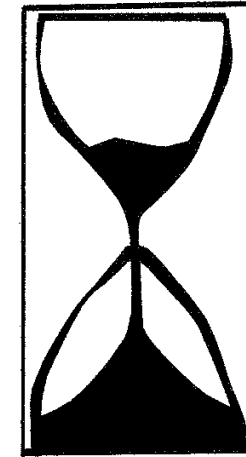
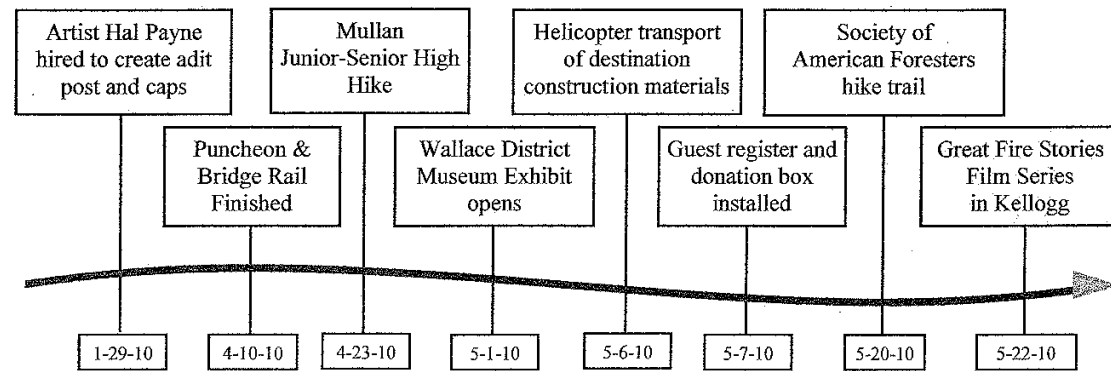
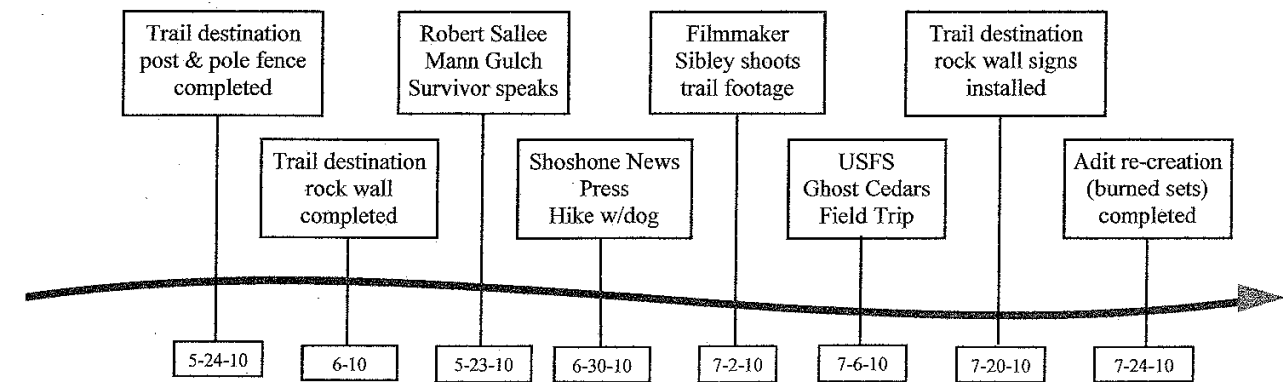


Pulaski Project Accomplishments & Activities Timeline

January - July 2010



and News & Media Coverage of the Great Fire of 1910



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2010

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

50 CENTS

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1910 Fire Committee planning centennial events

The 1910 Fire Commemoration Committee has been established for the remembrance of all those who perished in Silver Valley communities and the surrounding region during the catastrophic fires of 1910.

Committee members include individuals from the Idaho Department of Lands, United States Forest Service, Wallace Business Community Association (WBCA), Wallace Chamber of Commerce, Silver Valley Chamber of Commerce, local museums, the Pulaski Project, other organizations and many dedicated individuals from the Silver Valley.

The purpose of this group is to coordinate events leading up to the 100-year anniversary of the 1910 fires.

Special projects include: Planning, placement and construction of a memorial and interpretive signs at the Wallace Visitor's Center, a memorial for Ed Pulaski's fallen crew members (his original design proposal to Congress) and restoration of firefighter gravesite memorials at Nine Mile Cemetery.

Events leading up to the Aug. 19-21, 2010 commemoration and dedication start with the first annual Fireman's Ball on

March 6. On May 20-22, the Inland Empire Society of American Foresters will hold its meeting in Wallace.

During spring and summer, museum and business exhibits will be opened throughout the Silver Valley; informational and guided tours, educational programs and citywide events, special Sixth Street Melodrama productions, film festivals, speakers and book signings will take place as well. There will also be a USFS mule pack string, antique fire apparatus display and many more exciting activities and displays.



All events will lead up to the commemoration and dedication of the newly-constructed memorials.

For the success of these events and the construction of the memorials, the 1910 Committee is seeking donations and assistance from the business and residential

communities.

The monies sought will go directly to the memorials, Wildland Firefighter Foundation and other fallen firefighter organizations and projects.

Donations will be accepted at all Silver Valley US Bank locations or mail to: 1910 Fire c/o Forest Van Dorn, P.O. Box 444 Osburn, ID 83849

Contact the committee at the Historic Silver Valley Chamber, (208) 784-0821, or e-mail a message to 1910commemoration-committee@gmail.com or forest@flmine.com. Visit the committee Web site, www.firecoop.org, for more information.

1910 Commemorative Fireman's Ball



March 6, 2010 Wallace, Idaho

The Fireman's Ball is a fundraiser for the 1910 Commemorative Group so that a memorial can be erected to honor the fireman that lost their lives during the 1910 Fire that devastated Wallace and the Silver Valley.

The ball will include dinner (steak or lasagna), a no-host bar, a silent auction, and a night of dancing to classic big band music performed by the Coeur d'Alene Big Band.

This is a semi-formal event and dress uniforms are encouraged.

Dinner will be served 6pm to 8pm. Music and dancing will be from 7pm to 10pm.

Tickets must be purchased in advance and are \$60 per couple.

Please join us at the Elks Lodge, 419 Cedar Street, Wallace, Idaho for a fun filled night of food, music, and friends.

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2010



MOSTLY SUNNY ▲ 44 ▼ 24

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FACE TIME

Forest Van Dorn

Volunteer sees 1910 Fire as one of the region's formative events



Forest Van Dorn pauses at Nine Mile Cemetery near Wallace, Idaho, at a mass grave of men who died fighting the 1910 Fire. He is a member of a committee organizing events to mark the fire's 100th anniversary in August.

J. BART RAYNIAK bart@spokesman.com

By Becky Kramer | becky@spokesman.com, (208) 765-7122

Next August marks the 100th anniversary of the 1910 Fire, which swept across 3 million acres in Idaho, Washington and Montana during a two-day firestorm. At least 85 people – many of them firefighters – were killed in the blaze, testing the mettle of the newly formed Forest Service. Most of the fatalities occurred in Shoshone County. Forest Van Dorn is chairman of a volunteer committee in Idaho's Silver Valley that is organizing events for the August anniversary.

Q. Why is remembering the 1910 Fire so important?

A. 1910 was one of the most catastrophic fires we've ever had. At the time, the Forest Service was trying to get going. Some politicians thought it should be phased out; they didn't think there was the need for another government agency. After the fire, the thinking changed. Maybe they needed to have this organization to fight catastrophic fires. ... The loss of life is important, too. At the Nine Mile Cemetery, we have the grave with a father and son killed in the fire and two mass burials for firefighters – nine named and one unknown. When the fire blew up into one massive blaze, it trapped a lot of people.

