

**WOLF CREEK RURAL FIRE PROTECTION
DISTRICT**

Community Wildfire & Emergency Protection Plan

A Proactive Approach to Community
Wildfire Prevention



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I. Abstract

The Wolf Creek Community Wildfire and Emergency Protection Plan was a joint effort prepared between the fall of 2013 and the spring of 2014. This plan was funded through a Title III Grant awarded to Josephine County Oregon under the federal Secure Roads and Rural Schools Act. The preparation of the plan was a collaborative process between the Wolf Creek Rural Fire Department, the Josephine Integrated Fire Plan Partners, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and local citizens within the Wolf Creek Fire District. Information gathered throughout this process was done through a series of homeowner/property owner visits, community meetings, and fire district personnel interviews. The main goals of this wildfire protection plan include identifying hazardous fuels conditions around the community, and to educate local residents on how to better prepare their homes and properties for emergencies or natural disasters such as wildfires.

II. Background

The community of Wolf Creek is located about 20 miles north of Grants Pass along Interstate Route 5 in Josephine County Oregon. Originally established in the early 1870's to supply lumber and other goods to local miners, Wolf Creek is today home to approximately 830 residents. Structural fire protection for the community is provided by the Wolf Creek Rural Fire Protection District, a volunteer department responsible for protection of the community's 430 plus homes. The Wolf Creek fire district covers about 32 square miles consisting of private forests, industrial and federal forestlands, agricultural lands, small businesses, and residential properties. The community also contains two Oregon State historical sites and one Josephine County Park.

Wolf Creek is a rural community with a large portion of its population living near the narrow creek side valleys of Wolf Creek and Coyote Creek. Some resident's homes are located on the valley floor in agricultural areas, and in the mid-slope mountainous areas surrounding the community. The terrain bordering the community of Wolf Creek is mostly steep, moderate to densely stocked forestlands, woodland areas, and grasslands/brush fields with varying aspects and understory development. As with other areas within Southwest Oregon, many of the open areas around and within the community contain heavy grasses and brush as groundcover. The steep and forested terrain surrounding Wolf Creek combined with the heavy wildland fuel loadings in many areas make this community, its residents, their homes, and their natural resources highly susceptible to summer wildfires.

The community of Wolf Creek is bisected by Interstate Route 5, providing visitor services for travelers passing through the area. Interstate 5 is the primary access and egress route for the residents of Wolf Creek. According to Oregon Department of Transportation statistics, approximately 19,000 vehicles per day travel through the segment of I-5 that bisects Wolf Creek. This heavy vehicle traffic creates potential roadside fire hazards for the community. Other infrastructure within Wolf Creek includes the Vista Corporation natural gas pipeline that passes through the community, supplying gas for Southern Oregon area residents. The combination of local infrastructure and heavy fuel loadings in many areas, provide numerous fire hazards for the inhabitants of the Wolf Creek area.

Though the federal Secure Roads and Rural Schools Act, funds became available in the fall of 2013 to assist the community of Wolf Creek in preparing a local Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The main goals of this plan would include identifying and prioritizing potential wildfire hazards, seeking out funding to help mitigate the community's wildfire hazards, and establishing a community information network. Phase 1 includes collaboratively working with community residents to identify potentially hazardous fuel load conditions around the community. Phase 2 includes educating Wolf Creek residents on the importance of good land stewardship and how it affects overall wildfire safety for the community. Phase 3 of the Wolf Creek plan will focus on developing and implementing a community-wide information network for community residents and first-responders. This network could be used during wildfires or other emergency situations to disseminate crucial public safety information, and provide emergency personnel with useful information to aid in evacuations, and locations of local resources available. The collection of information and formatting for the local communications list began during the CWPP preparation process. Due to the sensitivity of local personal information, the local contacts list will be kept separate from this document and provided to the local fire department to complete and periodically update local contact information.

III. Elements of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

Under the federal Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, the minimum requirements of a CWPP include the following.

- A CWPP should be a collaborative process between representatives from local, state, and federal agencies, and include input from local residents and stakeholders within the community.

- A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas within the community where hazardous wildland fuel reduction treatments are needed by performing a community risk assessment. This collaborative process includes recommending the types and methods of fuel treatments needed to protect at-risk communities, and local essential infrastructure.
- A CWPP should provide community residents with fire prevention and other information needed to aid local residents in protecting their properties, and reducing their home's ignitability.

IV. Wolf Creek Fire Plan Goals

1. To develop wildfire prevention and emergency preparation strategies within Wolf Creek to help prevent losses to life, properties, and local natural resources.
2. To increase awareness about the importance of good land stewardship, and its influence on the community's overall public safety.
3. To promote visible fuels treatment projects and program successes within the community.
4. To aid Wolf Creek area residents in becoming a Fire Adapted Community and to help develop Firewise Communities in neighborhoods.
5. To develop a system to provide emergency information to the residents of Wolf Creek.
6. To further enhance the community's ability to safely evacuate pets and livestock.

