

FINDINGS OF FACT AND ORDER

Josephine County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee Josephine County, State of Oregon

In the matter of an order and findings of)
 fact which classify forestland-urban) Order
 interface property in Josephine County,) No. 2008-1
 pursuant to ORS 477.052.)

FINDINGS OF FACT

Whereas, the committee developed preliminary classification assignments during 21 public meetings of the committee, between April 2006 and March 2008, pursuant to ORS 477.031.

Whereas, the committee determined that 19,336 tax lots (77,233 acres) in Josephine County meet the criteria to be classified as forestland-urban interface property, pursuant to ORS 477.031. These tax lots have been grouped into 201 forestland-urban interface areas. The committee made classification assignments to these properties as follows:

Classification	Number of areas	Number of lots	Number of acres
Extreme	132	14,258	59,169
High	56	4,573	16,361
Moderate	13	505	1,703
Totals	201	19,336	77,233

Whereas, maps and a list of forestland-urban interface lots showing the classification assignments made by the committee are maintained for public review at the Oregon Department of Forestry, Grants Pass Unit, 5375 Monument Drive, Grants Pass, Oregon; and a list of forestland-urban interface lots showing the classification assignments made by the committee are maintained for public review at the Josephine County Clerk’s office, 500 SW Sixth Street, Grants Pass, Oregon, pursuant to ORS 477.052

Whereas, the committee held eight informal public meetings in 2007. The locations and dates of these meetings were Cave Junction on May 29, Merlin on May 30, Wolf Creek on November 6, Murphy on November 8, Cave Junction on November 9, Jerome Prairie on November 13, Merlin on November 15, and the Josephine County Fairgrounds on November 20. The meetings provided the public an opportunity to review the preliminary classification assignments made up to that time, pursuant to ORS 477.017. More than 1,000 people attended these meetings.

Whereas, public hearings on preliminary classification assignments were held March 18, 2008, at Fleming Middle School, and March 19, 2008, at the Josephine County Fairgrounds, pursuant to ORS 477.052. Written and oral testimony was submitted and heard by the committee. Following receipt of this testimony, the committee reviewed it for possible changes in the preliminary classifications, pursuant to ORS 477.052. The reviewed testimony consisted of requests for specific tax lots to not be classified as forestland-urban interface property or to have the draft classification changed.

Whereas, notification of preliminary classification and notice of the public hearings was mailed to over 16,000 landowners, pursuant to ORS 477.031. Notice of the public hearing was also posted at Ray's Food Place markets in Selma and Murphy, the Merlin Market and the Jerome Prairie Market, pursuant to ORS 477.031. A legal notice advertising the public hearing was twice published prior to the hearing, in "The Daily Courier" a Grants Pass-based newspaper, published six days per week, which serves all of Josephine County, pursuant to ORS 477.031. Digital copies of maps, which showed the preliminary classification assignments, were made available on the Oregon Department of Forestry's Southwest Oregon District World Wide Web site at www.swofire.oregon.gov. News releases about the public hearings were circulated to newspapers, radio stations and television stations in Jackson and Josephine counties and were posted on the Oregon Department of Forestry's Southwest Oregon District World Wide Web site.

Whereas, a preliminary Order and Finding of Fact was approved by the committee on May 15, 2008, pursuant to ORS 477.052

Whereas, a final classification was made by formal written order of the committee on May 15, 2008, pursuant to ORS 477.052.

Whereas, the criteria used by the committee for identifying forestland-urban interface properties to be classified were: that the properties must be within Josephine County, the properties must be within a forest protection district, the properties must meet the definition of "forestland" and the properties must meet the definition of "suburban" or "urban", pursuant to OAR 629-044-1010.

Whereas, definitions of "forestland," "suburban" and "urban," and the definitions of other terms used by the committee, are set forth in ORS 477.001, ORS 477.015 and OAR 629-044-1005.

Whereas, the method for the assignment of classifications was for the committee to view recent aerial photos and digital maps of all candidate lands. This review was combined with the committee members' knowledge of the county lands and properties. Josephine County, the Oregon Department of Forestry and other government agencies provided the information that was displayed. Information from the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan was also incorporated. The digital maps, using the application ArcMap, were able to show lands that met the criteria of being forestland-urban interface properties. The forestland-urban interface properties were then grouped into broader

areas of generally similar vegetation and risk factors. The digital information also enabled the committee to assign preliminary classifications, using topographic map layers to assign the Topographic Hazard Value; and aerial photos, showing vegetative cover, and digital information providing vegetation type data, to assign the Natural Vegetative Fuel Hazard Value. The third required factor, the Wildfire Weather Hazard Value, was drawn from the Wildfire Weather Hazard Value table in OAR 629-044-0230. In addition, the committee received professional opinions and perspectives from fire and forestry agency staff members. To determine clear boundaries and classification assignments, members of the committee were assigned specific regions of the county, after which their findings were reported to and reviewed by the committee at its next meeting.

ORDER

The Josephine County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee hereby finds, concludes, and orders, as shown on maps which accompany this order:

1. Lands having a dominant vegetative cover of low risk vegetation often with partial or predominant irrigated lands, and a general slope rating of less than 25 percent were generally assigned a classification of “Moderate.”
2. Lands having a dominant vegetative cover of young shrubs (fuel models 5 & 6) and healthy tree stands with little undergrowth (fuel models 8 & 9), and a general slope rating less than 25 percent were generally assigned a classification of “High.”
3. Lands having a dominant vegetative cover of shrubs and healthy tree stands, and a general slope rating of greater than 25 percent were generally assigned a classification of “Extreme”. Lands having a dominant vegetative cover of dry grasses, mature stands of shrubs, and areas of trees with buildups of ground litter (fuel models 1, 2, 3, 4, & 10), regardless of the slope rating, were generally assigned a classification of “Extreme.”

The Josephine County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee has reviewed this document and, by roll call vote, declared this Order and the Findings of Fact to be true.

DATED this 15th day of MAY, 2008.

Signed, Thomas Link, chairman

Signed, Charles Chase, secretary