to improving the safety of all members.

Alternate Escape Routes from Liberty Mountain

Road #9712 is our primary entry and egress route used on most occasions. This would be the preferred route of escape if fire originates from a north, west or eastern direction.

Taking Road #116 and turning left on Road #9711 would be the preferred route to take from fire originating to our south or southwest, our most likely scenario. This will take you down to Highway 97.

Another good alternate from a westerly fire would be to take Road #116 and take a right on Road #9711. This will take you to Road #9712 where you would take a left turn and in approximately 1/4 mile you will reach an intersection where Road #9716 joins. Take a left down Road #9716 all the way to Swauk Pass at Highway 97.

The recommended exit for low clearance and other questionable vehicles unable to navigate the upper section of Road #116 is to take Road #9712. The problem with this route of travel would be pertaining to the southerly fires in that you actually head back into the direction of fire from two sections in the road, which should usually be avoided. This is still better than no alternative, however. In taking this section of Road #9712, you can proceed to the intersection where it meets Road #9716 and take this down to Swauk Pass and Highway 97. Another alternative from westerly fires using this route, would be to simply exit down Road #9718 to Liberty.

These are only suggested emergency exits. Use your discretion in all of these routes and be sure of the fire direction before committing to any of these exits if possible. There are other alternate routes out of our area, but it is better to stay with just a few and become very familiar with them



A Liberty Mountain House in Need of Work. This Liberty Mountain house could not be defended against a wildfire. The owner is now aware of the risk and is planning to create defensible space around the house.

Photo by Steve Zabransky

before they are ever needed. It would be wise to explore these other roads and become familiar with our entire area. All of these fire exits would be greatly enhanced with the improvement of Road #9712-116. Remember, wild fires can travel extremely fast and become very dangerous. Leave the area immediately.

Helping Homeowners Reduce Risk

Recommendations for Creating Defensible Space

As part of the Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan, residents within the area are encouraged to create their own defensible space or utilize the Firewise Plan administered through the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. The Plan will list actions that can be taken by homeowners but will not attempt to reproduce the large volume of material already created by various agencies giving detailed instructions on how to do it. Instead, the source materials themselves will be made available.

Defensible Space

A defensible space is the area between a house and an oncoming wildfire where the vegetation has been modified to reduce the wildfire threat and to provide an opportunity for firefighters to effectively defend the house.

The amount of defensible space around any structure is dependent on:

1. Steepness of Slope – measured in percent
2. Type of Vegetation

Slope is divided into three categories:

1. Flat to Gently Sloping – 0 to 20%
2. Moderately Steep – 21% to 40%
3. Very Steep - +40%

Within the Swauk Basin, all three types of slope can be found. It will be up to the homeowner to determine the percent of slope.

Vegetation is also divided into three categories:

1. Grass
2. Shrubs
3. Trees

Within the Swauk Basin, all three types of vegetation can be found either in combination or as a singular type. Again, the homeowner should decide which type of vegetation combination is surrounding their structures.



Living With Fire Publication. The *Living With Fire* publication is a very good reference for homeowners wanting to reduce the risk of a wildfire destroying their home. It is available from the State Department of Natural Resources.

Courtesy of State Department of Natural Resources



Fire Risk Rating For Homes Booklet. The *Fire Risk Rating For Homes* booklet is a good way for homeowners to understand what needs to be done to reduce risk of loss by wildfire. After doing their own assessment they will know how the fire fighting agencies will rate their homes and whether or not their home will be defended in the event of a wildfire.

Courtesy of State Department of Natural Resources

Recommended Distances

Grasses on flat to gently sloping ground should have a minimum of 30 feet.

Grasses on moderately to very steep - 100 feet.

Shrubs on flat to gently sloping – 100 feet.

Shrubs on moderately to very steep – 200 feet.

Trees on flat to gently sloping – 30 feet.

Trees on moderately steep slope – 100 feet.

Trees on very steep slope – 200 feet.

If there is any combination of these vegetation types, utilize the larger distances.

The three R's of defensible space:

1. Removal
2. Reduction
3. Replacement

Removal includes the elimination of entire plants, trees, shrubs, etc. This would include dead trees and shrubs and other highly flammable vegetation. Keep it “lean, clean, and green.” Raking dead pine needles, cones, etc., from around the structure and on decks and roofs would be included in this action.

Reduction includes removing plant parts such as branches, leaves, and mowing dried grasses. This is where the removal of ladder fuels comes in. Tree limbs should be pruned up to 15 feet, or 50% of live crown from the ground, whichever comes first.

Replacement is substituting less flammable plants for more hazardous vegetation. This could include removing dense flammable shrubs for well-irrigated flower beds and grasses.

Once a defensible space is created, it is up to the owner to maintain the space in optimal condition so that the benefit will be of value for years to come.

Other Considerations in Home Survivability

The type of building material, particularly roofing material, can play a big part in fire survivability. Use as much fire resistant building material as possible. Roofing material of class C or better is recommended. Metal roofing is a popular choice in high fire hazard environments.



A Firewise Landscaping Publication. There has been much work done by Kittitas County Master Gardeners to advise people on how to fill the defensible space created around their homes with plants that not only look good but also resist fire. There are Master Gardeners living within the Swauk Basin who will help anyone wishing advice.

Courtesy of Kittitas County Master Gardeners

Woodpiles and LPG tanks should be located away from structures. (30 feet is recommended but check local codes.)

Road and house numbers should be clearly visible. Access to the property should be cleared of flammable vegetation and as wide as practicable (two-way road preferred).

Emergency Water Supply

Familiarity with local water sources should be a priority to the residents within the Swauk Basin and any local emergency agencies.

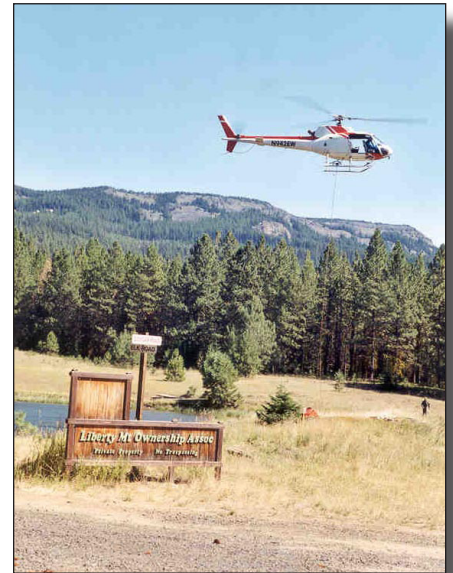
There are only a few water sources within the Swauk Basin area.

1. There are two ponds in the Liberty Mountain Ownership Association. These have been used in the past with great success to rapidly attack wildfires along the Highway 97 corridor and surrounding areas. Helicopters have been the most useful in the past, but these ponds can also be used as draft sources for fire apparatus to any emergency agencies responding.

2. The old dredge pond in Deer Gulch and the pond on the Siepmann property behind Liberty Cafe are two dependable water sources in the lower Swauk Basin. Both have enough open space for helicopters to use.

3. There are numerous streams and creeks but in late summer most do not have enough flow or clear areas for helicopters to use. They do have areas where pump spots can be developed for filling water tankers.

4. Some residents within the area have their own private water storage tanks and emergency water pumps that can be utilized during a fire. Any additional water supply by residents can be a valuable asset during these fire emergency situations. These water sources should be well marked and cleared for access.



Helicopter Dipping Water From Pond on Liberty Mountain. There are few water sources in the Swauk Basin. Liberty Mountain, however, does have two small ponds. The above pond was part of a sawmill that once stood on the spot. All homeowners will be encouraged to have water available on their property.

Photo courtesy of Dan Sanders

Simple Strategies

- Know your government agencies—different agencies, federal, state or county, have very different rules they must follow in meeting your expectations.
- Be involved early in agency planning process—the planning process can be long and it does little good to make your expectations known after the plans are complete.
- Maintain continuous contact with government agencies—government agencies have a short memory, personnel change often.

Coordinating With Government Agencies

Although the Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan is being written for private homeowners in the Basin, their action to reduce wildfire risk would have minimal effectiveness if the government land management agencies, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Natural Resources, did not also make appropriate changes to their part of the Basin.

The Swauk Basin has a mixture of land ownership, and any attempt to reduce wildfire risk must be coordinated between private property owners and the three government owners to be truly effective. The U.S. Forest Service has the largest ownership and because of past management practices, has the land most at risk for crowning wildfires. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management manages a critical parcel of land that appears to be in the National Forest but is instead adjacent to the forest boundary. The land has been, and still is, an undeveloped and uncontrolled camping area. The road to Liberty also goes through the land. The State Department of Natural Resources manages one section (a school section) within the Basin. It is heavily forested and in need of treatment. The Department of Natural Resources also administers the Forest Practices Act controlling all logging activities on private land within the State. The County can also contribute by assuring that property owners building new houses in the Basin realize the risks involved. And finally, private property owners within the Basin have not appreciated the risk they face from wildfire, neither their risk of loss from a wildfire started in the National Forest nor their risk of financial liability for a wildfire started on their property and spread to other property. All parties must cooperate and coordinate their actions for the maximum effectiveness.

Forest Service Initiatives

The Forest Service has managed most of the land within the Basin and has the greatest risk of resource loss from a wildfire. The National Forest has been managed under many Congressional and Administrative mandates, ranging from promoting the use of natural resources to multiple use of the land to conservation of wildlife habitat. For the last 100 years one action common to all management mandates was the suppression of fire. President Clinton's forest management mandate of 1994 went even farther in increasing the risk of loss to wildfire in a forest that was already at high risk. In order to protect spotted owl habitat it was directed that all logging should be stopped, any tree that died was to be left standing and any tree that fell was to be left on the ground. Roads should be closed and the forest left alone to become "old growth" habitat. The flaw in that reasoning, of course, was that it ignored the fact that by

suppressing fire for a hundred years fuel had built up to the point wildfire could no longer be suppressed, and it was just a matter of time before the forest would experience an intense wildfire that would destroy all habitat. The forest would not live to become old growth and would have to start over from ground zero.

The Forest Service did recently manage two thinning projects in the Basin. The first was a clearing of brush in an old timber sale to demonstrate a shaded buffer concept and the second was selective logging during the winter in Deer Gulch to protect spotted owl habitat. The large dense timber stand in Deer Gulch was broken up by logging select tracts in order to be able to better contain a fire to smaller tracts of habitat rather than risk losing the entire habitat in one inferno.

The Forest Service should continue their efforts to save the old trees still in the Basin and preserve habitat for wildlife. The first priority should be protecting against the spread of fire in the urban-forest interface by creating shaded buffers around private property. Having such defensible space will reduce the largest risk to both the forest and the private property. Next, create combination fire breaks with shaded buffers that will divide the forest so fire that did start can be isolated to a small area. A combination fire break and shaded buffer is a narrow fire break with a larger shaded buffer on both sides. Roads and ridges are a natural place for such combination fire breaks. Roads are already a fire break and ridges are easily created fire breaks. In this heavily forested basin neither roads nor ridges by themselves are effective because a crowning wildfire would easily jump across the fire break. Adding a shaded buffer on both sides of the fire break would dramatically increase its effectiveness. Now a crowning wildfire would be forced to the ground before reaching the firebreak. Once the fire was on the ground fire fighters would stand a good chance of stopping the fire at the firebreak.

Highway 97 is the main road through the Basin and would be a good demonstration of the concept of dividing and conquering a wildfire. The road is the main escape route and traffic on the road is a main risk source for starting a fire. The road by itself probably would not stop a wildfire. It didn't during the Rat Creek fire of 1994 on the Chelan County side of the Wenatchee Mountain Range. However, a 300 ft. shaded buffer on each side would create an effective way of isolating a fire to one half of the Swauk Basin. Such a demonstration of increasing the effectiveness of a State highway as a fire break would require cooperation and coordination with Washington State Department of Transportation. Local landowners would willingly help in lobbying the Department of Transportation to participate in such a demonstration.