V. Objectives

Public Emergency Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish community information sharing networks (phone tree/e-mail lists). • Identify area residents needing assistance during an evacuation or an emergency. • Identify and document resources and individuals whose properties or expertise can assist community residents and emergency responders during an emergency.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote emergency assistance programs for area residents such as the Disaster Registry through the Rogue Valley Council of Governments.
Hazardous Fuel Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify, document, and prioritize hazardous areas within or surrounding Wolf Creek containing hazardous build-ups of wildland fuels. Establish fuels treatment project areas. Locate funding sources to assist area residents in mitigating fuels hazards around their homes.
Land Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide small woodland landowners with information on how to create more fire-resistant forests on their properties. Identify funding programs (when available) to assist small woodland landowners with reducing hazardous fuel conditions around their properties.
Fuels Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish fuels mitigation project areas within and surrounding Wolf Creek that will benefit the community's ability to withstand a fire. Promote routine maintenance of fuels reduction projects on both public and private lands to help develop a more long-term solution to community wildfire safety.
Fire Adapted Communities & Firewise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide information to area residents on how they can live more safely in wildfire-prone areas. Educate area residents in their role in making their homes and properties safer from wildfire (Creating Defensible Space). Develop Firewise Communities within Wolf Creek that can survive a wildfire with little to no intervention from firefighters.
Animal & Pet Evacuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate area residents on how they can more safely evacuate themselves and their pets during an emergency.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify areas within the community that can be used as temporary safe evacuation shelters for pets and livestock.
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VI. Fire Plan Cooperating Partners

The collaborating partners in this community wildfire protection planning process include the Wolf Creek Rural Fire Protection District (RFPD), the Josephine Integrated Fire Plan Partners, the Oregon Department of Forestry, The Bureau of Land Management, and the residents of Wolf Creek Bureau. The Wolf Creek Community Wildfire and Emergency Protection Plan is an extension of the current Jackson-Josephine Integrated Fire Plan, and will assist with efforts to update the Josephine County Plan.

Agency/Partner	Representative	Contact
Wolf Creek Rural Fire Protection District	Steve Scruggs (Department Chief)	541-866-2584
Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)	John O'Connor	541-664-3328
Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan Partners	Jim Wolf	541-324-3446
Josephine County Forestry	Vic Harris	541-474-5291
Bureau of Land Management	Mike Main / Yanu Gallimore	541-471-6500

VII. Types of Disasters

Today, the most common and frequent disasters seen by most Oregonians are summer wildfires. The hot and dry summers, combined with heavy fuel loadings in many areas, creates the perfect scenario for catastrophic wildfires. Other areas including low-land drainages, riverfront or floodplain properties, and coastal areas within the state, can be susceptible to flooding from winter rains or spring snowmelt. Tsunamis are another potential disaster for coastal and tidal area residents. In addition to these disasters, the Pacific Northwest lies within the Ring of Fire, a seismically active area containing both active and dormant volcanoes that includes Oregon's Cascade Mountain Range, and many of the surrounding mountain ranges.

The colliding of tectonic plates in areas within the Ring of Fire releases energy that can cause earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Though Oregon's extensive history has seen many of these natural disasters, the most common and frequent disaster Wolf Creek, and other Southwest Oregon residents usually encounter are summer wildfires. Preparation and preventive measures are the best tools a resident has to protect their home, property, and their natural resources from a wildfire.

VIII. Wildland Fuel Types of Wolf Creek

The majority of the homes within the community of Wolf Creek are located in mid-slope mountain areas, narrow river/creek side valleys, or on the valley floor. Vegetation and fuel types within and around Wolf Creek are similar to those found throughout Southwest Oregon. The mountainous areas surrounding Wolf Creek are mostly steep, moderate to densely stocked, mixed conifer and hardwood forestlands with varying aspects and understory development. Other harsher and more open sites consist of an Oak Woodland overstory, with mostly a grass and/or brush understory. Some of the mid-slope and ridgetop clearings above the community contain shallow, granitic soils that are densely stocked with flammable understory brush and native grasses.

Most conifer and hardwood forests within and surrounding Wolf Creek are stocked with native tree species such as Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, sugar pine, incense cedar, golden chinkapin, California black oak, Oregon white oak, and Pacific madrone. Common riparian tree species include Pacific yew, black cottonwood, bigleaf maple, and Oregon ash, in addition to other native species found. Many of the native and non-native understory brush species found around Wolf Creek are highly flammable. Native understory plants such as manzanita, deerbrush, tanoak, scotch broom, and buckbrush just to name a few, can grow in dense thickets. These plants are easily ignited, burn extremely hot, and can spread fire rapidly to neighboring vegetation. In large clearings and open riparian drainages, highly flammable invasive blackberry and scotch broom can be found in some areas. Other open areas contain heavy concentrations of thistle and tall grasses which are hot, and flashy burning fuels. Some abandoned or unmanaged agricultural fields within or surrounding this community contain a dense mix of fast burning and flashy fuels.

In Wolf Creek, as with other areas throughout the Pacific Northwest, wildfires have been excluded from the natural regimes for more than 100 years. Wildfire suppression has been done in an effort to protect the area's resources and the growing populations. In many areas

this has created heavy wildland fuel loadings and densely stocked forests with heavy ladder fuel build-ups. Where present the overstocked conditions are not only susceptible to wildfires, but to forest pathogens such as wood boring insects that can cause greater amounts of tree mortality and increased fuel loading. The combined threats of steep terrain and heavy wildland vegetation within and surrounding the Wolf Creek Fire District make the community, its residents, their homes, and their natural resources highly susceptible to summer wildfires.



Steep forested terrain above and adjacent to the community of Wolf Creek.



Medium to large-diameter Douglas-fir and mixed conifer forest on north-facing 60% slopes above Wolf Creek.



Small-diameter, densely stocked mixed conifer and hardwood forestland.



East-facing understory brush on granitic hillsides above Wolf Creek.



South-facing woodland and grass area within 200 feet of Wolf Creek residence.



Dense conifer understory with ladder fuels in Home Ignition Zone of Wolf Creek residence (< 50 feet from the home).



Roadside fuels along rural resident's driveway in Wolf Creek.

