



City of Ketchum

For Immediate Release  
May 9, 2017

Contact: Lisa Enourato  
(208) 720-9766  
lenourato@ketchumidaho.org

## **Ketchum Officials Urge Residents to Avoid Bigwood River, Tributaries and Floodwaters that Pose Health and Safety Risks and Make Preparations for Continued Flooding**

**KETCHUM, Idaho** – City leaders are asking residents and visitors to stay away from Warm Springs Creek and the Bigwood River and its tributaries due to a threat to public safety and health.

The city will join with community members to provide additional help to residents trying to protect their property by filling and handing out sandbags on Wednesday, May 10. Last weekend, the city distributed 1,500 sandbags to residents battling rising floodwaters. Another 3,000 bags will be filled tomorrow and available to residents.

“We recognize the challenges residents are facing right now and are taking every possible step to help respond to the threats posed by flooding,” City Council President Jim Slanetz said. “We also want our citizens to be cautious and safe and to prepare for even more flooding posed by rising river flows.”

The flooding that occurred on May 7 and 8 was a precursor to flooding predicted to occur between now and mid-June. Residents should continue to prepare for rising waters.

City officials say that many homes in the floodplain have been impacted by floodwaters. So far, there are no mandatory evacuations. However, Fire Chief Mike Elle is encouraging residents along the floodplain to do some advanced planning, such as putting together a kit that includes extra clothes, medicines, food and pet supplies for those with dogs or cats. To find out if your property is in the floodplain, go to <http://maps.co.blaine.id.us:8008/ketchum/ksearch.html>. Once you access your property information, click on P&Z Info.

Elle said the floodwaters are creating a variety of public safety and health risks. He said residents should avoid going near the river, resist walking and playing in water flowing through city streets and obey signs posted to close public roads. The important thing right now is for people to stay out of the water; just avoid it altogether because of the risk it poses to health and safety,” Elle said. “The river itself is extremely dangerous and unpredictable every time a tree falls into the current and is carried downstream, creating a potential hazard for roads, bridges and private property.”

Water coursing through city streets is eroding the pavement, creating deep holes and cracks along the edges. There is also a threat of contamination because floodwaters from upstream tributaries may have intermingled with septic systems.

Property owners are also being encouraged to work with city officials on flood mitigation projects. The city's Planning and Building Department is expediting its permit process for making streambank alterations during the next few weeks.

It's important to communicate with the Planning and Building Department before making alterations because under current conditions, even a slight modification upstream can create bigger problems downstream. Residents and contractors should contact the department at 726-7801.

The city's sandbagging event will be held from 9-11 a.m. on Wednesday, May 10, at the Ketchum Street Department, located at 200 Tenth Street.

The city has also posted flooding, public safety information on its website. For more information, visit <http://ketchumidaho.org/flood>.

###

### **About the City of Ketchum**

The City of Ketchum is located in the Wood River Valley in south central Idaho. Founded in 1880 during the mining boom, Ketchum is now regarded as one of the most popular destinations for winter and summer visitors due to its world-class skiing, mountain biking, fishing, hiking, restaurants, art galleries, and shopping. This year, the City of Ketchum will host the 60<sup>th</sup> annual celebration of its famous Wagon Days on Labor Day Weekend and is in the direct "path of totality" for the solar eclipse on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Ketchum is home to more than 10,000 full- and part-time residents. For more information about the city of Ketchum, visit [www.ketchumidaho.org](http://www.ketchumidaho.org).