Similar buffered fire breaks on Forest Service roads up Lions Gulch, Cougar Gulch, Deer Gulch and Hurley Creek would both isolate fires

to smaller areas and improve escape routes for homeowners and forest visitors. Extending the buffered fire breaks along select ridges would further isolate fires. After that select tracts could be thinned to further reduce wildfire risk to the remaining old trees in the Basin. There are many 300 to 400 year old trees which have been surrounded by smaller trees providing ladder fuel for a crowning wildfire. These old trees, having survived dozens of low intensity fires, will be killed along with all the rest in the next big fire. A needless loss. Spotted owl nesting sites must still be protected and the preceding strategy could do just that and at the same time restore the forest to its previous park-like look of 100 years ago.

Bureau of Land Management Initiatives

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management manages a critical few acres (about 70) in the Basin. It is land that had valid land entries at the time the National Forest boundary was established in 1908 but the land entries did not complete and the land reverted to the General Land Office (now the Bureau of Land Management) rather than being included in the National Forest. It requires an act of Congress to change a National Forest boundary and the area involved was too small for such an endeavor. After the old mining camp (old Liberty) was abandoned, the area has been used as an undeveloped campground. Liberty Road, the main escape route for homeowners and visitors in Liberty, Cougar Gulch and Harkness Gulch goes through the property as does the electric power line and telephone line. The area is forested with a portion that is heavily forested. It has been a concern that the heavily forested slope would support a crowning forest fire starting in the campground and going up slope to either the Liberty town site or the Harkness Gulch neighborhood, or both, depending on how the wind was blowing.

The entire area should be thinned to create a buffered fire break to protect Liberty Road and to reduce the risk that a fire starting in the campground would spread into the dense Forest Service timber adjacent to the campground. The campground itself should be brought up to standards for campgrounds with fire rings and barriers for protecting the riparian area of Williams Creek.

The Bureau of Land Management has suggested they could use a “Forest Stewardship” contract for the area, and they are encouraged to do so . A “Forest Stewardship” contracting concept would permit using proceeds from sale of the timber resources directly for improving and maintaining the area rather than having the proceeds go to the general fund and then having the improvements funded from the general fund as two separate actions. Although no specific contracting language has been prepared, there is an opportunity for local people or organizations to get involved and that is good.

State Department of Natural Resources Initiatives

The Washington State Department of Natural Resources has three interests in the Swauk Basin. They manage a section of land (a school section) within the Basin, they administer the State Forest Practices Act controlling all harvesting of timber on private property within Washington State, and they are the local promoters of the Firewise program and the main promoter for creating this community fire plan.

The section of land the Department of Natural Resources administers for school funds is heavily timbered and at a high risk for a crowning wildfire. It should have a shaded buffer where it adjoins private property and a shaded fire break along the ridge, just as was proposed for Forest Service land. The sides of the section adjoining Forest Service land share a mutual risk, and any fire break between them needs to be mutually agreed upon between them.

The Washington State Forestry Practices Act is administered by the Department of Natural Resources and controls all logging on private land. The act is designed primarily for environmental protection and needs to be modified slightly to include reducing the risk of wildfire as a valid measure for protection of the environment. State law cannot be changed by a State agency; however, the regulations and guidelines created to implement the law can be. If there isn't enough leeway to create sensible regulations, then private timber owners should lobby the Legislature for an amendment to the law. Local landowners are willing to help in that lobbying.

The Department of Natural Resources administers the Firewise program for Washington State. They have provided support to the local landowners in preparing this Wildfire Protection Plan. It is assumed they will continue to support the implementation of the plan with information, assistance in preparing grant requests, and other advice. One issue that has not been resolved yet is obtaining funds to print and distribute the plan. It is planned to create a website where a copy of the plan as well as other appropriate information will be available for distribution. It is planned also to have printed copies of the plan available. We may need a series of fund raisers to raise the money each year.

County Government Initiatives

All departments of County government have been helpful in preparing this Wildfire Protection Plan. The County Sheriff's Office and the County Fire Marshall participated directly. There is still more that can be done at the County level. There are few new homes expected to be built in the Swauk Basin, there just isn't that much private land left. Each person building in the Swauk Basin should be given a copy of the Swauk Basin Wildfire Protection Plan to make certain they know the risks involved and how to reduce those risks. When building a new house, a homeowner new to the area should know whether the house being planned will be defended from a wildfire or not. If the homeowner chooses to build a home without defensible space, adequate access, water supply or noncombustible material in the high risk areas of Swauk Basin, both he and his insurance company as well as his neighbors should know that.

History and Community

At one time Liberty, Lauderdale and Swauk Prairie were a community. People living in the area shared common problems—poor roads, little money, little entertainment and long rides to town, and they looked out for each other.

Over the years, as transportation became more efficient, that sense of community diminished as people came to identify with larger, distant communities. People no longer shared common problems.

The threat of wildfires presents all homeowner as well as the land managers in the Basin with a common problem, and solving that problem calls for establishing a sense of community. Only now the “community” needs to include government agencies.

Besides the threat of wildfire, homeowners and government agencies also share a common history, and that common history provides a starting point in creating a sense of community where neighbors help neighbors.

A look at history will help in finding common ground and in establishing a sense of community.

Appendix A – Swauk Basin History

by Wes Engstrom

The Swauk Basin has changed in the last one hundred thirty years since it was first settled. The forest has gone from an open park-like stand of ponderosa pine to a dense jumble of vegetation that only looks pretty, to some, from a distance. The ownership of the land has gone from 100 percent U.S. government to 40 percent back to 90 percent U.S. government. The government's attitude toward management of the land has gone from promoting the development of its resources to stopping its resource use and converting the land to a forest sanctuary for wildlife. Throughout the one hundred thirty years the one constant has been the recreational use of the land and a certain fondness by the people in the Kittitas Valley for the area. The result of this history is a Basin with a small amount of private property with a handful of full-time residents surrounded by a National Forest that is ready to burn.

The time line for the area is as follows:

- In the 1870's gold was discovered which spurred the development of the entire Kittitas Valley.
- In the 1880's half the land (odd number sections) was given to a railroad.
- In the 1890's gold miners built a wagon road through the Basin, it became Highway 97.
- In 1908 the Wenatchee National Forest was created managing forty percent of the land.
- In the 1910's homesteading was encouraged at the expense of mining.
- In the 1930's logging was extensive on both private and public land.
- In the 1940's the Forest Service began acquiring private land.
- In the 1950's and 1960's the Forest Service eliminated non-conforming uses.
- In the 1960's and 1970's ownership of the Liberty town-site was challenged.
- In the 1990's President Clinton's forest plan created a sanctuary for the spotted owl.

Today the challenge is bringing conflicting interests together to keep the forest from burning.



Liberty Town Site About 1900. The hillside in the background shows the open nature of the forest 100 years ago. The large building in the middle background was the community hall. The two story building in the foreground was the hotel, it is still standing and in use as a home.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection



Liberty Hillside Today. The hillside is the same as shown in the 1900 picture above. The open nature of the forest has been filled in with dense ladder fuels. Individual old trees on the ridge line seen in the 1900 photo can still be identified.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

Gold Discovery Creates a Community

The Swauk Mining District formed in 1873 after gold was discovered in Swauk Creek. Unlike many mining camps, Liberty did not boom and then bust. Instead it rose and fell, certainly, but did not become a ghost town. It instead became a living ghost town. The discovery of gold was at a gravel bar a few hundred feet north of the present Liberty Road turnoff from Highway 97. There are many stories about the event. One of the more colorful is from *Valley of The Strong*, A KIT Publication, Yakima, Washington. It is as follows:



“Old Liberty” in 1912. The Swauk mining camp came to be called “Liberty” when the post office was established in 1892. The camp and post office no longer exists.

Photo courtesy of Kittitas County Historical Museum

“If I went home this filthy,” said D. Y. Borden, one of a party of prospectors riding through the Swauk Creek area. “I’d be thrown out of the house. So let’s make camp at the creek and boil our clothes before heading home.” “Good idea,” agreed Tom Goodwin, who was riding near him. “And while we’re at it, we can do a little panning.”

“Forget the panning,” growled H. R. Beck, “I’m sick of finding nothing but sand. But I’m all for boiling the clothes.”

This was in 1873 and the men were returning from an unsuccessful prospecting venture in the Stuart Range and down Ingalls Creek. In the party were the Goodwin brothers, Beck, George Mycock, Borden and several others—all tired and discouraged.

After starting a fire, the men settled down to eating a lunch of beans and biscuits before starting the laundry operation. Benton Goodwin, who was deaf and mute, finally went down to the creek with a pair of buckets.

On dipping the first bucket into the creek, he happened to loosen a stone with its rim. After a swirl of muddy water had cleared, Benton saw something glistening on the streambed. Plunging his hand into the cold water, he pulled out a handful of gravel—and there, nestling in the dark gray gravel was a small gold nugget.

Benton’s heart started pounding. Six years earlier he had been prospecting with a group in this same spot on the creek. He had panned out a minute trace of gold, but the rest of the group had laughed it off as too insignificant to bother with. They had humorously named the spot “Discovery Bar.” But here was proof that there really was more than a mere speck of gold in Swauk Creek.

Excitedly, he popped the nugget into his mouth for safekeeping, filled the two buckets and struggled up the bank. At the top, with a bucket in each hand, he broke into a run, with his cargo of water sloshing and splashing around him.

As he burst, wide-eyed, into the camp, the others thought surely a bear must be after him. Several grabbed for their rifles and crouched ready for a shot at the beast.

Benton, mumbling incoherently, set down the now half-empty buckets, grabbed his brother by an arm and pulled the rifle from his hands.

“What’s the matter with you?” Tom yelled.

Raising a hand to his mouth, Benton spit the nugget into it, and extended the palm for his brother’s inspection. It took several long seconds before Tom could close his suddenly gaping mouth—and yell:

“Yahoo! Benton’s found a nugget!”

Within an hour they had more than \$5 worth of coarse gold and a nugget worth more than \$100. All thought of returning home vanished, and during the few days at Discovery Bar they took out more than \$600 in gold. By then, however, their supplies had run out, and they were forced to head for civilization—though vowing as they rode never to reveal the location of their strike. Somehow, though, the secret did get out, and a rush was on to the Swauk district.

The resulting mining camp on the Swauk developed into one of the earliest communities in Kittitas County. It was complete with a post office, school, stage lines, stores and a community center. It was a place that became famous for its Saturday night dances. Most important, however, was that it didn’t develop as a rip-roaring mining camp but instead as a community for families.

Two Mining Camps Are Named Liberty

There were only two mining camps within the Swauk Mining District, and they both were named Liberty. Not at the same time but in sequence. One still exists and the other is just a memory. The first mining camp was in the area where gold was first discovered on Swauk Creek. That is the area where the present Liberty Road connects with Highway 97. In April of 1892 a Post Office was established which the locals wanted to call the Swauk Post Office. However, the postal authorities did not approve the name because there already was a Sauk Post Office on the Sauk River and it would be confusing to also have a Swauk Post Office. The story goes that the postmaster, “Bull” Nelson (Gustaf Nilson), had invited some of the miners into the new post office and told them “You’re at liberty here boys, so set down, lay down or do as you please.” Later, when the postal inspector asked for a name different from Swauk, the boys suggested “Liberty.” Thus Liberty, the name of their camp, represents freedom and miners like freedom.

The second mining camp was on Williams Creek about two miles east of the first camp. By 1895 most of the activity had moved to this camp called Meaghersville. It was pronounced “Mearsville.” In July of 1912 the Post Office was moved to Meaghersville and instead of changing the name of the Post Office, the name of the camp gradually changed to Liberty. From old photographs it appears the “Liberty Post Office” sign was simply taken off the building in old Liberty and put on a store in Meaghersville. There wasn’t any formal paper filed anywhere changing the name. Map makers have been confused ever since, and some state maps still show Liberty on Highway 97 and Meaghersville where present Liberty is. The last structure in the original Liberty location, the Chic Cafe, burned in 1962 and now no trace of the old camp remains. The



Remains of Meagher’s Cabin in Liberty Historic District. Thomas Meagher is credited with finding the old gold bearing channel of Williams Creek. The mining camp was named Meaghersville before it became the present Liberty town site.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

Liberty Post Office closed in 1951. Mail is now handled through the Cle Elum Post Office.