IX. Wolf Creek Fire History

Since the community was founded in the early 1870's, the residents of Wolf Creek have seen numerous wildfires within and around their community (See Fire History Map in Appendix Section). Small fires, those less than 10 acres, occur each year with intermittent frequency. Larger fires such as the Sugarloaf Fire in 2001 and the Dads Creek Fire in 2013, usually occur during the driest of fire seasons. During the 2013 Fire Season, the Dads Creek fire (part of the Douglas Fire Complex) burned a total of 24,761 acres in Josephine and Douglas Counties. The Dads Creek Fire burned into the north and western edges of the Wolf Creek Fire Protection District threatening numerous homes and properties. Other large fires occurring in the vicinity of Wolf Creek during the 2013 Fire Season included the Rabbit Fire, burning about 122 acres 11 miles west of Glendale, and the Farmers Fire, burning over 248 acres east of I-5 between Glendale and Wolf Creek.

The summer of 2013 saw one of the most active fire seasons in over a decade around Southwest Oregon. Fire behavior was extremely volatile due to a dry winter followed by an early hot and dry summer. These conditions combined with localized winds, contributed to very low wildland fuel moisture contents that fueled an above average number of wildfires around Southwest Oregon. An above average amount of lightning activity also occurred during the spring and summer months during 2013. Since these conditions can occur almost any year, the best protection homeowners in Wolf Creek and other surrounding areas can have is advance planning, and using fire prevention tactics.



South-facing slope burned during 2013 wildfire event, upslope from Lower Wolf Creek Road residences.

X. Wildfire & Emergency Action Plan

1.)	Identify areas within Wolf Creek with accumulations of hazardous wildland fuels. Prioritize areas by the risk they pose to the community. Establish fuels treatment project areas from priority areas. Identify sources of funding to assist with fuels treatments in project areas.
2.)	Educate community residents on the importance of good land stewardship. Good stewardship of forest, agricultural, and other lands cultivates healthier vegetation, and helps to increase public safety by mitigating wildfire hazards on a landscape level.
3.)	Identify wildfire safety zones around the Wolf Creek community. Safety zones could be used by residents during an evacuation, in the event of an emergency extraction, or to identify safe areas where residents may have the need to shelter in place.
4.)	Educate area residents on proper evacuation and evacuation planning procedures.
5.)	Continue to develop and implement community-wide emergency information sharing network. Employ tools such as phone tree/e-mail lists, and include noting local resources that may be useful to the public, and first responders in the event of an emergency.

XI. Assessing Wildfire Hazards in The Home Ignition Zone

Protecting a home from wildfire is one of the most important investments of time or money a homeowner can have. This is particularly critical for homes within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) where homes are adjacent to and intermixed with wildland fuels. Under these conditions homes can be a potential source of fuel for nearby wildfires. Homes destroyed in WUI fires in most instances are from a series of single ignitions from burning embers on or near the home, usually not from the advancing flame front. Recognizing and addressing items within the Home Ignition Zone (HIZ) is the best wildfire protection a homeowner can have.

Roof peak to the eaves

- Use fire-resistant roofing materials.
- Keep leaf litter and needles off your roof, valleys, and out of your gutters.
- Prune tree limbs at least 10 feet away from chimneys and stovepipes.
- Clean off solar panels and skylights. Replace plastic skylights with more fire-resistant glass.

Eaves to the foundation

- Use 1/8 inch or less metal mesh screen to cover soffit and attic vents.
- Use fire-resistant building materials in the construction of your home.
- Avoid planting vegetation near windows or under roof eaves.
- Use double-paned tempered windows.
- Replace plastic window screens with metal screens.

Defensible Space

- Create a fuel-free zone 3 to 5 feet out around your home's perimeter with no flammable groundcover.
- From 5 to a minimal of 30 feet out from your home, thin and adequately space vegetation, remove dead materials and vegetation, and prune shrubs and lower tree limbs.
- Plants should be carefully spaced, low-growing and free of resins, oils, and waxes that burn easily.
- Create a secondary fuel break around your home to extend an additional 20 to 70 feet or more.
- Keep areas around decks, sheds, outbuildings, and fences clear of debris, flammable vegetation, and dead vegetation.