Q. The fire has lots of dramatic stories. Which is most compelling to you, personally?

A. The Pulaski group. They were up above Lake Elsie and they

Fireman's Ball

► Tickets for the Fireman's Ball are \$60 per couple and must be purchased in advance. The March 6 ball at the Wallace Elks Club is a fundraiser for the 1910 Fire Commemoration Committee. The committee's goal is to raise \$50,000 for interpretive signs and monuments that tell the fire's story. To order tickets, call (208) 753-0591 or (208) 682-4436.

got trapped to the fire. They were able to get to an old mine entrance and get inside. Ranger Ed Pulaski saved most of his firefighting crew. I also think about the devastation that it did to Wallace and surrounding areas – how people worked to save their towns.

Q. I understand that about a third of Wallace burned?

A. That's probably pretty close. One of the reasons they didn't

lose the whole town was that they had a fire in Wallace earlier, in the late 1800s. When they rebuilt, they made sure the buildings were built of brick. A lot of people from Wallace were evacuated to Kellogg. There are stories about some of the trains coming through ... with the trestles on fire. It was quite a time.

Q. Describe some of the events planned for the August anniversary.

A. We'll dedicate the new memorials and interpretive signs on Aug. 21. We've invited authors and dignitaries. ... We'll have a parade of fire vehicles, and a mule pack train. ... We'll have trips to the Pulaski Trail. We found blueprints of a memorial that Pulaski sent to Washington, D.C., to honor the men from his crew that died. It was never built. We're going to build it and place it near the trail. One hundred years from now, people will understand exactly what happened here.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2010

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Visit area wildlife center



D1

50 CENTS Visit us online at www.shoshonenewspress.com

UP FRONT

■ Happy Big 40

Daniel

— Love, Kip, Blake,

Isaac and Boone

■ Arrestion for

Frene Mae (Drapeak)

Lundbeck will follow

the celebration of

her life on Saturday

Feb. 27. The celebra-

tion will take place

at 2 p.m. at Yates

Funeral Home in

Coeur d'Alene, and

the reception will be

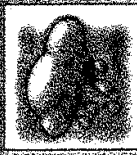
held at the Seventh

Day Adventist Church

(112 E. Louist Ave.

Coeur d'Alene)

INSIDE



Weather

A2



Leisure

ARTIST

from A1

"Now that I've worked out my techniques, it's just time-consuming," Payne said. "As I go along the logs get easier to do. They go faster."

He has never crafted faux burned-out timbers before, so Payne was experimenting with different methods from the outset. He designed and built a large workbench-like platform for the heavy logs, making it easier for him to move the raw lumber (each log is 10-12 inches in diameter). He also picked up a burnt piece of wood from an old slash pile to use as a model.

Before starting a cut, Payne studies 1910 photographs of the fire-scarred Pulaski Tunnel. His goal is to replicate all seven timbers that appear in the photos, down to the smallest detail. He shapes every bulge and knot with a chain saw, cuts long gashes with his circular

Recreating a fire's aftermath

Artist making burned-out timbers for Pulaski Tunnel trail

By NICK ROTUNNO
Staff writer

Early on the morning of Aug. 21, 1910, Ranger Ed Pulaski emerged from the damp darkness of a mining tunnel on the West Fork of Placer Creek. He entered a post-apocalyptic world.

The ground smoldered and smoked; burned-out trees lay uprooted and bare. The once-verdant forest was lain to waste, blightorched by a vicious and unstoppable wildfire that would eventually be known as the Big Blowup.

As Pulaski's crew stumbled from the tunnel — saved only by the quick thinking of its brave foreman — the ranger surveyed that dreadful scene. He saw the desolation, the sheer destructive force of the inferno. Surely, he must have noticed the entrance to the mining tunnel, his fortunate refuge, its exterior timbers blackened and charred from the boiling heat.

Now, nearly 100 years later, Pulaski's story endures. At the end of the two-mile Pulaski Tunnel trail (which begins just outside Wallace), hikers can still peer into the murky aperture that saved the ranger and his men. They can imagine



— Photo by NICK ROTUNNO

Wallace artist Hal Payne chisels a white pine log in his workshop at the Wallace Civic Auditorium. Payne is working on a recreation of the burned-out timbers that once surrounded the entrance to the Pulaski Tunnel.

the flames, the despair and the valor.

But something's missing from that legendary tunnel: Those beey timbers that once guarded the cave and burned over during the blaze.

Enter Hal Payne, the Wallace artist and craftsman who's recreating the wooden sup-

ports in a workshop at the Civic Auditorium. He's carving, torching and sawing thick white pine logs, and when he's finished, a helicopter will transport the replica timbers up to the Pulaski Tunnel. There, workers will position the new supports right where the old ones burned in

1910.

And when the Big Blowup centennial rolls around this August, the tunnel will look better than ever.

Payne hopes to complete the project in a few weeks. All told, he'll spend roughly 100 hours in his workshop.

see ARTIST, A3



— Photo by NICK ROTUNNO

Hal Payne's log artwork is painstakingly intricate and highly realistic.

saw's whirling blade, and carves each tiny crevice with a hammer and chisel — much the same way a Native artist carves a Pacific Northwest totem pole.

Payne has the rare ability to fashion almost anything from a blank

doesn't really matter to me, it's the process. And I like projects that are new to me."

Once the chiseling is complete, Payne chars the wood with an acetylene torch, giving it that burned-out look and

blackened color. To preserve the finished logs, he'll apply a coat of high-quality stain and install Bor Rods every foot or so. The rods are made from a crystalline material that dissolves as soon as water enters the log, protecting the wood within. With safeguards on both the outside and inside, the timbers won't rot anytime soon.

"I'm hoping they last at least 25 years, and I think they will," Payne said.

Each log is a masterpiece of its own, a real work of art. All seven will stand proudly at the Pulaski Tunnel, adding to the history and mystique of the ranger's tale.

Payne is excited about the project and thankful for the opportunity. He doesn't care about profiting from his work; he's just happy to be creating something special and unique.

"I wanted to be an artist from the day I was born," Payne said, recalling how, as a boy growing

up in Texas, he used to idolize Rembrandt and van Gogh. "I never considered the fact that they both died in abject poverty. It's always been the art that's been important to me."

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Rail route tunnels saved lives in big fire

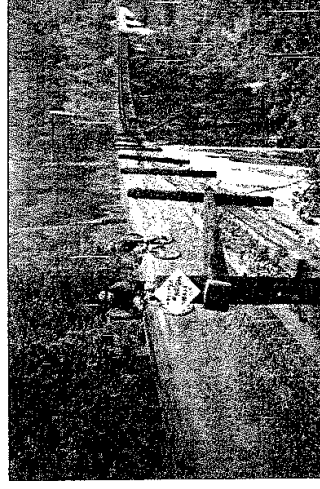
By Carl Gidlund

smokejumper@roadrunner.com

One of the most popular recreation areas in North Idaho is the Route of the Hiawatha, a 15-mile biking and hiking trail on the abandoned roadbed of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. The area is managed by the Lookout Pass Ski and Recreation Area under a special-use permit from the U.S. Forest Service.

In 1935 the railroad began passenger service from Chicago to the West Coast with a series of speedy trains, all named Hiawatha. The trail is named for the most famous of those, the Olympian Hiawatha, which passed over the route daily between 1947 and 1961.

