Oregon 2020 Wildfire Impacts on Drinking Water Infrastructure

- Oregon Association of Water Utilities
  - OAWU provides technical assistance, formal training and representation for drinking water and wastewater utility operators and managers – large to small utilities and both members and non-members
  - OAWU's role during the 2020 fires – field emergency assessments and summary reporting to OEM and various others
  - Summary provided by Jason Green, Executive Director

Responding

- Emergency Management Structure
- Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality and Oregon Health Authority Respond
- Counties Respond
- OAWU and ORWARN Respond
- Additional volunteers and service providers
- Others

Dry Summer

- Time of Year When
  - Water Demand is High
  - Water Supply is Low
- 18 Fires – Early August – Early September
- High Wind Event in Early September
  - Extremely low humidity levels for coast and valley areas – days of teens/ twenties with east wind
  - Fires Increased in Intensity and Spread Rapidly
  - 1.2 Million Acres Burned

Human Impacts

- 9 Confirmed Fatalities
- 1 Missing
- Unknown Number of Sheltered Persons
- Over 23,000 Registered for Assistance
  - Mass Evacuations
  - Over 4,000 Homes Lost
  - 1,400 Other Structures

Public Water Supply Impacts

- More than 60 Systems Jeopardized – OAWU initially contacted or visited and assessed
- 20 Systems Compromised
  - Loss of Pressure due to infrastructure failure and/or electrical
  - Under Boil Water Notice and/or Do Not Use
- Several Drinking Water Systems Incurred Major Loss
  - Treatment plants, pump stations, generators

Communities

- Severely Affected Utilities and Communities
  - Lyons/Mehama, Gates, Detroit
  - Blue River
  - Talent and Phoenix
  - Panther Creek, Echo, Salmon River and River Bend
  - Several MHP destroyed
  - Several tiny water systems such as bed and breakfasts, small hotel units/complexes and restaurants, etc.

Communities

- Utility Infrastructure damage or not – In communities where homes and businesses where lost, rebuilding and repairs and growth with planning needs to occur to begin to repair, rebuild and/or maintain utilities and meet revenue requirements, etc.

Private Water Supply Impacts

- Emerging Concerns
- Numerous Individual Wells Potentially Compromised
  - Damage to Equipment
  - Water Quality Concerns
  - Groundwater Contamination
  - Communication and Informational Needs

Future Considerations

- Emergency Plans Review
- Repairs and Replacements
- Source and Protection
- Possible Contaminations
- Source Water Study and Updates to Protection Plans
- Watershed or Regional Planning Considerations
- Funding

Thank you