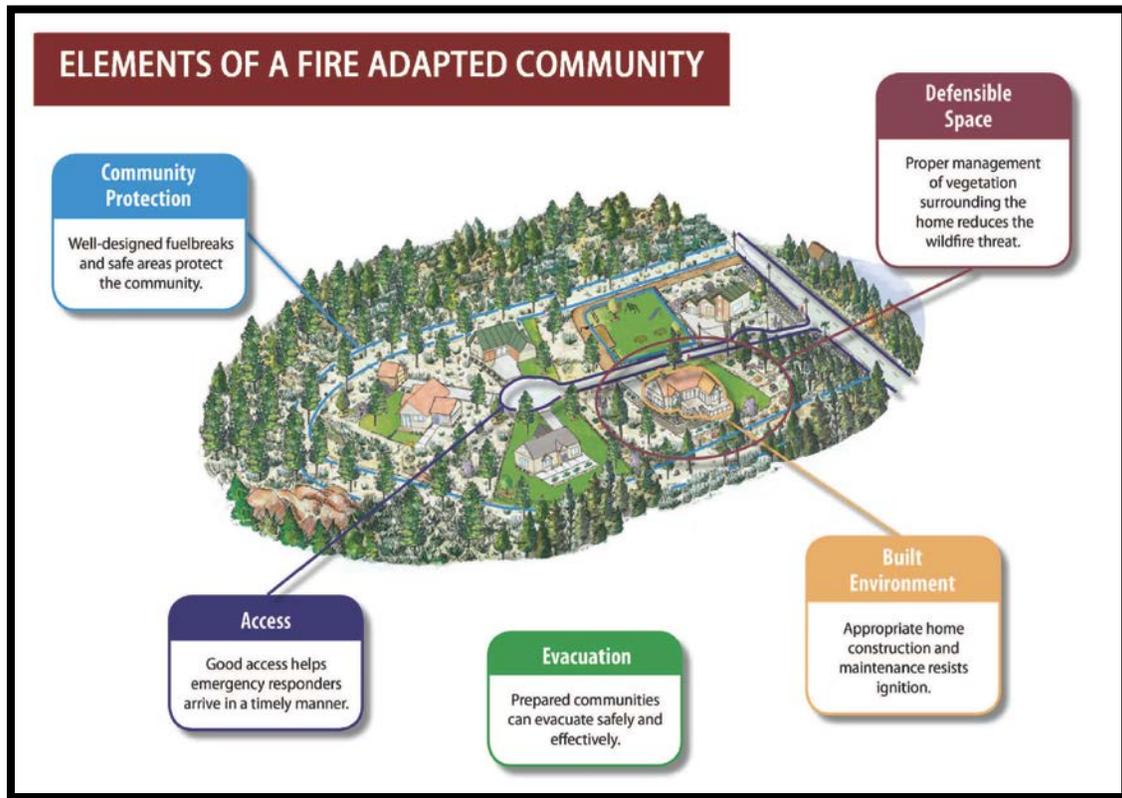


Image courtesy of fireadaptedcommunities.org

Seven Steps to Wildfire Safety

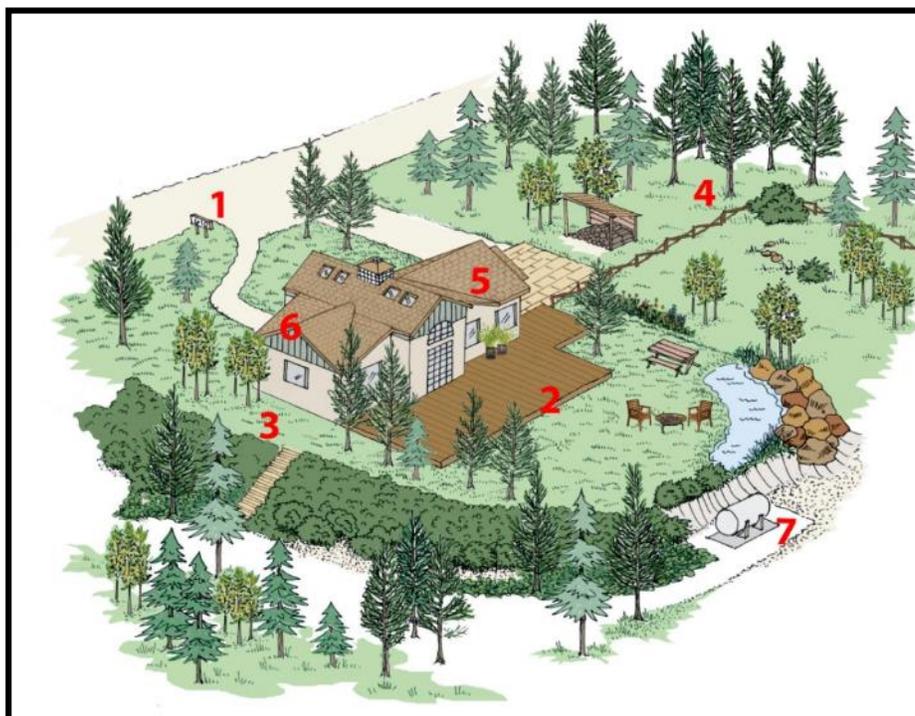
The following section outlines seven basic steps to creating and maintaining defensible space that will help protect your home and property from wildfires.

Seven Steps to Wildfire Safety

How to protect your home from a wildfire!



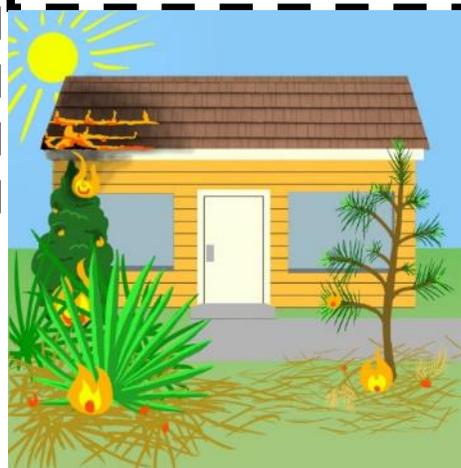
Step 1: Post your house number by the road and all intersections of your driveway. Address signs should be visible from both directions day and night.



Step 2: Never store flammables underneath or on top of decks. Use hardscaping and some form of barrier to prevent debris, fires, and burning embers from getting into hidden areas under decks.



Step 3: Use fire-resistant plants and keep the landscape around your home lean, clean, and green.



Flammable plants and landscaping can spread a fire to your home.

Step 4: Thin and prune trees and shrubs to keep fires on the ground. Remove any dead and dying vegetation. Always keep grass and weeds mowed to no more than 4 inches.



Step 5: Use non-flammable roofing and keep leaves and debris off your roof and out of gutters.



Step 6: Put metal mesh screens over exterior vents and other openings to keep airborne embers and ash out.