Thousands bike and hike the trail every summer, but few know the story of how heroic trainmen and laborers saved hundreds of people



FILE Associated Press

Bicyclists cross a trestle over Small Creek, along the Route of the Hiawatha Rail Trail.

during the 3 million acre forest fire that's come to be called the Big Burn, the largest fire ever in the United States. We'll take you on a trip down the trail, noting what happened here those terrifying days of Aug. 19 and 20, 1910.

See 1910 FIRE, 3

1910 FIRE

Continued from 1

First, a bit of history: This segment of the line was constructed by the railway company between 1907 and 1909. Small towns and work camps abutted the tracks in 1910, and homesteaders, miners and merchants staked their claims or built their dwellings near them, too, so they could receive supplies and send their products to market.

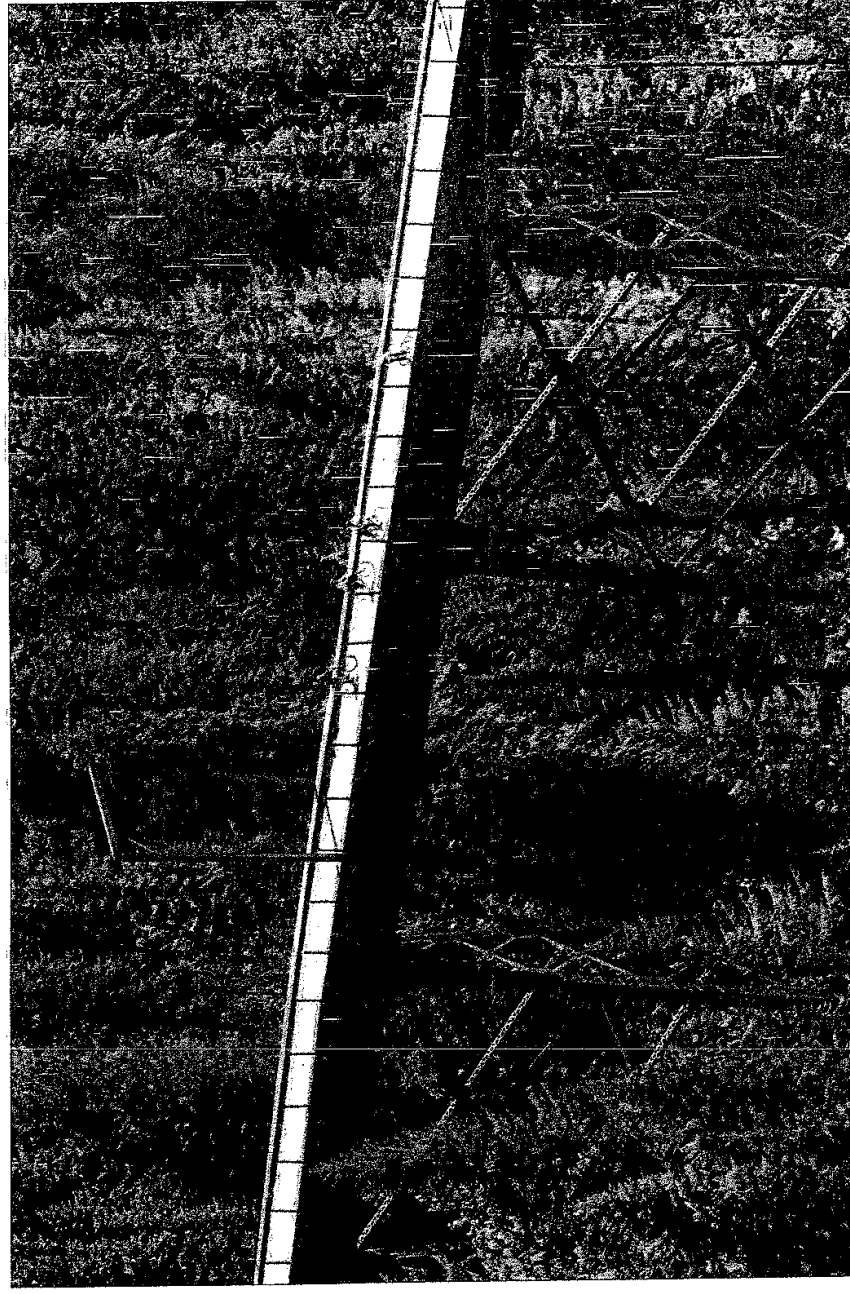
To access the top portion of the trail, take Interstate 90 to the Taft exit, Montana milepost 5. The town of Taft was built on the flats to your left as you head for the parking lot near the entrance to the St. Paul Pass Tunnel, also called the Taft Tunnel by many locals. Owing to the fire there's nothing left of the town, but once you get to the parking area you'll see some foundations of buildings erected later by the railroad.

During the railroad construction and until the fire, Taft was quite the hellhole: When Lolo National Forest Supervisor Elers Koch first saw it, he recounted in Timothy Egan's book, "The Big Burn: "The bars were lined with hard-faced dance hall girls, and every kind of gambling game going wide open."

Taft residents had given so much trouble to the Forest Service during construction that the agency had little use for them. In fact, as the fire approached Taft on Saturday, Aug. 20, Ranger Frank Haun suggested to his boss, Koch, that his crew of firefighters light a backfire that would burn toward the town. Most thought it was a good idea, but it was vetoed by Koch.

Haun knocked on saloon and home doors throughout the town, trying to solicit volunteers to defend it. No luck. According to Haun, "Instead of readying for retreat or defense, instead of digging fire lines or packing clothes and down roofs or gathering shovels and picks, the people of Taft went to work hoarding and then consuming their entire whiskey supply. As Supervisor Koch reported to his superiors, the Taft denizens decided that if they were going to be burned to death in an inferno that engulfed the Bitterroots, they would go down drunk."

Despite the booze, they all escaped by boarding rescue trains that took them to Missoula, but Taft burned to



FILE The Spokesman-Review

Bicyclists, dwarfed by one of several trestles and the surrounding beauty of the national forest, stop to admire the view in 2008 along the Route of the Hiawatha, a trail that follows the path of the long-gone railroad through the region on the Montana-Idaho border.

After you pay your fee to walk or ride the Hiawatha, you'll enter the 1.7-mile St. Paul Pass Tunnel, designated by the railroad as No. 20. During the fire, more than 400 people fled into it and all survived the inferno. Yet only about two miles to the northwest, over the ridge and in the next valley, eight men died at the Bullion Mine, trapped in a small shaft.

Looking down the trail as you emerge from Tunnel No. 21, about three miles from the west portal of the Taft Tunnel, the whole of the country as far as the eye can see was swept by the fire, "so hot that pick handles lying in the open beside the track were utterly consumed," according to Koch. As you traverse the trail, you'll note many earth fills. In 1910, all but two of these, Kelly Creek and Clear Creek, were wooden trestles, afire during those hot August days.

The 1,516-foot Tunnel No. 22 at Moss Creek saved the lives of 47 people. An engine and a boxcar had left Roland, a station at the west portal of the Taft Tunnel, about 3.5 miles back up the track. It couldn't make it to Falcon, about 11 miles farther, because of those burning trestles, but railroad

trainmen and laborers who had

railroad employees.

Tunnel No. 27 at Clear Creek, 2.5 miles below Adair, although only 470 feet long, saved 168 people. On the night of Aug. 20, engineer John Mackedon arrived at Falcon siding about a mile down the tracks. It was on fire and men, women and children were gathered on the depot's platform. The moment he stopped everyone tried to get on the engine. Realizing there wasn't room he hooked onto flat cars at an adjacent siding and loaded them all.

After reaching the tunnel they discovered that Superintendent C.H. Marshall had been left behind. The engineer and a conductor returned to Falcon, found Marshall, and returned to the tunnel.