Three Types of Gold Mining in the District

Most mining districts have two types of gold mining, placer and lode. The Swauk Mining District has three, placer and lode gold mining in the usual ways and, in addition, pocket mining for wire crystalline gold. Gold crystals occur only in half dozen places in the world. Specimens from the Swauk Mining District are among the best and are found in mineral collections throughout the world. Placer gold is recovered by washing gravel, lode gold by digging ore from a vein in rock and grinding it to free the gold, and wire crystalline gold is found by following seams through the rock to find pockets of gold. When the pockets are found, nothing more needs to be done to recover the gold. Usually just wash the mud off, occasionally soft calcite needed to be dissolved to free the specimen. The largest nuggets in the State came from the Swauk District. Some were on display at the Field Museum of History in Chicago. Wire crystalline gold from the Swauk is on display at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington DC.



Early Mining Flume Near Liberty. The flume was used for placer mining where gravel from a stream bed is washed to recover the gold.

Photo is a Pauske print in the Wes Engstrom collection

Last Innovation to the Ancient Arrastra Was In Liberty

The Swauk Mining District has a unique type arrastra. Some form of an arrastra has been used during the pioneer stage of mining in just about every part of the world. Gold ore is reduced to a mud by grinding action between a drag-stone and the rock-lined bottom of a tub. Mercury is used in the tub to amalgamate with the fine gold released from the ore as it is ground. The heavy mass of gold amalgam stays on the bottom as the mud is washed away by constantly running water into the tub. The amalgam is collected and is heated in a retort to vaporize the mercury, leaving the gold behind.

The Spanish are credited with bringing the arrastra to the West Coast of the United States via Mexico. Hence, it is commonly called a Spanish arrastra. Originally the arrastra was powered by man or animals, but as technology developed, water wheels were used where water power was available. The local arrastras used a very innovative water wheel unique to this area. Instead of a vertical water wheel, local arrastras had a horizontal undershot water wheel which looked much like a merry-go-round, with the tub in the center and the drag-stones tied directly to the spokes of the wheel. It does not use a gear as does a vertical water wheel nor does it require a heavy framework to support it. It operates on a single replaceable wooden bearing and is about as light weight and stable as is possible for a large water wheel. It may be that this was the last improvement made to the ancient arrastra in its 3000 year history, but

the innovation was lost to the historians because industrial technology developed better devices, such as the stamp mill, and the ancient arrastra was quickly forgotten.

In 1897 there were eight arrastras in operation in the Swauk Mining District. They were soon outclassed by the more modern stamp mills, but nevertheless, arrastras were still being used here in the 1930's and one, the Virden arrastra, was used in the 1950's. It is still a mystery who came up with the idea of using a horizontal undershot water wheel. Was it a local invention or was it brought here from somewhere else? A search through mining history books has not found a single mention of such a water wheel any where else, and no one living around here now has been able to tell us why local arrastras used this unique design while arrastras just fifteen miles away did not. Perhaps it was one of the same people who had the foresight to build the first Liberty school who also had the natural engineering ability to adapt technology and create a truly great improvement in arrastra design. That is, to create what can be called the "Liberty design" for the arrastra.

Miners Build a Highway

The prospectors who discovered gold in Swauk Creek in 1867 and again in 1873 were prospecting farther to the north and were returning to Yakima after unsuccessfully looking for gold in the Peshastin and Mt. Stewart range. Gold was discovered on Peshastin Creek above Ingalls Creek at about the time the Swauk deposits were found. There were no wagon roads at the time. The prospectors were using Indian trails and pack animals. At first pack trains were used to haul necessary supplies for developing the mines. Wagon roads were needed when the Peshastin Camp began major development in the 1890's. A narrow canyon on Peshastin Creek just above Ingalls Creek prevented any wagon from getting through from the north. Therefore, lumber, steam boilers, stamp mills, trams and cables could not be brought from Wenatchee, they had to come from Ellensburg or Cle Elum over the Wenatchee Mountain Range.

In 1891 the mining companies in the Peshastin built a wagon road from Mountain Home, up Park Creek over the Wenatchee crest and down the Peshastin Creek to the mines in Culver Gulch. They followed the old Indian trail with a series of short switch backs up the steeper parts of Park Creek and Peshastin Creek. Kittitas County Commissioners were asked to help, but they declined. Miners then each donated one week of labor and the mining companies donated equipment and supplies to build the wagon road. In 1892 the Blewett Mining Company bought a major interest in the Peshastin Mines and also assumed responsibility for the road. They opened the Blewett Post Office and in 1897, when the



Virden Arrastra in the 1970's. The arrastra was used to grind gold ore. The arrastras around Liberty used a horizontal undershot water wheel for power, probably the only place in the world to do so. Vandals destroyed the arrastra in 1974. A working replica of the Virden arrastra was built in Liberty in 1974.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

United States Geological Survey (USGS) made the first map of the area, they named the Peshastin Camp “Blewett” and the old Indian pass over the Wenatchee Range “Blewett Pass.”

In 1915, Washington State was converting wagon roads to automobile roads. The Sunset Highway was created to connect Seattle and Spokane. It was planned to go over Snoqualmie Pass to Ellensburg then north over Colockum Pass to Wenatchee, go over the Columbia River at Wenatchee and on to Spokane. The only bridge over the Columbia was at Wenatchee. Kittitas County Commissioners had already paid for a survey over Colockum Pass. Cle Elum interests objected as they wanted the road to go over Blewett Pass. The Commissioners agreed to pay for another survey over Blewett Pass. However, they specified an eight percent grade, the same as the wagon road and too steep for a practical automobile road. Cle Elum interests were incensed and raised money for another survey over Blewett Pass, only this time on a five percent grade. The matter was settled when A. J. Sylvester, the Forest Service Ranger, offered to contribute \$1000 toward the cost of the road if it went over the five percent grade on Blewett Pass. Discussion ended and work begins. The incredibly sharp hairpin curve was named “Echo Point,” not because you can hear an echo there, but because the Cle Elum Echo newspaper was instrumental in organizing Cle Elum interests to pay for the survey.



Hauling a Boiler for the Peshastin Stamp Mill. The miners had to build the wagon road over old Blewett Pass to haul large equipment from Cle Elum and Ellensburg for the stamp mill at Peshastin. That wagon road later became Highway 97.

From the Fred Krueger collection

The old Blewett Pass highway was a real exciting experience with its sharp curves, steep hillsides, lack of guard rails and narrow width. In the 1950's the highway was rerouted over Swauk Pass 4 ½ miles east of Blewett Pass. The pass was 30 feet higher (4071 ft. versus 4102 ft.) but the grade was much less. When the road was first moved, it was named Swauk Pass for a while. Locals, however, continued to call it the Blewett Pass Highway and finally the state acquiesced. Now the passes are called Old Blewett Pass and Blewett Pass even though it goes over Swauk Pass. What started out as a miner's wagon road is now a major state highway, SR 97.

Most Land in the Basin Becomes Private

Most odd sections of the land within the Basin were granted to the Northern Pacific Railroad in the 1880's and 1890's as part of their land grant agreement for building the railroad. The railroad was granted the odd numbered sections of land for 20 miles on each side of the tracks in exchange for building the railroad. The railroad in turn sold the land for whatever price they could get to pay their expense of building the railroad. Because Meaghersville was already occupying Section 1, the railroad was given an even numbered section to compensate. By the 1930's Cascade Lumber Company had bought 23,000 acres of the railroad land in the Swauk Basin. The balance of the non-federal land

was owned by miners, homesteaders and Washington State. In 1889 Washington State had been granted sections 16 and 36 in each township to fund schools. Many of these sections were sold or traded by the State. When the Wenatchee National Forest was created in 1908 only 40 percent of the land, about 21,000 acres, in the Swauk Basin belonged to the Forest Service. The balance, 32,000 acres, was private.

A National Forest Changes the Rules

Until 1908 miners in the Swauk Basin were not encumbered by federal bureaucracy. Under U.S. law an organized mining district established their own rules for mining within the district. The boundary of the mining district, the size of the claim and the requirements to be met to retain the claim being the most important rules of the district. The district also recorded the claims and settled disputes over the claims. When the Swauk Mining District was formed in 1873 a claim was established as 1000 feet rim to rim on the creek and the miner had to be on the claim on a certain day in May to hold the claim. The district was reorganized in 1884 to follow the 1872 federal mining laws which called for 20 acre claims with assessment work filed on September 1st of each year. The claims were now filed with the County Auditor's office in Ellensburg. Kittitas County had been formed in 1883. The miners continued to govern themselves for the most part.

Although the unpatented land in the Swauk area was set aside as part of the Rainier National Forest in 1902, and jurisdiction for its management was transferred to Washington National Forest in 1907, the first on-the-ground representative of the federal government did not arrive in Liberty until January 1908. A. H. Sylvester was the first Forest Supervisor of the Wenatchee National Forest and Deputy Ranger Clyde B. Simmons was appointed as the first representative to the Swauk District. He immediately started declaring mining claims invalid and accused residents of Meaghersville of being illegal trespassers. The miners, especially the residents of Meaghersville, wrote their Senator, Wesley L. Jones, in the Washington DC seeking relief. Jones in turn wrote to Chief Forester Pinchot who in turn wrote to Wenatchee Forest Supervisor, A. H. Sylvester, requesting an immediate investigation. In 1909 Simmons was replaced by O. E. Kerstetter who was a lifelong member of the Liberty community and who was trusted by the miners. The question of the legality of Meaghersville festered for another 72 years before being settled in 1980.

Although Deputy Ranger Simmons stirred up the miners with his interpretation of mining law, it was sheep and cattle grazing, not mining, that was of the greatest concern to the Forest Service at the time. Before 1907 the National Forest lands in the Swauk Basin were considered open



The Blewett Mines in 1905. Originally called the Pesbastin Mining Camp. The large building on the right was a twenty stamp mill used to process gold ore. All material needed to build the camp had to come from Ellensburg or Cle Elum over Blewett Pass.

Photo courtesy of Central Washington Historical Museum

range available to whoever got there first. Two major livestock driveways crossed the Basin. The Teanaway-Wilson driveway came off of Table Mountain, crossed between Deer Gulch and First Creek, and went up and over Teanaway Ridge. In 1916 over 45,000 sheep were counted at the Liberty Guard Station on their way to the Teanaway. The other driveway crossed Table Mountain and headed north over Swauk Pass on its way to the Blewett region. Overgrazing was severe for two or three miles on either side of the driveways. Separate allotments were established for cattle and for sheep to limit numbers and restrict them to specific areas. A fee was charged for the right to graze, either five dollars per thousand or if there was competition for an allotment, it went to the highest bidder. At its peak there were 10,000 sheep and over 1000 cattle in the Basin. Over 60,000 sheep were using the two driveways through the Basin. Today the driveways are no longer used and there are only two sheep allotments and a single cattle allotment partly within the Basin. Sheep are now trucked in and unloaded at the heliport rather than herded.



Al Nicholson's House Near Liberty. Al's wife, Frieda, in front of their house on what is now the heliport. The house has been moved and is still being used.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

There were at least four homestead entries existing within the Basin when the Wenatchee National Forest was created in 1908. They did not conflict with mining claims. However, when the Forest Service arrived they encouraged people in the Basin, especially miners, to apply for homesteads.

Homesteading Displaces Mining

(By Vic Pisoni)

After the Wenatchee National Forest was created in 1908, miners were encouraged by the Forest Service to file homestead applications for 160 acres of land. This seemed like a better idea to some than applying for patent on a mining claim of 20 acres. Besides, the Forest Service favored farming and disliked mining. The homestead issue led to a confrontation between miners who elected to become farmers and miners who wanted to be miners—on the same ground. There were few areas in the Swauk Mining District where a 160 acre homestead application could be made without staking over an existing mining claim. Dodge Alley was a miner who decided to try.