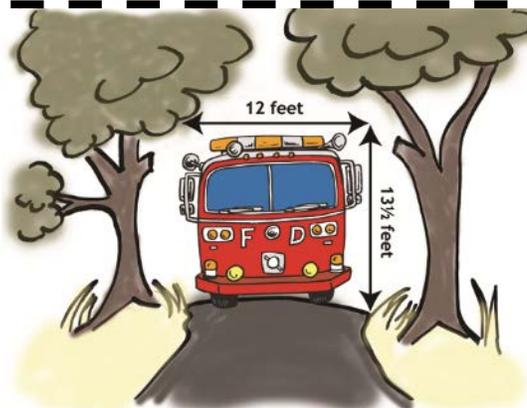


Step 7: Make the areas around propane tanks and other fuel storage areas fire-resistant and easily assessable.



Always

Keep your roads and driveways clear of low-hanging tree limbs and flammable groundcover to allow access for large emergency equipment.



XII. Wildfire Protection for Small Woodland Landowners

Wildfire protection is important for all landowners, urban and rural. Creating and **maintaining defensible space** around homes and outbuildings is the best wildfire protection for any structure. Many of the same basic fuel reduction principles used when creating a home's defensible space (pruning, reducing/rearranging surface fuels, and controlling understory vegetation) is also useful for reducing fire and fuel hazards on forested properties.

For small woodland and private forest landowners, reducing surface fuels and controlling understory vegetation provides several benefits. With Southwest Oregon's dry forest conditions, limiting surface fuels and reducing understory vegetation helps to not only mitigate wildfire hazards, but also reduces stand competition promoting healthier, more vigorous trees and plants.

Pruning low-hanging tree limbs is a very important component in fuels reduction. It increases the distance between the surface fuels, and the tree canopy. When a ground fire passes through an area, pruning will help keep the fire on the ground where it is easier to control, and keep it from reaching tree canopies. This many times can save a tree and help to prevent further spread of the fire. Another important element of protecting a forested area from wildfire is plant spacing. While conditions and plant spacing requirements around most forested properties are site-specific, reducing dead, dying, or suppressed understory trees and plants frees up water and nutrients for the remaining plants and overstory. This helps promote a more vigorous, and fire-resistant forest.

A fire-resistant forest does not mean fire-proof since even under the best conditions it can still burn. In a fire-resistant forest, by reducing and rearranging the fuels you can lessen the chance of a surface fire becoming a crown fire in the forest canopy. Reducing this fire risk gives the forest a better chance of surviving a wildfire.

Five basic principles to creating and maintaining a healthy and fire-resistant forest:

- Reduce surface fuels
- Increase the height to the base of the tree crowns (pruning)
- Increase the spacing between tree crowns (thinning)
- Keep larger trees of a more fire-resistant species
- **Promote fire-resistant forests on a landscape level**

More information on forest fuels thinning and how to protect a forested property from wildfire can be found at the Oregon State University Extension Service (see website links below), and in the Appendix Section of this document.

The OSU Extension Service series on Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties is available at:

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/details.php?sortnum=0528&name=Stand+Management&cat=Forestry+%26+Wood+Processing>

1. *Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties: Pruning*; Holmberg, John & Fitzgerald, S., 2008; EC-1576-E
2. *Hazardous Fuels Reduction on Woodland Properties: Thinning*; Parker, B. & Bennett, M., 2008; EC-1573-E
3. *Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties: Mechanical Treatments*; Bennett, M. & Fitzgerald, S., 2008; EC-1575-E
4. *Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties: Disposing of Woody Material*; Bennett, M. & Fitzgerald, S., 2008; EC-1574-E

Thin For Quality & Health, Not Spacing: Bennett, M. & Fitzgerald, S.;

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/sorec/southern-oregon-forestry-notes> (click on note 18)

Reducing Fire Risk on Your Forest Property: PNW 618, OSU Extension, 2010;

<http://hdl.handle.net/1957/19402>

A Land Manager's Guide for Creating Fire-Resistant Forests: Bennett, M. & Fitzgerald, S.; 2013; EM-9087

http://extension.oregonstate.edu/union/sites/default/files/a_land_managers_guide_for_creating_fire-resistant_forests_.pdf

XIII. Community Wildfire Risk Assessment

One of the most important elements of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan is the development of a community-based risk assessment. The wildfire risk assessment helps to understand and analyze the potential losses of life, property, and natural resources that may result from a wildfire event. The objectives of the Wolf Creek risk analysis include identifying at-risk areas around the community, and to identify and prioritize potential hazardous fuels treatment projects for lands within Wolf Creek.

Risk Analysis Factors

- **Risk** – The potential and frequency for wildfire ignitions (based on past occurrences).
- **Hazard** – The conditions that can contribute to wildfires (slope, topography, fuel types/density, aspect, elevation, & weather).
- **Values** – The residents, homes, properties, natural resources, and other sources that could suffer losses in the event of a wildfire.
- **Protection Capability** – the ability to mitigate losses, to prepare for, respond to and suppress wildland and structural fires.
- **Structural Vulnerability** – The elements that affect the level of exposure of the hazard to the structure (roof type, building materials, access to structure, lack of or presence of defensible space or previous fuels treatments around structures).

Risk Assessment Committee Members

- Jim Wolf – Josephine County Fire Plan
- John O'Connor – Oregon Department of Forestry
- Steve Scruggs – Chief Wolf Creek Fire District

Cooperating Agency Representatives

- Mike Main & Yanu Gallimore – U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Vic Harris – Josephine County Forestry

Risk Assessment Guest Speakers

- Corey Krause – Josephine County Sherriff's Department SAR
- Jessica Schwartz - Josephine County Emergency Management Coordinator
- Bob Schumacher – Firewise Communities Coordinator for the City of Grants Pass Fire & Rescue and the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization

Ownership of Lands within Wolf Creek Fire District

Ownership	Acreage	Percent of Land
BLM	7749	38%
County	1283	6%
Private Industrial	1819	9%
Private Non-Industrial	8085	39%
State	1560	8%

Methodology

The Wolf Creek community wildfire risk assessment process was a collaborative effort including fire district personnel, area fire planning partners, agency representatives, and local community members. The process began by conducting numerous individual home and property hazardous fuel assessments. The home assessments were completed by fire district and ODF representatives. Individual fuels treatment prescriptions were written on-site for most homeowners visited. Some properties with moderate to high risk assessments were eligible to participate in a 2013 grant program that targeted completing fuels reduction within the Home Ignition Zone. Under this program defensible space was completed around approximately 20 homes in high priority areas identified during the Josephine County Fire Plan risk assessment.