They later described their trip: The huge timbers of bridges were burning beneath them, but they kept on until they rescued the official. Their return trip to the tunnel was terrible. After crossing burning bridges they had to stop to extinguish the flames that threatened to destroy the caboose. According to engineer Mackedon, also cited by Egan, "Why, all you could see was a wall of flame, but we crossed it. I hooked her up, threw her

wide open, and then we lay down on the deck to protect ourselves from the heat. We expected that every minute would be our last on Earth."

The people remained in the tunnel eight days until the bridges were rebuilt.

The remains of a redwood water tower on the bank above the trail mark Falcon's location. It served as a construction camp and drop-off point for supplies for nearby settlers and the town of Grand Forks in the valley below that was reached by a steep trail. It burned to the ground.

A railroad worker who was left behind saved his life by scrambling into a 168-foot culvert through fill dirt.

Your trip down the Hiawatha Trail will probably conclude at Pearson, about four miles down the track from Falcon. The Lucky Swede and Pearson Mining Co. used the siding to bring in mining equipment and the siding eventually became known as Pearson.

As you look uphill from here, you'll see a smaller railroad bed on your left. It's the Bogle Spur, named for one of the partners who built it, Bogle and Callahan. The short line was used to remove timber killed by the fire.

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

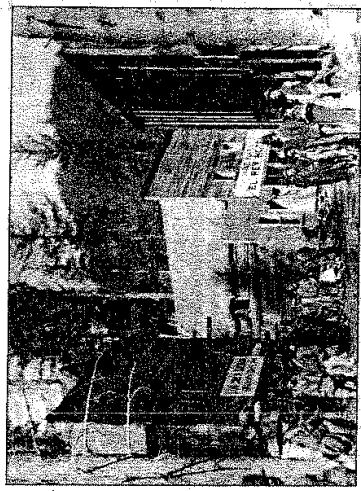
Forest fire in 1910 ruined Grand Forks

By Carl Gidlund

smokejumper@roadrunner.com

The town of Grand Forks was populated by railroad workers and scallwags of every type who enjoyed and profited from all the vices. It was said that Taft, Mont., was the toughest town in the West until Grand Forks, Idaho, developed.

Grand Forks was built in 1908, during the earliest days of the construction of this segment of the Milwaukee Road, near the confluence of Loop and Cliff Creeks. The town was about a half-mile down the slope of Loop Creek Canyon from the railroad depot and siding at Falcon. That was where the Milwaukee delivered supplies for Grand Forks; it's now a wayside on the Route of the Hiawatha recreation trail. On Aug. 20, 1910, it was directly in the path of



Courtesy of US Forest Service

A street scene in Grand Forks shows a bustling town in the Silver Valley circa 1908.

the largest fire ever to strike the United States. Here's how Joe Halm, then the assistant district ranger for the Forest Service's Wallace

See **GRAND FORKS, 6**

GRAND FORKS

Continued from 1

District described Grand Forks before the fire: "A wild mushroom construction town. The main section . . . had no streets. It was built in the form of a hollow rectangle around a sort of court. Both sides and ends of this court were almost solid with rough timber and log buildings.

"During the mornings the court was deserted except for a few sobering stragglers sitting on empty beer kegs piled in front of the 12 or 15 saloons. Some of these saloons also served as eating places and one or two had store annexes. Behind the saloons, scattered all around through the woods were nondescript assortments of tents and shacks which served as dwellings for the town's population.

"Toward evening the town would begin to show signs of life and as the night came on and as oil lamps began to glow, player pianos began their finny din, an orchestra here and there began to tune up. Women dabbled with rouge came from the cribs upstairs and sat at lunch counters or mingled with the ever-increasing throng of gamblers and rough laborers from the camps. As the hours wore on, the little town became a roaring, seething, riotous brawl of drinking, dancing, gambling and fighting humanity."

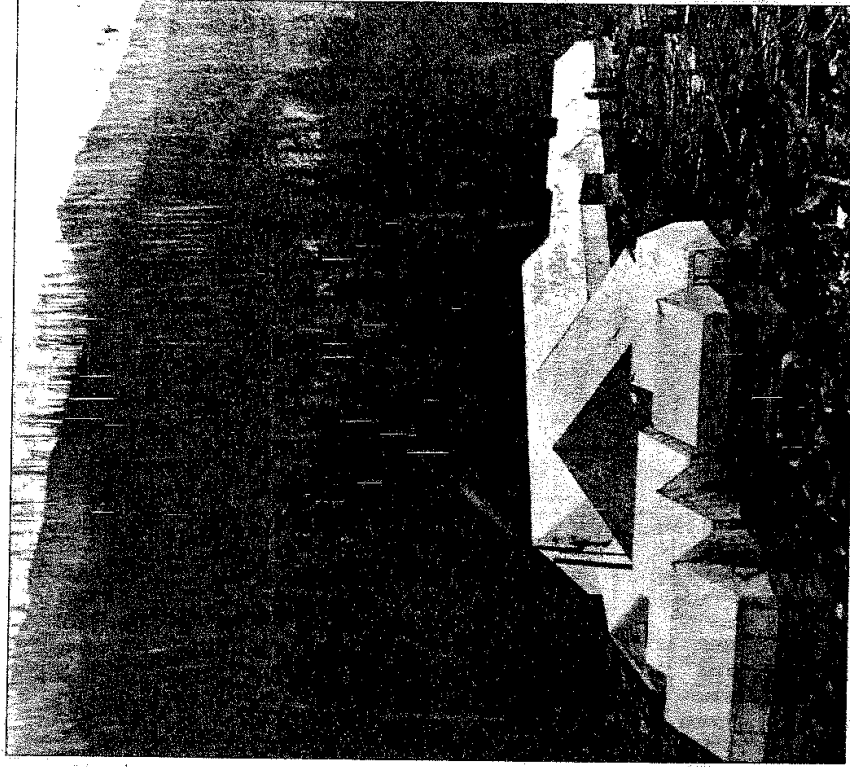
The Forest Service which managed the land on which

the town was sited had tried many times, with small success, to shut down its many saloons. They arrested the owners and conveyed them to Wallace where they were tried and fined. After one such excursion, Halm reported, "Upon our return to Grand Forks we found most of the saloons still running full blast, operated by hired assistants. Warrants were again secured, and these new men were taken out for trial. . . . When one saloon was closed, another sprang up next door, and we had it all to do over again."

According to Stanley Johnson's book on the history of the Milwaukee Road in Idaho, "Its citizens included a professional gambler who was shot through the tongue by an unhappy customer who, while in the very act of squeezing off the silencing shot, fell over backwards, shot dead himself by the card player."

Johnson also relates that Grand Forks was once torched by a prostitute who burned down the entire town to hide a customer whose charred corpse was later found in her bed. It was quickly rebuilt, just in time for the August 1910 fire.

As fire roared toward the town, all the residents fled up the rough pack road that led to Falcon. There they joined more than 100 people from up and down the tracks — homesteaders, railroad workers and miners — huddled on the station's platform. An engine arrived and the engineer, John Mackedon, hooked onto flatcars at a



Courtesy of the US Forest Service

railroad buildings, a nearby forest guard station and the town of Grand Forks.

The town was rebuilt, but stood for only a short time. Railroad construction was finished, the workers departed, and soon thereafter so did the other residents, following the men whose wages had given life to their

nearby siding, and everyone loaded aboard. He pulled his terrified passengers a mile up the tracks over burning

wooden trestles and bridges to the 470-foot Tunnel No. 27 where they huddled with other refugees — a total of 168 souls — while the fire-burned the forests around them, destroying their homesteads,

town. Grand Forks is no more. The place where pianos were tinkled and gunshots and shouts echoed is now a serene meadow, a popular camping spot where you can find a few remnants of its short, raucous life — pieces of cast iron stoves, beer barrel hoops and bottles.