There was a narrow window of opportunity for filing for a homestead claim after the Wenatchee National Forest was created. A person possessing valid settlement rights upon public lands within the limits of a National Forest, by virtue of having settled prior to the creation of a National Forest does not necessarily forfeit his claims to the lands settled upon. The settler can continue to pursue that claim, making an additional entry after the land was surveyed. Dodge Alley made application to have a survey done, even though his original claims had been filed on as mineral in content, and the Alley tract was in the very midst of a mining

district worked for more than 40 years by miners. He stated the land was more important for agriculture than mineral. The Forest Service hired a surveyor in 1908, named Miller to do an agricultural survey. Miller pulled a colossal boner when he mistakenly used a closing corner stake for what he said he thought was a standard corner, and made the line between sections 31 and 36 stand west of its true location nearly 1,000 feet, encroaching onto the Fire Bug and Fidelity placer claims. This was protested in a letter to the Land Office of the Department of the Interior at Yakima, Washington, and signed by John Carse, S.I. Rhodes, E. M. Wells, Minerva Powles, and her husband John Powles. These folks all suffered damage and loss because of Miller's mistake. They were never compensated.

The greater part of the Alley homestead entry in section 36 was originally obtained with a filing by Andrew Flodin, December 31, 1902. The Flodin family was among the Swauk Mining Districts' top gold producers. Flodin's heirs deeded Andrew's property on September 1, 1906 to Minerva Powles for \$500, including all improvements: ten acres under fence, a two-story seven room log house, a two-story barn, and a wagon shed. Minerva's claims plus several other miners' claims were staked prior to the date of Dodge Alley's homestead application. The homestead entry land was inside the boundary of a legally surveyed and registered mining district. It was mineral land. Cultivation of land within the mining district was an afterthought, not the dominant feature in the gold mining settlements of the area involved. This was the argumentative bone of contention between opposing forces in a struggle between miners within the Swauk Mining District.

Dodge Alley applied for a homestead on January 4, 1910. In a letter to Commissioner of the Department of the Interior, Fred Dennett (Washington, DC), Dodge Alley stated he and his family settled on the land in debate, in 1904. The tract of land was 65 acres, unsurveyed at the time, in Sections 31 and 36, T 21 N, R 17 and 18 E and located about 1 ½ miles northeast of what was then Meaghersville (presently the town of Liberty). Within the area was a portion of Williams Creek, and two of its tributaries, then known as Price Creek and Bullion Creek. Dodge stated in an affidavit, "I am well acquainted with the character of the land herein applied for, and within each and every legal subdivision thereof. Having personally examined same, that there is not to my knowledge within the limits thereof, any vein, or lode, or quartz, or any other rock in place bearing gold, silver, tin, lead, or copper, nor any deposit of coal, placer, cement, gravel, salt spring, or deposit of salt, nor other valuable mineral deposit; that no portion of said land is claimed for mining purposes under the local customs or rules of miners, or otherwise; that no portion of said land is worked for mineral during any part of the year by any person or persons; that said land is essentially non-mineral



Fire Lookout at Lion Rock. The lookout had an unobstructed view of the entire Swauk Basin. There was a single-wire telephone line to the Ranger Station in Liberty for communication. Only the concrete foundation remains today.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

land, and that my application therefore is not made for the purpose of fraudulently obtaining title to mineral land; that the land is not occupied and improved by any Indian.”

On July 3, 1910, Alley wrote a letter to the Acting Assistant Commissioner at the General Field Office for the Department of Interior, asking for a mineral expert to determine the character of the land embraced in his homestead entry. The Acting Assistant Commissioner refused and told Alley that would have to be accomplished via legal hearings. However, the Commissioner came back, reversed the Acting Assistant Commissioner, and hired practical miner, W. R. Davey, to do the examination on October 31, 1910. Davey noted the Alley tract as being “narrow and the land is cut by three deep ravines,” reported an earth movement had changed the elevation of the creek beds in the vicinity, and placed the bedrock at around 70 feet in depth. He noted some hearsay information, and saw gold washed out of the west boundary of a placer claim adjoining the Alley ground at better than five dollars a cubic yard. He wrote in his report that gold had been found above and below the homestead entry in paying quantities, and it was reasonable to expect gold to be found in the intermediate portion of the streambed. He then submitted that the land embracing the homestead entry should be classed as mineral, and the entry canceled. Chief Field Director, L.L. Sharp, read the report and promptly suspended the report pending further hearings.



Logging With Horses Near Liberty in the 1920's. Al Nicholson had a saw mill on his homestead and logged his land in the 1920's and 1930's. It is believed that this picture shows part of his operation. It had to be a challenge to handle such large logs with only horse power.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

In the meantime, W. M. (Mike) Mikesell disagreed with Dodge. Mike, along with an agitated group of fellow miners led by A. F. York, his attorneys, John B. Davidson and John M. Rankin, filed complaints against Dodge Alley's homestead entry. Backing them was their connection in the United States Senate, Senator W. L. Jones. He encouraged them to pursue a line of legal action resulting from suggestions by R. A. Ballinger of the Department of Agriculture, and Commissioner Fred Dennett of the Department of the Interior. The miners began storming the legal gates and the fur began to fly.

A.F. York vs. Dodge Alley-1910 to 1918

Witness testimony was taken on the 9th and 10th days of November, 1910, before George Sayles, Commissioner. Opposing lawyers were: Irvin J. Bounds Esq., and H.J. Snively attorneys for Dodge Alley, and John B. Davidson, Esq., and John M. Rankin attorneys for A.F. York et. al. Davidson had fifteen witnesses ready to go on the stand, and Bounds had six.

Davidson's witnesses were: Aaron F. York who had been in the Swauk since 1890 as a miner and qualified surveyor; S.I. Rhodes who was in the Swauk for 14 years; Amos R. Jordin who had been in the Swauk

mining camp for nine years; E.J. Mathews who was the Kittitas County Auditor; Minerva E. Powles who came to the area in 1901; John Powles who first entered the area in 1894 previous to his permanent residence in 1901; E.M. Wells who lived at the Liberty post office; George Virden whose personal mining background was preceded by an extensive farming career; M.W. Maxwell who was a Liberty resident and a prospector/miner for six years; Carl Enenkel who came to the area in 1900; Charles Powles who had been living with his parents in the area for nine years; William Anderson who was in the Swauk since 1895; George A. Bloomquist who also arrived in the Swauk in 1895; John Carse who entered the Swauk Mining District in 1892; and Thomas F. Meagher who came into the Swauk in 1874. All witnesses testified they had had mines, or worked in mines or saw gold from the mines on the homestead land and further, the land would not grow enough produce for a man to live on.

Bound's witnesses were: Edmond Grady who lived in the Swauk for eight years; Pat Dunning who had been a miner in the Swauk since 1895; Eldredge Brown (65 years old) was the brother-in-law of Dodge Alley and resided in Teanaway Valley, never having lived in the Swauk area; Tom Swan and W. Forbes had a placer claim since 1904 up Lion Gulch; Louis Shirk who had a mineral claim located on the north fork of Williams Creek and lived 18 miles away in Cle Elum and; Dodge Alley who had an extensive mining background before he decided he was a farmer.

At the hearings Dodge Alley proceeded to identify paperwork pertaining to the homestead allotment which was the survey of the land made by Forest Service employee Miller with the 1000 ft. error. Alley stated he had water to irrigate most of the 65 acres because he bought water rights from Bloomquist who had bought from Morrison. John Davidson brought Alley up to date by letting him know the miners down stream on Williams Creek had the water rights to the flow going through the Alley land. Dodge was not aware of that. When asked, Dodge said he could clear the remaining land for \$35 an acre. Dodge claimed he had a good market for his hay in Roslyn and Cle Elum. Alley gives accolades to farmer McFry's and Pat Dunning's produce crops, and said there is no reason why his cannot be as good which was counter to all witnesses on the subject to that point. He said he entered on to his land in December of 1904 and that he spent \$300 to \$400 per year on developments but he described the improvements that were on the property when the Powles were on their mineral claim and they had to leave behind standing structures. All he could physically account for was \$50 worth of fencing put up by him, and lumber for a log house equal to \$100. Alley's lawyer, Mr. Bounds, put up a weak offense in the form of leading softball questions and suggestions, and mostly ignores Alley's answers, if Bounds did not hear what he wanted, by quickly going to another subject. Meanwhile John Davidson, York's attorney, remained as silent as



Logging With a Tractor Near Liberty. A 1926 Fordson crawler tractor with one very large log. The tracked version of the Fordson tractor was a factory option available for a short time in 1926–27. It must have been a challenge to go down hill with the set-up above.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

a sheep being sheared, no objections, stricken statement requisitions or anything. Alley then had the audacity to say he knew of no mines in the vicinity, except some old abandoned ones and if there were some around, they weren't paying to his knowledge. Hard feelings were acknowledged as the dominant emotion conveyed towards Alley by the agitated and disgruntled Powles clan and their backers. Alley had not proven he could make a living by farming his land in the admission he had to work for other miners, such as on the McCualey claim, or outside the mining district for wages. The hearing ended with rights reserved to call certain witnesses at the next hearing on December 9, 1910.

At the December hearing the value of the land for mineral development was challenged as problematical and once again council for homestead entry respectfully requested that the entry be allowed. The court tug-of-war-of-words went on as reams of paper, in the form of letters and attorneys' legal pages rolled continuously under the glazed-eyed scrutiny of various governmental department heads. A. F. York pointed out the opposition's mocked ignorance of the character of the mineral deposits involved within the mining district, particularly the upper Williams Creek area. On April 4, 1912, the Assistant Commissioner S.V. Proudfit of the Department of the Interior reversed a former decision, the miners' protest was dismissed, and the homestead entry allowed. The protestants were advised of their right to appeal within thirty days. The litigation went on for two more years.



Liberty Fourth of July Celebration in 1916. The entire County was invited to a two day celebration in Liberty in 1916. The dance lasted until a.m. when a case of dynamite was set off on Kingfisher Ridge to announce breakfast was being served.

A Pautske print in the Wes Engstrom collection

In March of 1914, a letter was drafted by the Swauk miners, and presented to Forest Ranger O. E. (Earl) Kerstetter asking him to do a private mineral examination. He refused on the premise of treating all parties equal. He did offer to make an affidavit allowing that the land was indeed better suited for mining of minerals than the propagation of agriculture, but he wouldn't place a projected value on available gold. His was an awkward situation. On the one hand the Forest Service was generally sympathetic to the farmer/rancher, while in Kerstetter's, mining background in particular, was a quartz claim in 1904, called the Ben Hurr. He obviously didn't want to make bold statements that would put any government agency in an embarrassing position.

A.F. York, et. al., appealed, and the decision was reversed once more by A.A. Jones, April of 1914. A review showed a preponderance of the testimony that said the land will grow no crops except hay, and only in limited amounts, and a man could not make a living depending on that alone. The only tract of land to support an agricultural living, was that of Mr. Virden. This was because it was located seven miles south of the Swauk Mining District, in Swauk Prairie, a valley, or bottomland. Minerals win again, but the fact is not many were making a living mining at this time, and none had made a living at agriculture in the district.

Some of the agriculture group was shown to be assisting their livelihood with gold mining. What judgment would come from such a convoluted mess?

Heated points of view escalated to a near melt down. With the physical overlapping of mine claim lines and the land tract dispute, it was no surprise when considerable trouble would arise between the two parties, and State Officials had to intervene to stop physical fights between the miners and the sod-busters. This was brought to the attention of Secretary of the Interior, Franklin M. Lane. He was told in no uncertain terms, to take care of a situation that had been pushed to the back burner, because if it boiled over, he'd have a very messy political kitchen to clean up. An out of court, physical Swauk miner vs. farmer face-off was a possibility.