The next phase in the Wolf Creek risk assessment process included conducting local meetings at the Wolf Creek Community Center. The meetings were opportunities to gather local information on hazardous fuel conditions from community residents. Meetings were held during the winter of 2014. Outreach to notify residents was done through Public Service Announcements in the local newspapers and radio, posting flyers with local businesses, local phone tree contacts, and through individual homeowner contacts. Hazardous fuel conditions were identified around the community through mapping exercises with local residents and fire planning staff. Public safety information was also made available to community residents at the meetings from fire district, agency, fire planning, and county emergency management representatives. Grant administrators and agency personnel concluded the meetings explaining details about creating defensible space around homes, and to discuss current or potential fuels treatment grant opportunities, which may become available to area residents in the future.

In total seven at-risk areas were identified by local residents during the 2014 community risk assessment. Several areas identified during the 2014 risk assessment were also listed

during the Josephine County Fire Plan risk assessment. Another area of concern noted by a Wolf Creek Fire Department official during the 2014 community risk assessment was the presence of a transportation bottleneck at the north-end of the fire district. At the intersection of Interstate 5 and Speaker Road (Exit 78), no south-bound access is available to re-enter the freeway after exiting Interstate 5 south-bound. The interstate has a north-bound entrance at Speaker Road but south-bound access is limited to a local two-lane road that extends through the town of Wolf Creek, re-entering the interstate at Exit 76.



South-bound I-5 Exit 78 at Speaker Road. No south-bound freeway re-entry access.

Resident attendance at the Wolf Creek west-side community meeting on 2/25/2014

Residents	Residents
Dan & Karen Schilberg	Judith Hill
Tinker	Laurie Robertson
Wonder	Camille & Michael McManus
Rich & Jenifer Hurley	Sharon Gamble
Sharron Van Dorn	Mike Gamble
Wonder	Gary Jennings
Sandy Lathrop	Randy Tooth
David Maranov	

Resident attendance at the Wolf Creek east-side community meeting on 3/20/2014

Residents	Residents
Danny Schilberg	Peter & Victoria Klein
Sharon Gamble	Jim & Carla Fields
Ross & Ginger Johnson	Mel Jones

	At-Risk Area	Opportunities	Hazard	Structures Threatened	Land Ownership	Previous Management
1.)	North of Coyote Cr Rd MP 1.5 (33S 6W 23 NE-1/4, 24 NW-1/4)	Extend treatments to create fuel breaks on south-facing slopes above residences.	Ridgetop Brush	7	BLM & Private	London Peak 2007 - Treated west and NW bordering risk area.
2.)	North of Coyote Cr Rd MP 3.5 (33S 5W 19 NE-1/4, 20 NW-1/4)	Maintain BLM treatments to the north & treat private lands to tie into existing 2006 BLM.	Ridge Heavy Fuels	11	Private Non-Industrial	BLM Grave Creek 2006 - Mid-slope roadside fuels buffer on 33-5-18 Road north of area.
3.)	Coyote Cr Rd South of Robinson Gulch BLM 33-5-21.2 Rd.	Maintain, treat slash, & extend BLM/private treatments.	Heavy Fuels Limited Access	27	Private Non-Industrial	BLM Coyote Pete 2003 & Grave Creek 2005 - Treatments north & south of homes.
4.)	Residences South of Coyote Cr Rd (33S 5W 29)	Maintain previous BLM treatments, extend treatments, & treat slash. Extend private treatments.	Heavy Fuels High Population Density Limited Access	19	Private Non-Industrial	BLM Coyote Pete 2003 Fuels Project area east of neighborhood.
5.)	St. Peter Mountain Area (33S 5W 28)	Maintain previous treatments, treat slash, & extend treatments south of populated area.	Fuels/Slash Limited Access	46	BLM	BLM Coyote Pete 2003 - 2005 roadside ridgeline treatments.
6.)	East-end of Coyote Creek above Robinson Gulch (33s 5W 15,16 &22)	Maintain existing treatments above heavily populated area.	Heavy Fuels	27	BLM & County	BLM Coyote Pete 2003 & Grave Creek 2005 Fuels Project area.
7.)	1100 to 2000 block of Lower Wolf Cr Rd (33S 6W S16)	Maintain & extend existing fuels work to provide larger buffer. Treat Slash	Heavy Fuels High Population Density Thinning Slash	32	Private & County	Recent private HIZ work & 20 acre 2009 roadside treatment around 320 acre county tract.