Grand Forks is no more. The place where pianos were tinkled and gunshots and shouts echoed is now a serene meadow, a popular camping spot where you can find a few remnants of its short, raucous life — pieces of cast iron stoves, beer barrel hoops and bottles.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2010

SHOSHONE NEWS-PRESS

Mullan students head outdoors to learn about Great Fire of 1910

MULLAN — Mullan Junior/Senior High School will participate in a number of activities related to the centennial of the Great Fire of 1910. The culminating activity will be a hike on the Pulaski Tunnel Trail on Earth Day, Thursday, April 22.

Prior to the hike, students will have attended two assemblies highlighting significant events related to this historic occasion. One of those assemblies took place on Tuesday, April 13; the second will occur on Tuesday, April 20 in the MHS little gym.

Parents and the public are welcome to attend.

Activities during the assemblies include slide programs, sound and smell of a forest fire, trail reconstruction, Mullan stories of the 1910 Fire experience, archaeology reports and video programs. Learning about the Great Fire of 1910, the Pulaski story and the reconstruction of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail will help students relate to history that resides in their own backyard.

Students have also been studying forest management, trees, fire behavior and soil conditions in science classes at MHS.

"We hope to make the



— Photo by NICK ROTUNNO

Mullan Junior/Senior High School students will explore the Pulaski Tunnel Trail (located on Moon Pass Road, just outside Wallace) on Thursday, April 22. Beforehand, the students will study the history and lore of the Great Fire of 1910.

activities related to the Great Fire of 1910 a significant learning experience for our students," said Mullan High School Counselor Jim See. "Local, regional, state and national history happened right here in the Silver Valley. Wallace was at the epicenter of this national tragedy, with Mullan not far behind."

Students will learn of stories related to the fire. They will hear of the circumstances experi-

enced by the residents of Mullan during the fire.

This program will generate interest in the activities planned by the 1910 Fire Committee for the commemoration of the fire happening this coming tourist season. District museums will have special displays related to the fire. Local activities will culminate with special events scheduled for the weekend of Aug. 20-21 in Wallace.

"Significant learning

can and does take place outside the traditional classroom," said Mullan Principal Thomas Durbin. "Having an appreciation for local historical events that had national significance helps students appreciate their heritage in the greater order of events."

The Pulaski Tunnel Trail is an interpretive hike located just one mile south of Wallace;

see STUDENTS, A4

STUDENTS from A1

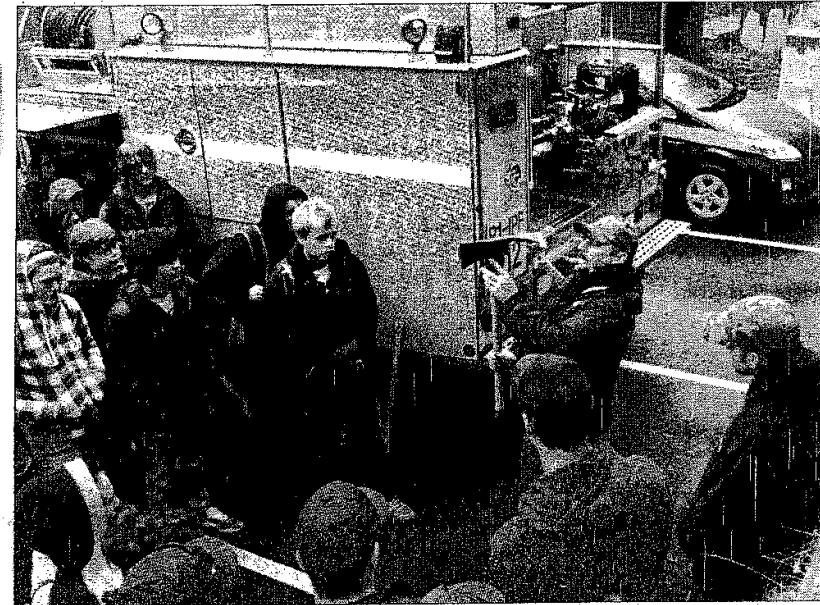
Twelve signs tell the story of the Great Fire of 1910, the Pulaski rescue and the early development of the U.S. Forest Service.

The two-mile trail follows the West Fork of Placer Creek in a narrow canyon that offers a scenic hike in the forest of North Idaho.

"Mother Nature and actual historic locations teach lessons that cannot be duplicated in the traditional school setting," said Robin Stanley, Mullan School District superintendent. "We are privileged to be able to provide this experience for our students."

FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2010

Hands-on history lesson



— Photos by NICK ROTUNNO

Stan Goode, a wildland firefighter from Coeur d'Alene River Fire, shows Mullan Jr./Sr. High School students a pulaski on Thursday morning. The students were about to embark on a hike of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail, not far from Wallace. Goode, along with fellow firefighter Kyle Mann (far right, in camo hat), discussed wildland firefighting equipment and techniques.



Local historian Ron Roizen (center, in yellow hat) tells Mullan students about the Forest Service and its firefighting policies on Thursday morning. After Roizen's presentation, the students went for a hike on the historic Pulaski Tunnel Trail.

THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2010

BOHOSHONE NEWS-PRES

Wallace District Mining Museum to unveil exhibit on Saturday

By NICK ROTUNNO
Staff writer

WALLACE — With the 100-year anniversary of the 1910 Fire fast approaching, the Wallace District Mining Museum will unveil The Pulaski-1910 Fire Virtual Exhibit this Saturday, May 1, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The grand opening will showcase a new touch-screen kiosk. Using state-of-the-art technology, visitors will learn about the mighty fire (which incinerated more than

3 million acres of woodland), Forest Service legend "Big Ed" Pulaski, the archeology of the Pulaski Tunnel and the Wallace experience during those fiery days.

"This is really something special, really neat," said WDMM Executive Director Jim McReynolds. "We're the only [museum] in the state that is using this virtual technology."

Easy to understand and operate, the computerized kiosk is an innovative addition.

"If you can follow a net

browser, you're all over it," McReynolds said. "It makes [the experience] more relevant for the generation that's been brought up on computers. We're very visual. We're interactive, self-guided oriented. It makes it relevant for today's learning."

Various 1910 artifacts and old photographs will also be on display. Items will include material from the Pulaski Tunnel and nearby cabin, the Frank Hess bicycle, the original

see MUSEUM, A3

MUSEUM

from A1

Pulaski tool (a firefighting device the ranger designed), Samuel's Hotel artifacts and a railroad speeder.

"We have something for grandpa, grandma — we have something for my grandkids," McReynolds quipped.

Two keynote speakers will deliver presentations on Saturday. Stan Cohen, author of "The Big Burn: The Northwest's Great

Forest Fire of 1910," will speak at 10:30 a.m. He'll show slides, discuss his famous book and sign Centennial Edition copies.

At 1 and 3 p.m., Steve Matz, the Idaho Panhandle National Forest heritage manager, will present his recollections of the 2008 Pulaski Tunnel & Cabin Archaeological Project.

The virtual exhibit is a collaboration between the Wallace District Mining Museum, Idaho Panhandle National Forests, The Pulaski

Project and the Idaho Association of Museums. ALS Computers provided IT consultation and labor; much of the funding came from the Idaho Humanities Council.

Visitors can browse the 1910 exhibit from May 1 until Oct. 31, 2010. After Halloween, the virtual elements will move to the WDMM and Forest Service Web sites.