Alley's Attorney, H. J. Snively, wrote a rather well worded appeal letter to A. A. Jones of the Interior Department. The wording was an attack on the six-point correction of errors document made by the York party. The letter worked, and everything past and present would be held in review, pending a forthcoming mineral report.

On July 10, 1914, the Department of the Interior sent an urgent request to the General Land Office to do a mineral examination of the Alley entry as soon as possible. Edmond Grady had filed for a homestead entry on an adjacent tract to the Alley entry. Grady's tract would also be examined for minerals. W. A. Wells was challenging the Grady entry in court. All court action was suspended, and the mineral examination took place on October 30th and November 1, 1914. Frank Farmer was the mineral examiner. The examiner first tested a 150-foot tunnel on the Fidelity Mining claim. One sample was taken from the face of the tunnel; it gave one color of gold. A pan from the tunnel dump gave three colors. Several colors were taken near the mouth of the tunnel. The mine had good discovery gold on it, but its future value was deemed merely conjectural. All the other claims failed to meet qualifying standards as paying gold claims. It appeared the Alley homestead application would go ahead.

Court records remain mute, until January 1915, when A. F. York dusted off his typewriter to send a request for another reversal. It basically hashed over the same information, but the past sense of urgency seemed diminished. Ben Killson submitted a written protest of the homestead entry acceptance, but it too seemed half hearted. The miners appeared to be stymied by the official mineral examiner's report. Fewer people rallied around those who remained involved in the case. By 1917, Judge Edward Pruyn and E.K. (Sonny) Brown, the two attorneys now representing the miners, were unavailable. E. K. Brown was in France, involved in the First World War, and E. Pruyn was U.S. Commissioner, and was no longer qualified to be the miners' lawyer. Minerva Powles' husband was too ill to



The Community Hall in Liberty in 1916. The hall was temporarily named the "Wildcat Dance Hall" for the occasion which was a Fourth of July celebration. Cascade Pride was a nonalcoholic beer made by the Roslyn Brewery during prohibition in the County. Moon shiners in the woods supplied the real stuff.

A Pautske print from the Wes Engstrom collection

attend, and she wanted to have the long awaited hearing put off to a later date. That only caused more frustration and perpetrated more disinterest.

A. F. York tried once more to set up a hearing with a letter to the Department of the Interior. The Portland Field Division of the Department of the Interior, that sent the mineral examiner, Mr. Farmer, was at that point nonplused, and even reluctant to send Farmer as a representative. It was now obvious the case was losing momentum. An out of court meeting was set for May 28, 1918. The hearing was to be held, not for all the claims, as before, but for a decision as to the validity of the one claim that showed gold, the Fidelity. May 28th came, the Mineral Examiner and a Special Agent from the same agency showed up, as did the homestead claimants and their witnesses, but no appearance was made on behalf of the mineral protestants, and no evidence submitted by them. With no evidence available to introduce for impeachment and correction of the mineral examiner's report, the miners' mineral protest was dismissed.



Loading Logs Near Liberty in the 1930's. Cascade Lumber Company built railroad spurs up all the main drainages and logged the Swauk Basin during the 1930's and 1940's. They then traded most of their land with the Forest Service for other timber land elsewhere.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

Dodge Alley, Edmond Grady, and the Price family were granted homesteads. Thus, there are homesteads in a mining district that were granted years after the area was set aside as a National Forest and not open to homestead application. The animosity between the miners and the homesteaders continued for two generations until those involved died or moved away. Today all is forgotten as the property in question is neither mined nor farmed.

Logging Becomes the Major Industry

Gold mining and logging have been the two main activities in the Swauk Basin until recent years when both have declined being replaced by outdoor recreation as the main activity. Gold mining and logging coexisted in a complementary fashion. Early logging and saw milling was done to support the mining operations. Some timber being used for shoring in the mines but most being used for homes and other structures. Little product was exported from the immediate area except over Blewett Pass to build the Blewett mining camp. In the late 1930's and early 1940's the Cascade Lumber Company, which owned 43 percent of the land in the Swauk Basin, built railroad lines up each of the main creeks and selectively logged the large Ponderosa pines that could be skidded to the rail lines. In the 1930's miners were glad to get the logging jobs to supplement their earnings from gold mining. The headquarters camp was at Lauderdale where First Creek joins the Swauk.

In the Swauk Basin almost all of the logging was done by "gyppo" loggers under contract to Cascade Lumber Company. E. Wm (Bud) Hughes logged First Creek in 1934-36, Baker Creek in 1936, Deer Gulch in 1936-37, Pine Gulch in 1937, Williams Creek in 1938-39, Lion

Gulch in 1940-41, upper Swauk Creek in 1941 and Hurley Creek in 1944. Archie Kennedy logged Mill Creek, Medicine Creek, Blue Creek, Durst Creek, Hovey Creek and Iron Creek. Dominick Contratto logged the area west of Swauk Creek opposite First Creek. The Hurley Creek operation in 1944 was the last of the railroad logging in the Basin.

Logging continued on Forest Service land after the 1940's using military surplus D7 and D8 cats with arches. Skyline operations were introduced in the 1970's and helicopter logging in the 1980's. All logging stopped in 1994 when President Clinton's forest plan designated the entire Swauk Basin as wildlife sanctuary (late successional reserve) to protect spotted owl habitat. U. S. Timberlands has been logging on their private property using skidding operation and thinning their stands of trees rather than clear cutting. Their private lands now have the same "park like" look the entire Basin had in 1900. There are still many National Forest lands within the Basin that have never been logged. The old trees are now completely surrounded by smaller trees providing a "ladder" for a fire to reach the crowns.

Most Land in the Basin Becomes Public

When the Wenatchee National Forest was created in 1908 only 40% of the land in the Swauk Basin belonged to the Forest Service. The balance was private.

Some private land within the Basin was acquired by the County in the 1930's for unpaid taxes and was turned over to the Forest Service. Cascade Lumber Company exchanged 18,500 acres of its land with the Forest Service in 1942 and another 4,300 acres in 1946, retaining just over 1000 acres at First Creek. Cascade Lumber Company merged with Boise Payette Lumber Company in 1957 and became the Boise Cascade Corporation. Their First Creek land was sold to U. S. Timberlands in 2000.

After an exchange of 1,400 acres with Washington State Department of Natural Resources in 1986, the Forest Service now controls 90 percent of the land within the Swauk Basin.

Almost all of the private property that started out as patented mining claims or homestead claims has been divided into smaller units. There are 280 tax parcels of which about 168 have homes built on them. Only about 49 of the homes are occupied full time, the rest are weekend and summer homes.



Sulphur Springs Ranger Station in the Early 1900's. Sulphur Springs was a popular camping area and it actually had a mineral spring used by many people for healing purposes. It is now called Mineral Springs and the spring has dried up.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

A Mining Company Threatens Liberty

(By Henrietta Fackler)

On March 29, 1963, the Golden Thunderbird Mining Company (later the name was changed to Gold Placers Inc.) with Virgil Hiner as general manager bought the holdings of Nugget Properties, Inc. There were patented and unpatented claims included in the sale. These claims were situated along Williams and Boulder Creeks beginning near Deer Gulch. Among the unpatented claims was the New Discovery, and it was occupied by the Liberty townspeople. Gold miners and families began settling along Williams Creek in 1883. By 1890 the surface of the New Discovery was measured out into town lots and residences and business buildings were constructed. This settlement was recognized as a town called Meaghersville (pronounced Mearsville) by Washington State and Kittitas County.



Gold Mining in Liberty in the 1960's. Gold Placers Inc. conducted the last large scale mining operation in Liberty. They attempted to also mine the town site but were stopped by a lawsuit brought by the residents and finally settled in the State Supreme Court.

Photo from the Wes Engstrom collection

Trouble for the town residents and property owners began to surface soon after the sale of the mining properties. Virgil Hiner tacked up notices on all the town buildings which stated: "In compliance with Forest Service regulations prohibiting the use of unpatented mining claims for cabin and home sites, this structure must be moved from this claim immediately." He drove through the town using a loud speaker demanding that the people vacate the claim because it now belonged to the Thunderbird Mining Company. The mining company and the residents alike appealed to the Forest Service for help, but they adopted a hands off policy. Personnel of the mining company continued to display a belligerent attitude toward the townspeople and it soon became apparent they would use any means at their command to assert what they believed to be their right of ownership to the Liberty town site, the New Discovery claim.

In the meantime the company began work on the Bigney claim that lay adjacent to the Liberty town site. Noise from their machinery droned incessantly through the pine studded valley and the great iron jaws of their equipment tore viciously into the overburden of the Bigney. As they worked they heaped huge piles of tailings and debris onto a portion of the town, and rocks and dirt soon begin to slide into the clear mountain waters of Williams Creek.

When the townspeople of Liberty made no effort to vacate their properties, Virgil Hiner and his cohorts burned down the town hall and a log cabin that at an earlier time served the community as a United States Post Office. The residents were highly incensed by this hostile act and mourned the loss of these historical buildings. It was learned later that District Ranger Warren Drake was in favor of the burning. The buildings were burned during the day, while the men were away at work. The women in town were intimidated by this aggressive action and were at a

loss as to what they should do. One of the women climbed the hillside and helplessly watched the act of desecration, while her tears coursed down both sides of her cheeks. The town hall was a former school house built in 1904 and attended by children of the district up until 1939, when Liberty School District 44 was consolidated with the Cle Elum School District.

When the school house was vacated the residents bought the building from County School Officials and converted it into the town hall. This was done as a replacement of the original hall built in 1892 and was torn down in 1944 because it had deteriorated to such a degree that town citizens felt it was no longer safe to use. The community hall had always been the central gathering place for the people in the town and the whole of the surrounding community, and was used for multi-purposes, such as, Swauk Mining District miner's meeting; church and Sunday school services; weddings and receptions, bridal and baby showers; Saturday night dances, where gold nuggets were given away as door prizes; a poling place for the Swauk Precinct from 1892 until 1961; the Women's Literary Society organized in 1904; and occasionally a theatrical presentation performed by traveling actors groups.

Hiner's animosity toward the people grew in intensity and he continued with any means at hand to try and drive them out of their homes. His next venture was an attempt to divert all of Williams Creek into the town ditch. Fearing that the town would be washed out by this action two of the town's women stopped Hiner and his co-workers. Elsie Hale held a rifle on the culprits, while Henrietta Fackler contacted the local State Game Department Warden to alert him of the infraction of state game laws about to take place. The warden soon arrived upon the scene and advised Hiner of the regulations of the game department that did not allow hydraulic projects such as, diverting a creek from its natural stream bed. He further stated, "That if Hiner attempted to continue with the violation he would be arrested on the spot."

The next move made by Hiner to intimidate the townspeople was an attempt to cross the creek for the purpose of dumping huge loads of tailings separated as residue from the gold ore into the middle of the town. On the day this was to take place, Graham Thorne, a resident and World War II veteran patrolled the creek bank carrying a rifle that he was prepared to use if the occasion should arise. He was a very credible threat as it was known to all he was dying of cancer. Fortunately, the game warden arrived in time to settle the matter (while protecting the creek waters from the trucks that would have driven through the creek).

It was not long before a serious assault occurred, Clarence Jordin Jr. was attacked by Virgil Hiner and his brother while working in his yard. Clarence Jordin Jr. said he was hit on the head by one of the men's



The Chic Cafe in Old Liberty. The building was the first post office, the first school and the first Ranger Station in Liberty. It later became a cafe and store in the 1920's.

Photo from the Wes Engstrom collection

pocket knife. There also was a third man present with the Hiner brothers. Jordin's stepfather came to his defense, and between the two of them they fought off the onslaught perpetrated by the Hiner brothers and their friend. Jordin sued the Hiner brothers. He won the court decision and received a rather sizable sum to compensate for his injuries.