XIV. Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Projects

During the Wolf Creek community risk assessment meetings various past and present fuels reduction grant programs were discussed with attendees. The most recent program, completed during the 2013 to 2014 field season, treated approximately 20 Wolf Creek residences under a Secure Roads & Schools Act Title III funded fuels reduction grant. The project, administered through Josephine County Forestry supplied crews to create at least 100 feet of defensible space within the Home Ignition Zones (HIZ) of community residents. This fuels reduction project was initiated during the beginning stages of the Wolf Creek CWPP. The majority of the work completed was adjacent to portions of Lower Wolf Creek and Coyote Creek Roads. These areas were previously identified as high risk during the Josephine County Fire Plan risk assessment. Many of the same hazardous fuels areas of concern were identified by local residents during the 2014 Wolf Creek community risk assessment process. Areas including private and Josephine County-owned lands north of Lower Wolf Creek Road (33 South - 6 West - Section 16), and other private, and BLM-owned lands above and below Coyote Creek Road were identified during the 2014 risk assessment. In addition to recent treatments on private lands, other portions of these high-risk areas on public lands have been part of past fuels reductions projects, within the last 10 years.



Title 3-funded 2013 - 2014 HIZ fuels treatment area north of Lower Wolf Creek Road residence.

Previous Lower Wolf Creek Road Treatments

Properties along Lower Wolf Creek Road were recently threatened by large wildfires during the 2013 fire season. Numerous homes between the 1.0 and 3.0 mile markers (33 - South 6 West - Sections 20, 21, & 16) of Lower Wolf Creek Road were treated during Josephine County Forestry's HIZ treatment program in 2013. These homes are downslope and south of priority area 7 within 33 South - 6 West - Section 16, identified as high-risk during the 2014 risk assessment. Additional work is currently being planned on previously treated and untreated privately-owned properties in this area. The goal is to extend recent fuels treatments in this fire-prone area to create larger, landscape level fuel breaks between the homes, and the heavily vegetated south-facing slopes north of the homesites. Portions of the county-owned forestlands north of the homesites in this area were part of a 2009 grant-funded fuels reduction project. The project created approximately a 100 to 150-foot roadside fuels treatment buffer. The treatment area covered about 20 acres which bordered the moderate to densely stocked 320 acre county-owned parcel north of Lower Wolf Creek Road. The objective of the roadside fuels project was to help prevent wildfires from spreading off the forested ridgetops, into the populated and/or heavily vegetated private areas downslope.



2014 view of county-owned 2009 roadside fuels treatment buffer on ridgetop, with light ground slash. Treatment borders 320 acre parcel that is within high priority area upslope from Lower Wolf Creek Road residences.



Areas of new-growth brush and natural understory regenerating within the 2009 roadside fuels buffer.



Remaining ground slash from 2009 fuels treatment. Some larger remnant slash piles are in adjacent large canopy openings.



Densely stocked and untreated privately-owned forestland below the roadside fuels buffer. This area is upslope from Lower Wolf Creek Road residences.

Previous Coyote Creek Road Treatments

Several of the high risk areas identified during the Wolf Creek CWPP risk assessment were between 1.5 and 5.5 mile markers of Coyote Creek Road. Most areas were upslope to the north or south of residences adjacent to Coyote Creek Road. Similar to some Lower Wolf Creek Road residences, several homeowners in this segment of Coyote Creek Road participated in the 2013 Title III funded HIZ fuels reduction program. Some publically-owned forested lands upslope from these homesites have also received some level of fuels treatment since 2003. These roadside and ridgetop project areas vary in distances (100 yards to 1 mile or more) from the homesites, and are situated north and south of Coyote Creek Road (see Past BLM Fuels Projects Map in Appendix).

Robinson Gulch Area

As mentioned above, portions of the BLM-owned forestlands above and below priority areas 3, 4, and 5 along or below the east-end of Coyote Creek Road have been part of fuels management projects conducted between 2003 and the present. In the Robinson Gulch area, several small areas both above and below BLM Road 33 – 5 – 21.2 received treatments. Current conditions of these treated areas vary due to on-site conditions. For example, some closed canopy areas contain only minimal new-growth surface vegetation, similar to a shaded fuel

break. However, other closed canopy areas contain residual thinning slash and recent wind-thrown trees. Some previously treated large open areas, particularly roadside areas, contain slash and/or new-growth understory vegetation.



Previously treated open roadside area adjacent to Robinson Gulch, BLM Road 33 – 5 - 21.2. The area contains some residual slash and new-growth understory. This area is due north and upslope from Coyote Creek Road residences and priority areas 3, 4, & 5.



Mid-slope closed canopy area above BLM Road 33 – 5 - 21.2 with previous fuels treatment extending to ridgetop. Conifers with closed canopy conditions and limited understory brush development since treatment.



Area of treated larger diameter conifer extends from BLM Road 33 – 5 - 21.2 to ridgetop. Currently, residual debris and some small-diameter wind-thrown trees are present in some of the treated area. Surface vegetation remains minimal today under the closed canopy conditions.



Untreated mixed conifer area upslope from BLM Road 33 – 5 - 21.2 light understory cover.



Untreated open roadside area adjacent to BLM Road 33 – 5 - 21.2, upslope from priority areas 3 & 5.



Western border of the treated area below Road 33 – 5 - 21.2, adjacent to Coyote Creek Road and priority area 3.



Heavy roadside fuels with dense understory stocking on private lands adjacent to Coyote Creek Road. The area is near priority areas 3 & 5.

St. Peter Mountain Area

Similar to the Robinson Gulch area, portions of publically-owned (BLM) lands due south and upslope of priority area 3 have seen previous treatments over the last 10 years. The previously treated and other surrounding areas in these region comprise priority area 5 identified during the 2014 community risk assessment.

The majority of the fuels treatments done throughout priority area 5 were adjacent to active road systems. In some areas the roadside treatments extend to the uphill ridgetops. Current conditions within the formerly treated areas include shaded fuel breaks with minimal slash and understory development, areas with accumulations of ground slash and wind-throw, and some areas containing residual slash piles. Overall, many of the areas within this region have responded well to treatments, though moderate to heavy amounts of slash are present in some areas.