Please RSVP for Saturday's grand opening by calling the WDMM at 446-1592. Seating is limited.

FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2010

1910 Fire memorial breaks ground



— Photo by NICK ROTUNNO
Forest Van Dorn (from left, foreground), Ronatta McNair, Bill Dire, Senator Joyce Broadsword, Commissioner Vern Hanson and Randy Swick, representing the 1910 Fire Memorial Committee, the city of Wallace and the Forest Service, break ground at the new 1910 Fire Memorial Site alongside the Wallace Visitors Center. Additional firefighting and Forest Service personnel look on in the background.

Donations still being sought for new Wallace landmark

By NICK ROTUNNO
Staff writer

WALLACE — Braving cold rain and dreary skies, a large crowd assembled at the Wallace Visitor's Center on Thursday morning for the 1910 Fire Memorial groundbreaking ceremony.

The memorial will pay respects to the many firefighters who died in the 1910 Fire. Planning began in October 2009, when the 1910 Fire Memorial Committee began holding meetings.

A few shovelfuls of dirt were pried from the wet ground Thursday, and construction has unofficially begun.

"We're trying to get the word out and let people know what we're doing," said committee treasurer Karrie Jerauld. "It's huge to know we came this far in just a short amount of time. It's huge to see it finally taking place."

Workers will use natural Idaho materials to construct the memorial, which will be semi-

circular in shape, made of granite and showcase a large commemorative plaque. It will also be illuminated at night.

A time capsule featuring 1910-era memorabilia will be a focal point as well.

Three local contractors have placed bids for the construction. According to committee chairperson Forest Van Dorn, the bidding process will soon be complete. Once a contractor is selected, the memorial should be finished in time for the 1910 Fire

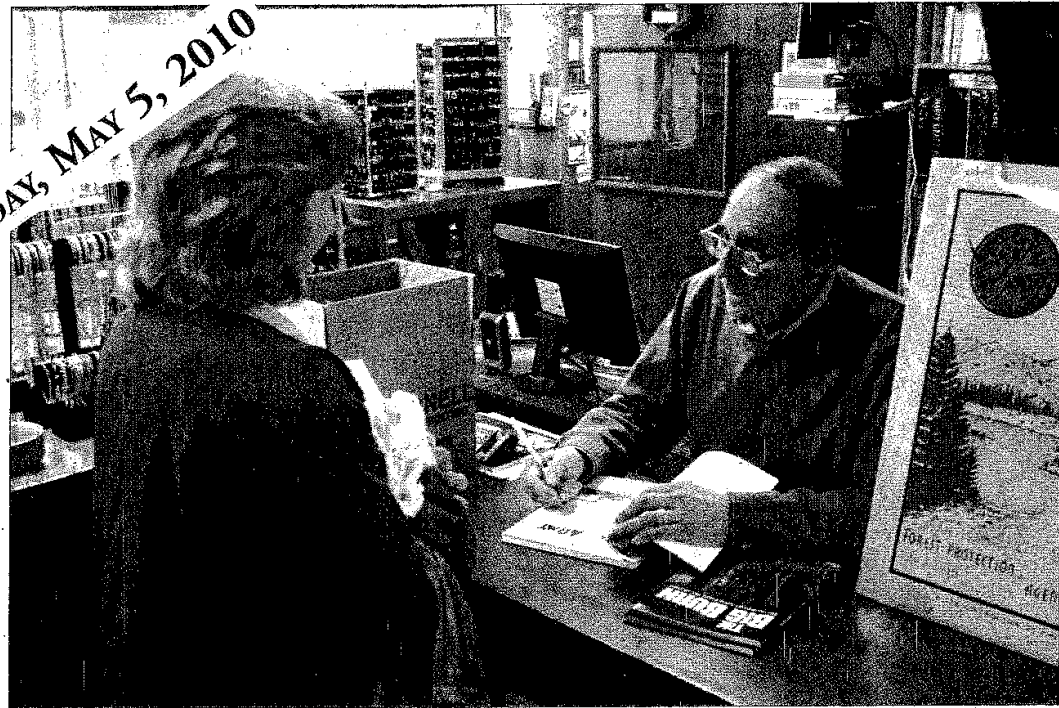
centennial in August.

"The fingers are crossed that maybe we'll be done by July," Van Dorn said.

Donations are still being accepted for the memorial and other 1910 anniversary projects. The Wallace monument will require maintenance and upkeep funding, but any leftover money will go to the Fallen Firefighter's Foundation — an organization that cares and provides for the families of firefighters killed in the line of duty.

Exhibit on 1910 Fire now open

WEDNESDAY, MAY 5, 2010



— Photos by NICK ROTUNNO

The Wallace District Mining Museum celebrated the grand opening of its 1910 Fire exhibit, shown below, on Saturday. Boasting a state-of-the-art electronic kiosk, numerous artifacts and historical photographs from the 1910 era, the exhibit paints a vivid picture of the mighty fire. To commemorate the grand opening, Stan Cohen, above, delivered a slide presentation and signed copies of his popular book, "The Big Burn." The book is a pictorial history of the 1910 Fire, and the centennial edition, available at the museum, features previously-unpublished content. An accomplished writer, Cohen has authored or co-authored 80 books, including stories about the Civil War, World War II and the history of Alaska.



FRIDAY, MAY 7, 2010

Helicopter helps renovate trail

Rock wall to be added near Pulaski Tunnel

WALLACE — Rotors twirling, engine thumping, a blue 407 helicopter roared over Moon Pass Road on Thursday morning.

With 1,000 pounds of cargo dangling from its fuselage, the chopper was headed for the Pulaski Tunnel Trail, where workers will soon begin an extensive renovation.

In preparation for the 1910 Fire Anniversary this summer, Forest Service crews will construct a rock wall at the tunnel overlook, add more signage and plant replica wooden beams alongside the old mine itself.

The project should be finished by July.

Pilot John Hubof, owner of Panhandle Helicopters, Inc., and an experienced forest flyer, delivered the necessary raw materials. Carrying pallets filled with rock, cement, wood and mortar, Hubof flew close to 50 trips Thursday. Every hour or so he landed, refueled and took off again.

Thanks to Hubof and the Forest Service, the Pulaski Tunnel Trail will soon be looking better than ever.



— Photo by NICK ROTUNNO

A helicopter transported raw materials to the end of the Pulaski Tunnel Trail Thursday.

SECTION 1 | SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2010

TODAY

SPOKESMAN.COM/FEATURES RECIPES, STORIES, MULTIMEDIA AND MORE CAN BE FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE



Two-wheeled wonders

Paul Turner examines Spokane's diverse bicycle culture as the annual Bike to Work Week begins.