After the assault on Clarence Jordin Jr. several of the miners started packing their guns. The County Sheriff became fearful that there would be a loss of life, and made the remark that the Liberty area was a powder keg ready to explode. Hiner began to complain that he was unable to carry on with his legitimate mining operations, because of the Liberty occupants. He blamed the Forest Service for its refusal to prosecute what he felt was trespassers upon the land. He soon filed suit against the Liberty homeowners in an effort to evict them.



Liberty School House in 1914. Liberty had a school from 1895 to 1939. The first school was in the store and post office building in Old Liberty. This school house was built in 1904 in Meaghersville (present Liberty) and later in the early 1940's it was used as a community hall replacing the old 1890's hall.

Photo from the Wes Engstrom collection

The Liberty residents hired Jack McSherry, a Cle Elum attorney, to defend them in the Kittitas County Superior Court. The decision made by Judge Cole was in favor of the residents and based on the testimony of Amos Jordin, a long time resident in Liberty, that in an earlier time it was first named New Yakima, then Meaghersville. He testified to assisting Thomas Meagher and one David Long in surveying and dividing up the town site into 100 foot frontage lots in the year 1885. Virgil Hiner and company immediately filed an appeal to the State Supreme Court, but to no avail. The State Supreme Court handed down a decision in favor of the residents on August 10, 1967.

Jack McSherry set a precedent in securing the decision in favor of the Liberty residents. Ordinarily cases concerning mining properties are held in the federal courts. The decision was made in State Court and was based on the precept of estoppel and laches, with the explanation that various mining claimants spent years of acquiescence and silence while the Liberty inhabitants continued to live on the property they regarded as their own. However the Judge had stated: As against the United States, residents are squatters or mere occupiers of the land. It will avail them nothing to show that the buildings were built 10, 20, 50 or even 80 years ago, for no one can acquire by holding adversely to the United States.

Hiner and company did make one last appeal to the United States Supreme Court, but lack of support from the Forest Service and the length of time it would take to get their case before the court, more than likely discouraged them and they withdrew their appeal.

Forest Service Challenges Liberty's Existence

(By Henrietta Fackler)

In January of 1971, members of the Ellensburg Ranger District, United States Forest Service, appeared in Liberty unexpectedly one day.

They brought with them restrictive use-permits (an instrument allowing the residents to continue to live there under rigid terms conforming to Forest Service policy), and told the people that they had no alternative but to accept the use-permits or face eventual eviction from their homes. These agents of the Forest Service said, “You people in our opinion are considered to be squatters residing upon public lands, but because of your long tenure upon the land we have decided to try to resolve your occupancy problem by means of a use-permit.”

The people felt that the use permit was merely a sham offering and its only purpose was to coerce them into relinquishing all legal rights to their property. They refused to accept the permits, because they felt they had legal rights and title to their properties.

The people knew that their historic mining town would be destroyed by fire if they were evicted, because Andrew Wright, Supervisor, Wenatchee National Forest, told them so. From that day forward American flags flew day and night over the Liberty town site; a constant reminder of the imminent danger that threatened the town and its citizens. The people rallied from the initial shock of the Forest Service proposal, and began to explore all available resources and possible support that would be of benefit to them.

Attorney Jack McSherry was engaged to represent the Liberty residents and property owners. Jack McSherry had been a champion of the people for over 25 years. He outlined a plan of action for the people to take under consideration. He said, “Taking a government bureau into court and expecting to win is like butting your head against a stone wall.” He continued, “The better way to handle the situation would be to gain public interest and support by airing the problem through the news media and seeking political help.”

Letters were mailed to state and federal legislators and local and state newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations were contacted. The people were overwhelmed by the response from the news media. The news items were eventually picked up and aired by the Associated Press, New York Times and French National News. Repeat TV specials were shown throughout the United States. Some of the local television stations that helped were: KOMO Channel 4 and KING Channel 5 in Seattle and KAPP TV and KIMA TV in Yakima. Local newspapers involved were: Grange News, Seattle PI, Tacoma Tribune, Daily Record, Northern Upper County Tribune, Yakima Herald and Wenatchee Daily World.

Petitions were circulated throughout Kittitas County and Washington State describing the perilous situation the Liberty citizens were faced with and the necessary support they must engender in order to save their homes and historic town site. Many signatures of those offering support



Al Nicholson in the Early 1900's. Al Nicholson was a miner in Liberty in the 1890's. He also homesteaded Liberty Mountain and ran a dairy on what is now the heliport at Liberty. His brother, Clarence, ran a store and gas station in Liberty. Al was a very good amateur photographer and many of his negatives have survived.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

were collected by means of the petitions, and later in time, were included in the packet of legal documents sent to U.S. Representative Mike McCormack and Senators Henry M. Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson.

The Liberty Coalition was organized as a non profit corporation and proved to be a formidable force in the on-going controversy with the Forest Service. The Liberty Coalition held monthly meetings within the town. They were attended by local officials, members of the State Parks and Recreation Board, Vista representatives, local historians, concerned citizens, old timers having once lived in Liberty, and state and federal legislators and congressmen. Coalition members carried on a low key campaign and never hesitated to invite the local forest ranger to their meetings and kept him informed of activities relating to the Liberty crisis.



Hydraulic Mining in Liberty in the Early 1900's. High pressure water is being used to wash overburden away to get to placer gold. Hydraulic mining was not successful in Liberty because there was no place for large boulders to go once they were on bedrock and the material above bedrock did not carry much gold.

Photo from the Wes Engstrom collection

Vista representatives, Tom and Julie Ahern, joined the coalition members and lent invaluable assistance to the cause. They helped to organize Liberty research materials, designed and printed “Save Liberty” bumper stickers, and printed brochures (material written and researched by Henrietta Fackler). The brochures called attention to the struggle the Liberty people were involved in to save their properties. Inserted within the brochures were cards addressed to Legislators appealing to them to help save the Liberty town site. Later it was learned that hundreds of these cards found their way into the offices of Representative Mike McCormack, Senators Henry M. Jackson and Warren G. Magnuson. Tom Ahern wrote the application to the State Parks and Recreation Board for the placement of Liberty on the national roll of historic places. Dr. Earl Glauert and Henrietta Fackler furnished advice and material for the application.

The residents revived the early custom of holding a Fourth of July celebration. Many interested people came from throughout the county and state to partake of a pot-luck picnic and to join the celebrations. There was fun for all; horse shoe pitching, gold panning contests, exhibitions by the Legendary Gun Fighters (a group who donated their services to the Liberty campaign), three legged races, bingo and pie auctions. The auctions and bingo games helped finance the campaign to further the cause, and the guests upon leaving were resolved to join in the efforts to save Liberty.

Things seemed to be going well for the campaign to save the town and properties when the Forest Service issued an ultimatum—Sign use-permits or move out! Immediately telephone calls and telegrams went into the legislators. At the advice of their attorney the residents barred themselves inside their houses. They suspected that U.S. Marshals might appear at any time to evict them. Friends and old timers in the area received word of the eviction notice and were all fired up and ready to come to Liberty and build barricades on the road and defend them with

rifles. The people refused the offer not wanting to place these good friends in jeopardy. At the last minute legislators intervened and told the Forest Service to back off and give the people ample time to research the records they needed to establish the legal claim to their properties.

The Forest Service Becomes a Friend

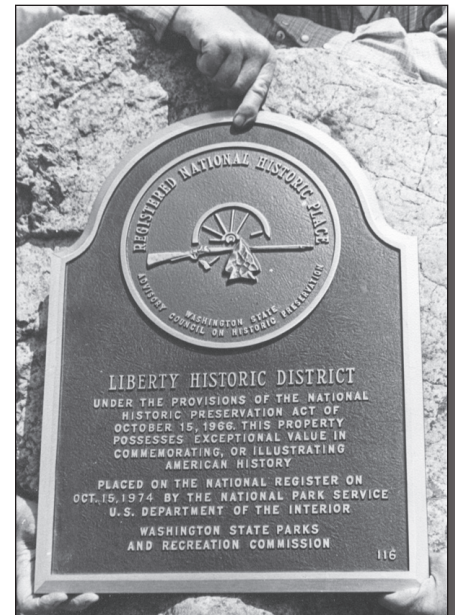
The Forest Service gave the residents a number of extensions and in the end helped the residents get clear title to their property. The paper establishing a mining town site was never found. Enough information was found however to create the Liberty Historic District. When that happened the Forest Service decided the best way to resolve the conflict was to have the residents submit a new application for a town site under the 1866 town site laws. The Forest Service helped the residents submit such an application. Symbolically it was submitted on July 4, 1976, the day of the U.S. Bicentennial Celebration. Things looked good for the residents.

However, that fall the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 was passed by Congress and became law. It repealed homestead and town site laws, including the 1866 law the Liberty resident had filed under. The new law did not have a provision for creating a new town site on federal land. It looked like Liberty residents had won the battle with the Forest Service but lost the war with the U.S. Government.

The Forest Service came to the rescue and suggested a special interest bill be passed by Congress saying Liberty could be an exception to the new law. There was a provision in the law that provided for the transfer of federal land to a town that needed to expand but was completely surrounded by federal land. That didn't exactly apply to Liberty as the town site didn't legally exist and hence there was no political entity for the U.S. government to transfer the land to. The special interest bill said that in our case the land could be transferred to the Kittitas County Board of Commissioners. The Commissioners in turn could transfer the land to the residents. Again the residents used all the political influence they could muster to get the entire Washington State delegation in Congress to support the bill. It worked. The bill was passed by Congress and signed by President Jimmy Carter in 1978. Victory at last. However, the celebration was short lived.

Additional Roadblocks Appear

Two additional obstacles would have to be overcome. There is a Washington State law that says property cannot be disposed of by County Commissioners except at auction to the highest bidder. The second law, The Federal Historical Preservation Act, says property of historical significance cannot be disposed of by the Federal government without the approval of the Historic Preservation Commission.



Liberty Historic District Plaque. The Liberty Historic District was created in 1974. The district is a "living ghost town" where the spirit of the early miners lives on.

A Roy Mayo photo from the Wes Engstrom collection

The first roadblock was removed by getting a special interest bill passed by the Washington State Legislature and signed by Governor Dixie Lee Ray. It sounds easy to say but it never would have happened without a special effort by Senator Frank “Tub” Hanson, a friend of Liberty. The Legislative session in 1980 was supposed to be “bare bones” with no special interest bills. Senator Hanson managed to pull it off anyway and Liberty became an exception to the State law.

The concern of the Office of Historical Preservation took more intricate negotiations but was finally resolved by proposing a county zoning ordinance to preserve the character of the Liberty Historic District. Back to lobbying. This time lobbying the County Commissioners. Compared to the U.S. Congress and the Washington State Legislature, the County Commissioners were softies as they were already on our side. The “Liberty Historical Zone” was added to the county zoning code. Any new structure would have the look of the old; board and batten or log exteriors, plain galvanized roofing, wood windows, no paint and wooden fences. When the historic district was created it was not the architecture that was stressed as important to preserve but instead the independent spirit of a mining community. It was based on the Liberty sign, “You Have Just Visited The Living Remains of a Ghost Town.” The spirit of the miner is still here. You just can’t see a spirit. The county zoning would assure that the look of a ghost town would also be preserved. Again the residents celebrated. And again the celebration was short lived.



Swauk Gold Dredge in 1926. This large gold dredge, the Powder River Gold Dredge No. 2, was brought in from Sumpter, Oregon, in 1925. It started working in the Swauk at the big rock outcrop north of Liberty Cafe and got just up Deer Gulch before being stranded. It could not handle the hard, shallow bedrock. The dredge was dismantled and shipped to Alaska, the barge it sat on still rots in the dredge pond in Deer Gulch.

From an Al Nicholson negative in the Wes Engstrom collection

Liberty Becomes More Costly

The next roadblock showed up when the Forest Service appraiser came to place a “fair market value” on the Liberty property. The original 1866 town site laws provided for the federal land to be sold for a town-site at \$2.50 an acre. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 specified land to be sold at fair market value. The special interest bill passed by Congress was silent on the subject of price. The appraiser decided fair market value was \$2,500 per acre, the going price of recreation land.