Treated ridgetop closed canopy area with some residual slash piles adjacent to BLM 33 – 5 - 28.1 Road. This roadside area is on St. Peter Mountain upslope and due south of priority area 3 and listed as part of priority area 5.



Treated roadside area near ridgetop along 33 – 5 - 28.1 Road with light slash and little ground or surface fuel development.



Treated north-facing closed canopy area downslope from 33 - 5 - 21.1 Road.



Roadside slash in treated area below 33 – 5 – 21.1 Road. Roadside refuse dumping is apparent in the area.



Edge of treatment area on steep north-facing slopes below 33 – 5 - 21.1 Road.



Heavy slash and wind-throw on ridgetop area upslope from 33 – 5 - 21.1 Road.



Roadside slash and ladder fuels upslope from 33 – 5 - 21.1 Road.



Riparian buffer area adjacent to 33 – 5 - 21.1 Road.



Roadside conifer thicket east of priority area 5 along Coyote Creek Road.

Other areas affected by 2013 wildfires include the north-side of Lower Wolf Creek Road near Lower Grave Creek Road. South-facing, county-owned lands (33 South, 7 West Sections 36 & 26) burned during the 2013 wildfire events are currently being actively managed for wildfire rehabilitation. These efforts include salvage logging and subsequent reforestation.

Future Opportunities

During the 2014 risk assessment seven high priority areas containing potentially hazardous fuels were identified by community members. Priority areas 3, 4, 5, and 7 were populated areas in the vicinity of public lands that received some level of fuels treatments. Many of the public land treatments were done adjacent to active road systems, taking place between 2003 and 2010. The treatments were contiguous in some areas, and intermittent in others. In many closed canopy areas the treatments responded well providing a shaded fuel break that restricted understory growth. However, accumulations of ground slash and slash piles could be found in some closed canopy areas. Most new-growth understory was confined to larger open areas, adjacent to roadside openings, or within untreated areas.

Providing funding becomes available in the future some potential opportunities include maintaining previous public land treatments, treating residual slash on existing treatments, and extending past treatments to cover more contiguous areas that connect to privately-owned lands. Opportunities may also exist to maintain and extend fuels treatments on private lands in the vicinity of public land treatments, to create landscape level treatments. Fuels treatment projects on both public and private lands throughout the community, will be completed as funds are allocated for projects in the future.

Another potential funding opportunity for Wolf Creek area residents would target larger non-industrial landowners adjacent to fire-prone areas. This program, made possible through the Farm Bill, is administered through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), is a cost-share fuels treatment program that targets fuels reduction and understory thinning on larger (10 to 200 acre) forested or wildland vegetated non-industrial properties.

In heavily forested, rural areas such as Wolf Creek fire protection intervention can be slower and availability limited depending on conditions. Factors including limited access, availability of forest road systems, steep forested slopes, densely overstocked forests, heavy understory vegetation, and multiple ignition sites during a wildfire event can all contribute to availability of resources. These conditions can lead to endangerment of homes in rural communities such as Wolf Creek.

The community of Wolf Creek is surrounded by heavily forested, steep mountainous terrain. Extending fuels treatment areas beyond the standard Home Ignition Zone's defensible space can help to create the landscape level treatments, which are vital to protecting rural communities such as Wolf Creek. Several non-industrial landowners with interest in participating in the NRCS EQIP program, and other fuels treatment programs were identified during the Wolf Creek community risk assessment meetings. This information will be used to develop future implementation strategies, in a further effort to complete landscape level fuels treatment projects.

Risk Assessment Prioritization

	At-Risk Area	Overall Risk	Priority
1.)	North of Coyote Cr Rd MP 1.5 (33S 6W 23 NE-1/4, 24 NW-1/4)	Ridgetop Brush Moderate number Residences	Moderate
2.)	North of Coyote Cr Rd MP 3.5 (33S 5W 19 NE-1/4, 20 NW-1/4)	Heavy fuels upslope from 2 populated areas	High
3.)	Coyote Cr Rd south of Robinson Gulch BLM 33-5-21.2	Heavy fuels threatening large number homes	High
4.)	Residences South of Coyote Cr Rd (33S 5W 29)	Heavy fuels - large number homes - limited access	High
5.)	St. Peter Mountain Area (33s 5W 28)	Large number homes and limited access	High
6.)	East-end of Coyote Creek above Robinson Gulch (33s 5W 15,16 &22)	Large number homes 1 mile below fuels	Moderate
7.)	Lower Wolf Cr Rd (33S 6W S16)	Large number homes & private lands below fuels	High

XV. Appendices

Appendix A - Map Section (Wolf Creek RFPD)

Appendix B - Wildfire Safety Tips for Small Woodland Landowners

Appendix C – Wolf Creek Community Information Network

Appendix A – Map Section (Wolf Creek RFPD)

A – 1 Aerial Photo

A – 2 Fire History

A – 3 Fire Behavior/Expected Flame Lengths

A – 4 Wolf Creek General Ownership

A – 5 Past Federal Management Projects

Appendix B - Wildfire Safety Tips for Small Woodland Landowners

- B – 1 Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties – Pruning
- B – 2 Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties - Thinning
- B – 3 Thin For Quality & Health Not Spacing
- B – 4 Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties – Mechanical Treatments
- B – 5 Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Properties – Depositing of Woody Material

Appendix C - Wolf Creek Communications Network

C – 1 Neighborhood Phone & E-mail Lists

C – 2 Community Resources List

- Citizens With Special Training
- Available Equipment
- Water Drafting Sources
- Parking, Pasture, Livestock Grazing, & Staging Areas
- Wildfire Safety Zones
- Other