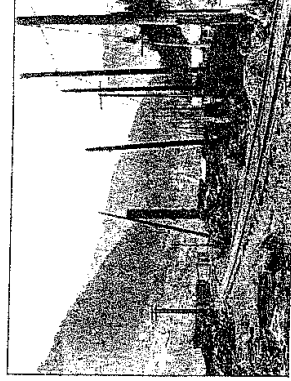
SUNDAY'S TODAY SECTION

Legacy of the devastating 1910 Fire lives on in a resilient Wallace and a duty-bound U.S. Forest Service

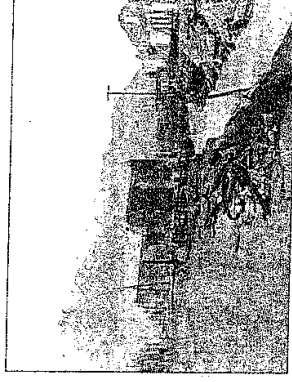
Burning Memories



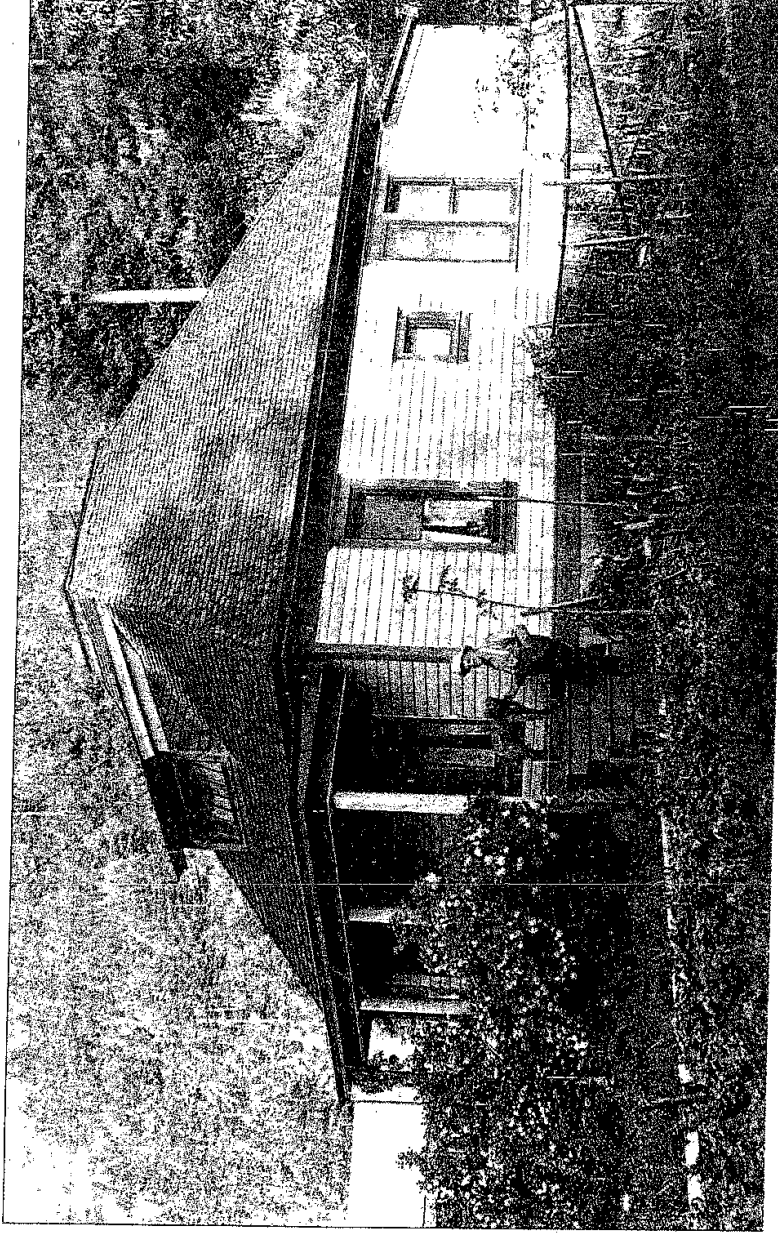
Every house was burned on this terrace during the 1910 Fire, about 200 in all.



A burned-over area in Wallace during the 1910 Fire, near the ruins of the foundry. The cottage on the terrace is the only one left standing in town.



The end of the fire line near the main business district in Wallace.



Assistant Ranger Ed Pulaski saved the lives of 40 firefighters during the 1910 Fire by herding them into an abandoned mine shaft. Photos courtesy U.S.F.S. Region 1 Archives

By **Becky Kramer**
beckyk@spokesman.com, (208) 765-7122

Spot fires flared in the streets as families fled Wallace. For days, the city's residents thought they might escape the forest fires blazing in the mountains around them.

But by the evening of Aug. 20, 1910, gale-force winds were pelting the town with glowing embers.

A third of the city's buildings were lost in the blaze. When residents returned to survey the wreckage, they also celebrated a seeming miracle.

Assistant Ranger Ed Pulaski had

If you go

Inland Empire Society of American Foresters meeting

What: The 1910 Fire and impact on forest management

When: Thursday through May 22

Where: Wallace Community Center and Wallace Junior-Senior High School

Cost: \$215 for regular registration; some events extra

Call: Michele Docy, (503) 224-8046, michele@saifnw.org.

saved the lives of 40 firefighters trapped on the west fork of Placer Creek by herding them into an abandoned mine shaft.

Some of the most vivid stories of the "Big Burn" took place in or near Wallace. So when Russ Graham started organizing a conference about the 1910 Fire, the location was never in question.

"To me, it was a no-brainer to have it right in the middle of the town that exemplifies the fire," said Graham, who works for the U.S. Forest Service's research laboratory in Moscow, Idaho.

On Thursday, the Inland Empire

See **FIRE**, E5

FIRE

Continued from E1

Society of American Foresters kicks off its three-day conference in Wallace. Public schools are closed Friday so the 200 attendees can meet in the high school gym.

The 1910 Fire burned an area the size of Connecticut, killed at least 85 people and influenced Forest Service policy for decades to come.

The conference's guest list underscores the fire's role in history. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell is speaking at the meeting, along with Dale Bosworth, a past chief.

"The Forest Service was 5 years old in 1910," said Graham. "The fire was its first big test."

The agency wasn't prepared for its baptism by fire. Firefighting was a relatively new endeavor — nothing like the science it is today. Crews were underpaid and thinly staffed. Their tools: shovels and pickaxes.

Graham also finds it interesting that the Forest Service recruited immigrants to work on the fire lines. Few locals wanted the job.

More than 1,700 separate wildfires were burning across the Rocky Mountains before the Aug. 20 windstorm whipped them into a massive blaze. Throughout the long, hot summer, many local residents were indifferent to the danger, he said.

"We had a cavalier attitude about fire back in 1910," Graham said. "Miners around Wallace lit the woods on fire to expose silver and lead outcroppings. Smoke and fire was sort of an accepted part of the landscape."

Graham's own Forest Service career began more than half a century after the Big Burn. As a teenager in Wyoming, he cleaned outhouses and worked on tree-planting crews. Later, he fought wildfires in the Black Hills to pay for his forestry degree.

In each phase of his career, he saw the 1910 Fire's influence on the Forest Service.

"It shaped the regimented, duty-bound organization that we became," Graham said. "Our mission was to make sure we had enough wood for society and to protect the forests from fire."

The fire also left its mark on Wallace. The tale of how Pulaski saved his crew became one of the fire's iconic stories.

And the frontier town rebuilt. Many of the gracious brick homes in Wallace's downtown were constructed within a few years after the fire — expressing residents' optimism about their town's future, said Dick Vester, the city's mayor.

Other towns razed by the fire have become historical footnotes.

"Wallace chose to move on and thrive," Vester said. "Our ancestors were resilient."

TODAY

1910 FIRE COMMEMORATIONS

Idaho and Montana communities are planning events for the 1910 Fire anniversary.

For a longer list, visit www.fs.fed.us/r1/1910-centennial/events-links.html.

► **The Historical Museum at Fort Missoula**

What: "When the Mountains Roared," an interactive exhibit on the fire.

When: Tuesday through Saturday, noon to 5 p.m. until Memorial Day.

Where: Bldg. 322, Fort Missoula, Missoula

Cost: \$3/adults, \$2/seniors, \$1/students (\$10/family).

More information: (406) 728-3476, www.fortmissoula-museum.org

► **Wallace Mining Museum**

What: Ed Pulaski and the 1910 Fire.