The residents hadn’t expected to pay that much for land they already owned. Another special interest bill was considered. However, Senator Jackson had died and a new slate of Representatives was in office. It would be another huge effort to solicit political support for another special interest bill. More importantly, what looked easy to the politically naive residents the first time was now recognized as a truly heroic, or lucky, effort. A special interest bill was truly “special” and not easy to do. It was decided to pay the U.S. government their asking price. One small concession was won. The original price included the county road. The residents told the Forest Service that if they had to buy the county road

they were going to erect a toll gate and recoup their money. The county road was removed from the deal.

Raising the money was not easy because some residents simply did not have it. However, friends and family did come through for those in need and \$39,650 was deposited with the County Board of Commissioners. The process of title transfer started. In December 1981 the residents finally received clear title to their property. The mining camp of Liberty, which once had 200 to 300 miners spread over many square miles, is now precisely defined as 15.94 acres. There are 18 houses and 15 full time residents. It is on the state and national historical registers as a place where the independent miner's traditions still exists. Miners are still working in the surrounding hills in search of that elusive gold.

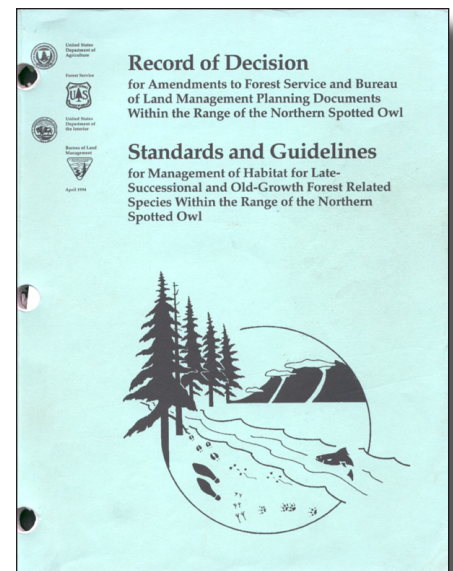
Land Use Changed Drastically by President Clinton

Land use on federal land within the Basin changed drastically in the 1990's. Under President Clinton's Forest Plan, the entire Basin was set aside as wildlife preserve to protect spotted owl habitat. The plan refers to the designation as "late successional reserve" rather than a wildlife preserve but the effect is the same. All logging stopped. Firewood gathering stopped. If a tree died it was left standing and if a tree fell it was left on the forest floor for cavity dwellers. Roads were closed to discourage activity that would disturb wildlife within the Basin. All of this was done in the belief that if nothing was done to the forest it would eventually become old growth habitat. The fatal flaw in this thinking was ignoring the tremendous fuel buildup that occurred because of fire suppression for the last one hundred years. If the fuel buildup were allowed to increase, there would be a wildfire that would kill all trees, young as well as old. The entire forest would have to start over and may never attain old growth status. The change in land use essentially eliminated the logging industry in the County.

The outbreak of wildfires in the West in the 2000's demonstrated what was going to happen in the Swauk Basin as well. If the old growth within the forest is going to be preserved for wildlife, the excessive fuels loading must be reduced and wildfires limited. There have been two areas of federal forest in the Swauk Basin that have received fuels reduction treatment. The Sno-Bowl project demonstrated the fuels reduction concept and the Fawn Thin winter project created shaded buffers to limit wildfire potential in a critical spotted owl habitat. It is a start.

Recreational Use Has Been Continuous

The Swauk Basin has been a popular camping area since anyone can remember. Indians had campsites along their trails and in their hunting



President Clinton's Record of Decision of 1994. President Clinton's forest plan drastically changed the management of the Swauk Basin. The entire federal portion was set aside as wildlife refuge to protect the spotted owl.

Document Courtesy of the Forest Service

grounds. The main trail being from the Ellensburg area through Green Canyon, down Deer Gulch to Liberty, up Lion Gulch and over a low saddle to Hurley Creek, down Hurley Creek to Mountain Home and then up Park Creek to the summit at old Blewett Pass and on to the Lake Wenatchee area. Green Canyon, Liberty and Mountain Home were camping spots along the trail as well as summer and fall berry picking and deer hunting camps. The Indians also managed the forest by burning out the underbrush every year or so improving berry production and deer habitat. They also used fire to herd deer into areas where they could be killed.

Early pioneers in the Kittitas Valley used the Swauk Basin extensively for summer camping to escape the heat in the valley. Families would spend weeks at a time in the woods at their summer camps. With a horse and buggy one could go almost anywhere in the open park-like forest of that time. The automobile made for even easier and faster access to the forest camping and picnic sites.



Mineral Springs Restaurant on Highway 97. The restaurant is on land leased from the Forest Service. The building is the old Swauk Recreation Lodge built in 1940 and later moved to its present location.

Photo by Wes Engstrom

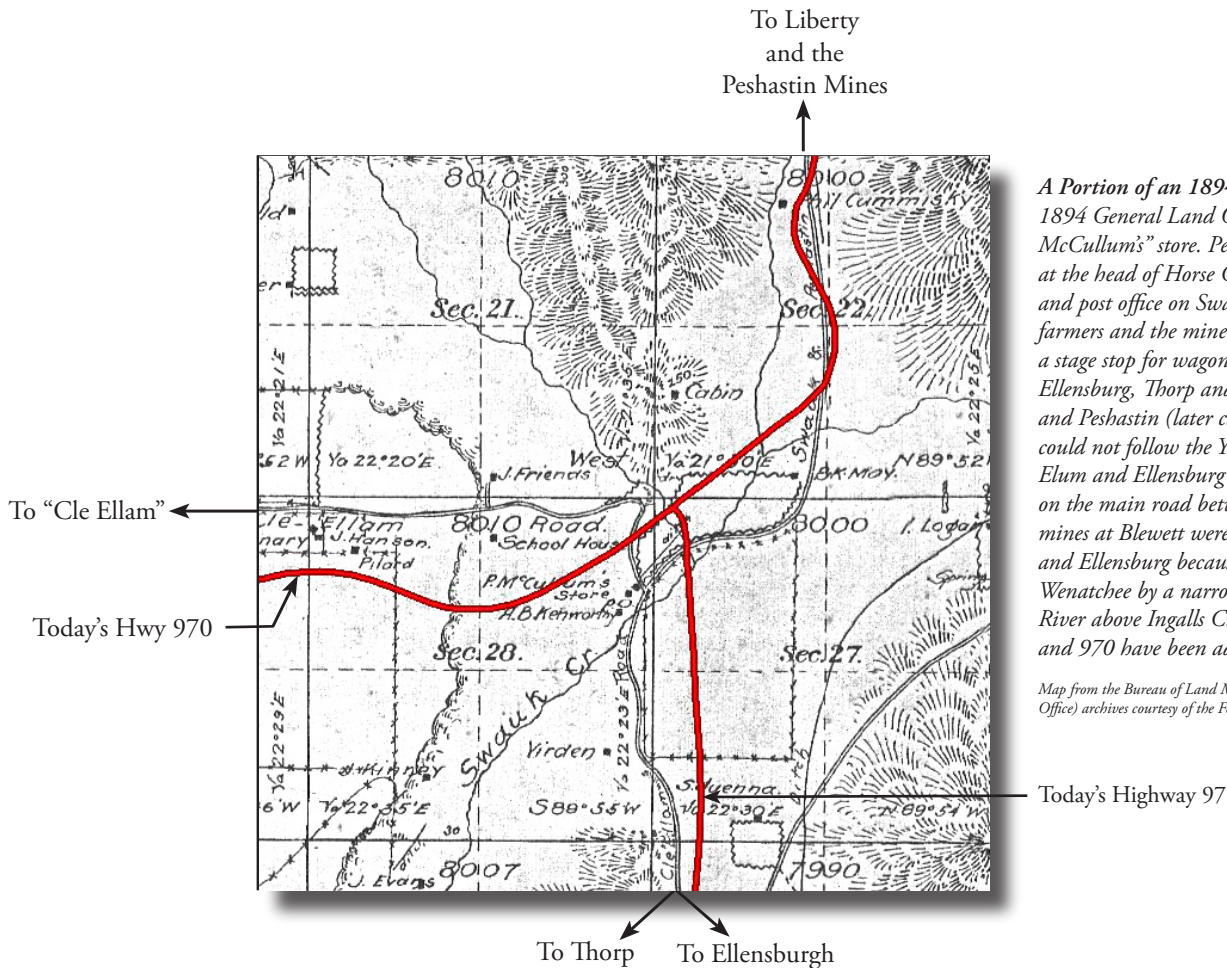
One of the favorite sites was the Swauk Recreation Lodge, one and a half miles above Mountain Home. (Mountain Home was at the intersection of the old Blewett Pass turnoff from Highway 97). The Swauk Recreation Lodge area was very popular in the 1930's and 1940's. A community lodge sponsored by Kittitas County was dedicated on the site June 9, 1940, with 2000 people attending. The lodge was 36 feet wide and 76 feet long. The main room had one of the largest open fireplaces in America, seven feet deep, twenty feet wide and eight feet high. The lodge was complete with dormitory room for fifty people, rest rooms and showers, clothes drying room, photography dark room and parking space for 800 vehicles. There was running water throughout the lodge, and for fire protection there were two fire hydrants with 300 feet of 1 ½ inch hose. Natural pressure would send a stream of water over the roof with ease. The lodge was used mostly in the summer, but it also had a 1000 ft. long rope tow to the summit for skiers to use for winter recreation.

The lodge was used until 1957. In 1963 it was cut into three sections, moved to Mineral Springs and reassembled. It is now used as a restaurant— with a much smaller fireplace, however. The Swauk Recreation Lodge was able to accommodate large groups. The Liberty campground and heliport is the only area left in the Swauk Basin that can accommodate large groups. The Liberty campground is undeveloped and for the most part, groups bring their own water and toilets. The Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service share costs to pay for portable toilets during the summer and fall.

Crossroads at Lauderdale Junction

The present junction of Highways 97 and 970 was at one time the crossroads of wagon traffic in the upper county. There have been businesses at that junction serving the traveling public from the 1880's to the 1970's. The location was originally called McCallum on early maps. It then became known as Virden and later as Lauderdale. On today's maps it does not have a name, it is just the junction of two highways.

During the era of wagon roads in the 1880's and 1890's the area was the crossroads for traffic between Cle Elum, Thorp and Ellensburg and the gold mines at Liberty and Blewett. Wagons could not make it through the Yakima River canyon between Cle Elum and Ellensburg nor could wagons make it through the Peshastin River gorge between the old gold mining camp of Blewett and Wenatchee. All supplies for both the Liberty and the Blewett mining camps had to come from Ellensburg or Cle Elum through the junction at McCallum. The wagon road south from McCallum went through Horse Canyon and then split, one branch going down Dry Creek to Ellensburg and the other over Hayward Hill to Thorp.



A Portion of an 1894 Map. A portion of an 1894 General Land Office map showing "P. McCullum's" store. Peter McCullum homesteaded at the head of Horse Canyon and opened a store and post office on Swauk Creek to supply local farmers and the miners at Liberty. His place was a stage stop for wagon traffic between Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Thorp and the mines at Liberty and Peshastin (later called Blewett). Wagons could not follow the Yakima River between Cle Elum and Ellensburg and thus McCullum was on the main road between the two towns. The mines at Blewett were supplied from Cle Elum and Ellensburg because wagons were blocked to Wenatchee by a narrow canyon on the Peshastin River above Ingalls Creek. Present Highway 97 and 970 have been added for reference.

Map from the Bureau of Land Management (formerly the General Land Office) archives courtesy of the Forest Service

Peter McCallum was the first to have a commercial business at the Lauderdale Junction. The traveler of the day used horses and horses require a “stage stop.” Peter McCallum’s descendents have described his pioneering effort in the book *A History of Kittitas County Washington*, 1989, Page 638. A portion of the description is as follows:

In the spring of 1882, Peter (McCallum) and two friends hiked across Snoqualmie Pass via a narrow Indian trail, leading a horse packed with equipment to sell to miners in the Swauk camps, and to search for land. Peter homesteaded 160 acres in Horse Canyon in August, 1882. He built a log cellar where Sarah and his three children joined him in October, 1883. He purchased 320 acres of railroad land that joined the homestead, 160 acres of it in 1891. He sold vegetables, beef, chicken, eggs, milk, cream, butter, cheese, pigs, cured hams and bacon to the camp of miners on the Swauk. He opened McCallum post office and store in his home, which was also used as a land office. He freighted goods from the Dalles, Oregon, to Liberty, and hauled much gold from the mines to Ellensburg, which he sent to the U.S. Mint. He opened a larger store and post office on the Swauk Creek. He gave land above the road from where Virden School now stands for McCallum School (District 15).

The McCallum Post Office is described in the book *Postmarked Washington, Chelan, Douglas and Kittitas Counties* by Guy Reed Ramsey, page 53.



Lauderdale Lodge in 1921. The lodge had cabins for travelers and a dining room. It became a favorite Saturday night outing for people from Ellensburg and Cle Elum. Luella Pappe lives in the lodge now. Al Nicholson is on the left and it is unknown who the person is on the right. The white cat’s name was Peggy.

Al Nicholson picture from the Wes and Carole Engstrom collection.

Peter McCallum and his wife Sarah (Harrison) were among the first farmers to homestead just south of the Swauk Mining District. In August 1882 they filed a homestead on 160 acres and immediately began to develop a farm. Other settlers followed suit, and McCallum saw an opportunity to serve both farmers and miners with a grocery and post office. His post office, established in 1884, was the first post office in the Kittitas Valley proper west of Ellensburg and north of the Yakima River. In 1892 Postmaster McCallum was elected County Commissioner on the Democratic ticket. He served in that capacity for two terms. In that same year the Liberty post office was established just four miles to the north and soon Liberty became a thriving town. Cle Elum and Teanaway had been established to the southwest. As a result the McCallum office was no longer needed to serve the area. Peter McCallum opened a grocery business in Seattle in 1897 and soon afterwards his post office was discontinued. He retained ownership of his farm lands, however, and in 1902 he returned to Cle Elum.

In the 1920’s the method of travel was changing to the automobile. The Lauderdale family responded to that need with a new lodge for people and “service station” for the cars. Charles (Frank) Lauderdale came to the area in 1893 when he bought a store in Liberty from Dexter Shoudy, son of John Shoudy, the founder of Ellensburg. In 1921 his son, Henry, built the Lauderdale Lodge and a service station next to it. The lodge building still stands today. Luella Pappe owns it and it is now her home. Frank Lauderdale’s granddaughter, Judith Peters Falk, supplied the following history of the service station from her family records.

If you look close you can still readily see the grade of the old original Blewett Road running between Luella Pappé's garage and her satellite dish. The earliest Virden Junction of two dirt and gravel roads, 12 miles from Cle Elum and 18 miles from Ellensburg in those days, was on that spot. This gravel Blewett Pass road ambled back and across a one lane bridge over Swauk Creek behind Lauderdale Lodge. It snaked its way towards Wenatchee. The road had turnouts in the event you met another car coming from the opposite direction and was open from late spring until early fall, closing for the winter months. Car traffic was light and truck traffic had not developed yet as most things were still shipped by rail.

At the junction, about where Lue's white garage sits today, the very first service station at Lauderdale opened in summer 1921. It consisted of a new five-gallon gas pump bought in May 1921 for \$389.50! The gas pump was positioned next to a shed, actually a barn, with a posted sign stating "MECHANIC ON DUTY." This first service station was owned by Henry "Lloyd" Lauderdale and his wife Pearl. Henry was known in the Virden area as "Lloyd" or "H.L." (my uncle). North and adjacent to this service station, was the alfalfa field owned by the widow, Mrs. Caterina Bettas.

The following year, 1922, a new Blewett double lane gravel road from Cle Elum to Wenatchee was put in, thus replacing the old one-lane. The State changed the lay of the road locating it $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north on the other side of Caterina Bettas' alfalfa field. Undaunted, Lloyd Lauderdale relocated his service station north of this new Blewett road to accommodate the tourists and passerby. He had a "new on the market" 10-gallon glass bowl pump installed, erected a small storage shed alongside to hold related items such as oil, and opened for business with his young brother-in-law, Glen Shimmons, pumping Shell gasoline.

This service station existed until 1928, when it was relocated from the north side of the Blewett highway to the south side of the Blewett highway. By this point in time Lloyd and Pearl Lauderdale had moved on and Lloyd's father Charles "Frank" Lauderdale and Lloyd's brother-in-law, Ed Snell, were in the area (June 1925), living and working in the Lauderdale Lodge.

A 5-year lease between Caterina Bettas as leaseholder and Lauderdale Lodge, with "Frank" Lauderdale and Ed Snell as copartners, was drawn up in March 1928. It involved two acres, more or less, of land bordering the south side of the Blewett highway that I referred to earlier as the Caterina Bettas alfalfa field. The lease gave the copartners of Lauderdale Lodge the privilege of erecting a building. With a renewable option, this agreement was secured for \$50.00 in gold coin and paid, in advance, each subsequent year by the first day of March.

Frank Lauderdale and Ed Snell erected a new Lauderdale service station on the leased alfalfa field bordering the south side of the Blewett road, referred to on maps of the day as the Sunset Highway. Initially the station had one 5-gallon, self-measuring, gravity fed gasoline pump. A second 5-gallon glass domed gas pump was added later which held high octane "ethyl." Each pump had its own storage tank. The men built the station with living quarters in the back and a small convenience store up front. Later a covered carport was added and a vehicle could gas up from either side. The Lauderdale and Snell families lived at Lauderdale Lodge summer months, with Frank and Nona Lauderdale



Lauderdale Lodge Service Station in 1926. The first service station was built beside the Lauderdale Lodge in 1921. It was relocated to the north side of the Blewett highway when the road was realigned in 1922 and is shown in the picture as it looked in 1926. Frank Lauderdale is on the left and Ed Snell on the right. The five-gallon gas pump was bought in May 1921 for \$389.50.

Photo from the Judith Falk collection

wintering at the service station. In 1933 Frank Lauderdale and Ed Snell families moved on. From 1933 until late summer 1936 Clarence "Ted" and Norene Hopper leased the service station. Norene was the daughter of Frank and Nona Lauderdale.

The Gault family ran the station from 1936 to 1941. C.P. and Elma Arrowsmith bought the buildings and leased the land from 1941 until 1961, Joe Micheletto from 1961 to 1968, Ralph and Henrietta Fackler from 1968 to 1971 and Bill and Jerry Snyder from 1971 to 1973 at which time the State Highway Department realigned the highway again and eliminated the station. Since 1973 the only business left at Lauderdale was a rock shop run by E. Benish until his death in 2002. ♣

Pioneers Shared a Cemetery

The Swauk Cemetery was started in 1884 when Mary Evans was buried on a gentle wooded slope in Swauk Prairie. There has never been a formal cemetery association formed for the cemetery; it was just an area set aside for pioneer families from Liberty, Lauderdale and Swauk Prairie to be buried. The only other cemetery in the area is the one acre, three grave, family cemetery of Peter McCallum in Horse Canyon (now Bettas Road). The Northern Pacific Railroad was granted the section of land containing the cemetery, and about 30 graves, in 1896 as part of their land grant. Two pioneers, Wm Kinney and Abe Wright, bought the cemetery land back from the railroad in 1902 and it has continued as a private cemetery ever since. Permission to be buried is not based on how much money you have but, instead, on who you are or what contribution you have made to the community during your life. There are now about 300 graves on the five-acre site, the exact number is uncertain because early records were lost. It is thought there are about two dozen unmarked or unidentified graves. The Kittitas County Genealogical Society has published a document, *The Rural Cemeteries of Kittitas County*, including the Swauk Cemetery.

Christine Bettas, late of Lauderdale, wrote in *A History of Kittitas County Washington – 1989* the following about the cemetery.

This quiet spot, gives one a feeling of serenity. The presence of the pioneers of this area, whose hardships, joys and heartaches could well fill a book, can almost be felt. It is good to know, that in the turmoil of today's fast-moving world and changing patterns of society, there still exists areas such as this which are the essence of peace and tranquility.

The same can be said of the entire Swauk Basin, which makes it important for the present keepers of the land to preserve it from wildfire for future generations.



The Lauderdale Gas Station in the early 1970s. The hand operated gas pump is now gone. Joe Micheletto owned the station from 1961 to 1968 and Ralph and Henrietta Fackler from 1968 to 1971. Bill and Jerry Snyder bought the station in 1971 and ran it until 1973 when the State Department of Transportation relocated Highway 97 to go right over the site. Now when you stop at the stop sign you are on the spot of the old Lauderdale Gas Station.

Photo from the Wes and Carole Engstrom Collection

Appendix B – Fire Plan Participants

The people participating in the plan are listed below. Everyone who participated in a meeting or requested to be put on the e-mail distribution list is listed as a participant in creating this draft document.

Participants List	
Name	Interest
Bonnell, Bill & Sheryle	Liberty Homeowner
Burwell, Bill & Lana	Liberty Homeowner
Cronk, Bob	Lauderdale Homeowner
Dana, Gene	County Sheriff
Dickison, Craig & Mark	Liberty Homeowner
Eberhart, Ross	Liberty Mountain Homeowner
Engstrom, Wes & Carole	Liberty Homeowner
Evans, Jack	Harkness Gulch Homeowner
Frederick, Barb	Highway 97 Homeowner
Frueling, Ken	Liberty Homeowner
Fulleton, Bill	Liberty Homeowner
Gaidos, Derald	County Fire Marshall
Gardner, Allen	BLM – Spokane
Gonzalez, Mark	Forest Service – Cle Elum
Greer, Dan	Kittitas County Emergency Mgt.
Guy, Lu	Homeowner
Hallberg, Jim	BLM – Portland
Harrison, Jim	Lauderdale Homeowner & KFD #7
Heesaker, Gary	Highway 97 Homeowner
Heit, Paul	Liberty Homeowner
Holter, Del	Liberty Homeowner
Horst, Dave	Highway 97 Homeowner
King, Dan & Cindy	Mineral Springs Restaurant
Knight, Lane & Bettey	Harkness Gulch Homeowner
Marion, Fred	Kittitas County Fire District #7
McInturff, Joe & Judy	Liberty Homeowner
McKeown, Pat & Cristy	Highway 97 Homeowner
McQueen, Janie	Highway 97 Homeowner
Morrow, Deral	Highway 97 Homeowner
Naragon, Jan	Harkness Gulch Homeowner

Participants List	
Name	Interest
Neuman, Dale	4wheel Club member
Parker, Gary & Rene	Liberty Homeowner
Petersen, Don	Liberty Mountain Homeowner
Pinkerton, Jim & Maria	Liberty Mountain Homeowner
Rees, Jim	BLM – Wenatchee
Riggin, Len	WA Dept. of Natural Resources
Ringer, Fred & Donna	Liberty Homeowner
Robinson, Debbie	WA Dept. of Natural Resources
Sanders, Dan	Liberty Mountain Homeowner
Sanders, Warren	Liberty Mountain Homeowner
Schultz, Dave	National Training Center
Siepmann, Harry	Highway 97 Homeowner
Slyfield, Fred	Sheriff's Office – Emergency Mgt.
Snyder, Jerry	Highway 97 Homeowner
Towers, Jack & Deb	Mining Claimant
Tweed, Bill & Mary	Liberty Homeowner
Ullery, Rod	Liberty Homeowner
Williams, Mark	BLM – Wenatchee
Wilson, Janelle	Harkness Gulch Homeowner
Yantzer, Don	Liberty Homeowner
Zabransky, Steve & Marilyn	Liberty Mountain Homeowner