When: Through Oct. 31, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily

Where: 509 Bank St., Wallace

Cost: \$3/adults, \$1/children 6 and older, free/children 5 and younger

More information: (208) 556-1592, www.wallacemining-museum.org

► **Old Jail Museum**

What: Flames and Courage, Sagas of the 1910 Fires.

When: Through Labor Day, noon to 4 p.m. daily

Where: 109 S. Madison St., Thompson Falls, Mont.

Cost: Free

More information: (406) 827-4002

► **Other Sanders County Events**

Fire Documentary: Showing of George Sibley's 1910 Fire documentary Aug. 5 at 2 and 8 p.m. at the Rex Theater in Thompson Falls.

A Step Back in Time to 1910: An evening of period music, readings

and a tribute to the late Lily Cunningham, a fire survivor, Aug. 20, 7 p.m. at the Thompson Falls Library.

► **Trout Creek Commemoration**

A full day of activities Aug. 20 at Trout Creek Park, including an ATV ride through burned areas; memorial dedication to four firefighters who died at Swamp Creek; a fire camp re-enactment; a talk by author Stephen Pyne; and a barbecue dinner from 6 to 8 p.m. (\$10).

► **Avery Fire Commemoration**

When: Aug. 21

What: 7-10 a.m., breakfast at the Avery Community Center (\$7); 10:30 a.m., dedication of a white pine tree in Avery Park, followed by living history

actors depicting early Forest Service employees and buffalo soldiers; 1910 photos on display at the Asleson Museum; 5-7 p.m., spaghetti dinner at Community Center (\$7).

More information: (208) 245-4517

► **St. Maries Fire Commemoration**

What: U.S. Forest Service Honor Guard and service honoring fallen firefighters.

When: Aug. 20, 4:30 p.m.; community dinner:

begins at 6:30 p.m. at the Nazarene Church auditorium

Where: Woodland Cemetery

More information: (208) 245-2531

► **Wallace Fire Commemoration**

What: Dedication of firefighter memorial.

When: Aug. 21, 12:45 p.m.

Where: Wallace Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Center, 10 River St.

More information: (208) 753-7151

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

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Union Pacific Station in Wallace after the forest fire of Aug. 20, 1910. The station was just finished being built.

Remember 1910

Big Burn scorched much of North Idaho

BIG BURN, GREAT LOSSES

1910 fire killed scores, scorched nearly 3 million acres, Wallace

By Carl Gidlund

SmokeJumper@roadrunner.com

The Big Burn of 1910, the largest forest fire in United States' history, inflicted a terrible toll on Eastern Washington, North Idaho and Western Montana.

Precise reporting is difficult because there are many discrepancies about the fire records. For instance, some reports say there were 1,736 fires burning in North Idaho and Western Montana on Aug. 19; others say 3,000. However, it doesn't matter much. For when the big blowup came that day and the next, owing to hurricane-force winds, it seemed like there was only one huge inferno.

The Big Burn killed 86 to 88 people, although an exact count will never be known because recordkeeping was imprecise, people were scattered throughout the wilderness, and some bodies were entirely consumed by flames in the intense heat.

Nearly 3 million acres burned, consuming over 7 billion board feet of timber. That was enough to build more than 50,000 four-room houses. By one estimate, the property losses amounted to \$13.5 million. That would be about \$314 million today.

The greatest loss of life was among firefighters. Seventy-eight of them died; the rest were civilians. Most of the area burned was unroaded wilderness peopled by settlers and those engaged in logging, mining and railroad construction. But a few settlements were wholly or partially consumed, including Avery, Grand Forks, Kyle and Falcon, Idaho, and Taft, DeBorgia, Henderson and Haugan, Mont. There was even a city, Wallace.

Before the fire leapt into that city of about 3,000, residents tried a creative solution: Prank Brooks, a balloonist, ascended into the smoky sky with a load of dynamite he was to set off at 5,000 feet to emulate thunder and lightning and bring on the rains. He never made it. He reached only 1,600 feet because the air was so smoky and the winds so adverse he couldn't rise higher.

As early as Aug. 14 firebrands lofted by heavy winds blew into town from miles away and set awnings afire. Insurance men got busy. Incredibly, they were selling policies to all who

wanted to buy until noon on Aug. 20.

That evening, Mayor Walter Hanson ordered every able-bodied man to report for fire duty, threatening jail for those who did not. Those "volunteers" plus members of the city fire department and soldiers of the 25th Infantry on duty in Wallace tried to set backfires, but there is disagreement as to whether or not their efforts were what saved most of the town.

At about 9 p.m. the fire came out of Placer Creek Canyon to the southwest. The winds were so strong that the fire jumped the main section of town and struck its east side. About a third of Wallace burned and two people were killed. Another account suggests there was a third fatality.

One was Joseph Boyd, a pioneer of the Coeur d'Alenes who died trying to rescue his parrot from the flames. A second, whose skull was found in the ruins of the Michigan Hotel, was never identified.

According to some accounts, chaos reigned. Carl Getz, who eventually left on an evacuation train, reported that the panic he observed "was the worst I have ever seen. Men, women and children rushing through the streets helter-skelter ... the buildings steaming ... the flaring light of the fire ... the intense heat ... The train whistles were screaming, the heavy boom of falling trees and buildings, the crackle of the fire, the buildings were screaming from the heat."

Yet others remained calm. The Roach family was warned to leave since they were in the line of fire. Yet they did only after they had bathed, dressed in their best clothing and brushed their teeth.

Five families piled their possessions into wagons and drove to a rocky hummock from where they observed some of their homes being destroyed.

Patients in the Hope Hospital were transferred west 5 miles to the Osburn Hospital. Twenty-five Providence Hospital patients and a like number of nurses and attendants were crammed into a rescue train consisting of an engine, tender and caboose. They sped through the burning mountains to St. Patrick Hospital in Missoula.

Many others also fled. On Aug. 21, the Missoula newspaper reported that about 1,000 refugees had been brought to that city, noting, "There is much distress among them."

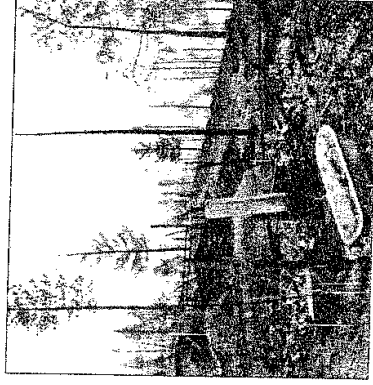


Photo courtesy of the Museum of North Idaho

Ruins of a Wallace house where a man lost his life trying to save his parrot.

being supplied by Missoula people and they have been given temporary homes. The first of the trains came in over the Northern Pacific's Coeur d'Alene branch and brought the patients who had been in the sisters' hospital at Wallace and as many refugees as could find places on the small train.

"There were 250 on this train and a second train at noon brought as many more. These people came from the small towns along the line between here and Wallace. Many of them had been roused from their sleep by the people on the train, whose summons had been the first intimation that the fire was near; there had been no sign of it when the people went to bed Saturday night ..."

Monetary losses in Wallace were estimated at \$1 million, about \$23 million in 2010 dollars, for the destruction of about 150 homes plus a hardware company warehouse, a brewery, hotel, iron works, railroad depot, printing firm and furniture company.

But most of Wallace survived because of backfiring on the west and southern edges of the town, because residents wet houses and lawns, because civic leadership was good and because the wind finally shifted and rushed from the north.

Sources for this story were: Mineral County, Mont., website (www.thebigsky.net/MineralChamber/1910.htm)

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Idaho Forest Products Association website (www.idahoforests.org/fires.htm)

GenDisasters website (www3.gendisasters.com/Idaho/6962/)