

# Mid-Term Threats and Needs Alameda and South Obenchain Fires

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1/12/2021

ROGUE BASIN WILDFIRES AND DRINKING  
WATER SUPPLIES WORKSHOP



# Alameda Drive Fire- Private Lands: Outreach & BMP Implementation

- ▶ Focused on riparian areas
- ▶ Erosion control, stream bank stabilization
- ▶ Invasive weed regrowth
- ▶ Damaged infrastructure
- ▶ Dozer lines

# Riparian-Area Focused Outreach

- ▶ Blackberry, riparian vegetation carried fire
- ▶ Burned areas limited to riparian-adjacent lands
- ▶ Particularly tributaries- more private ownership
  - ▶ Coleman, Payne, Anderson, Kanutchen, Jeffery, Butler, Wrights Creeks
- ▶ Largest threat to natural resources



# Erosion Control & Stream Bank Stabilization

- ▶ Surprisingly, little concern on private lands we worked with
  - ▶ No evidence of hydrophobic soils
  - ▶ Clay soils seemed to “bake”
  - ▶ Localized damage to stream banks, confluences
  - ▶ Large amounts of needle and leaf cast
- ▶ Placed straw on targeted areas of erosion concern
  - ▶ Wrights Creek confluence
  - ▶ Hillside above Bear Creek
- ▶ Seeding for future soil stabilization



# Invasive Weed Regrowth

- ▶ Biggest concern
  - ▶ Rapid regrowth of blackberry
  - ▶ Lack of funding, not considered an immediate threat
- ▶ Treated 30 acres of public and 37 acres of private riparian land
  - ▶ \$33k grant to RVCOG to contract with herbicide applicators
  - ▶ Referred private landowners as we met them
  - ▶ Urban and rural
- ▶ Goal: Reduce blackberry presence for future restoration & management
- ▶ Lesson learned and applied from 2018 Peninger Fire



# Damaged Infrastructure

- ▶ Fences, irrigation, culverts
- ▶ Still a NEED
  - ▶ Insurance coverage
  - ▶ FSA
  - ▶ Future OWEB, OWRD grant projects



# Dozer Lines

- ▶ Limited, two properties
- ▶ Recommended seeding, straw
- ▶ No action to date



## South Obenchain Fire: Outreach for Private Lands Damages

- **Partner Outreach:** organized meetings with Rogue Basin partners who had resources or were stakeholders in natural resource effects of the fire.
- **Landowner Outreach:** coordinated mailing with information from OSU Extension, NRCS, FSA, JSWCD
- **Landowner Endorsement:** key to building trust in this community





# South Obenchain Fire Impacts and BMPs

1. Fire Severity: patchy, but significant areas of high-severity
2. Steep slopes and erodible soils
3. Disturbance from fire suppression efforts: bulldozer fire lines
4. Infrastructure losses: irrigation, outbuildings, equipment
5. Invasive species threats: blackberry limited to riparian areas; annual grasses, yellow starthistle pose a threat to native bunchgrass ecosystems





# Private Lands Restoration Outreach

## Key Partnerships and Communication Coordination

- ▶ Followup Actions:

- ▶ Site Visits

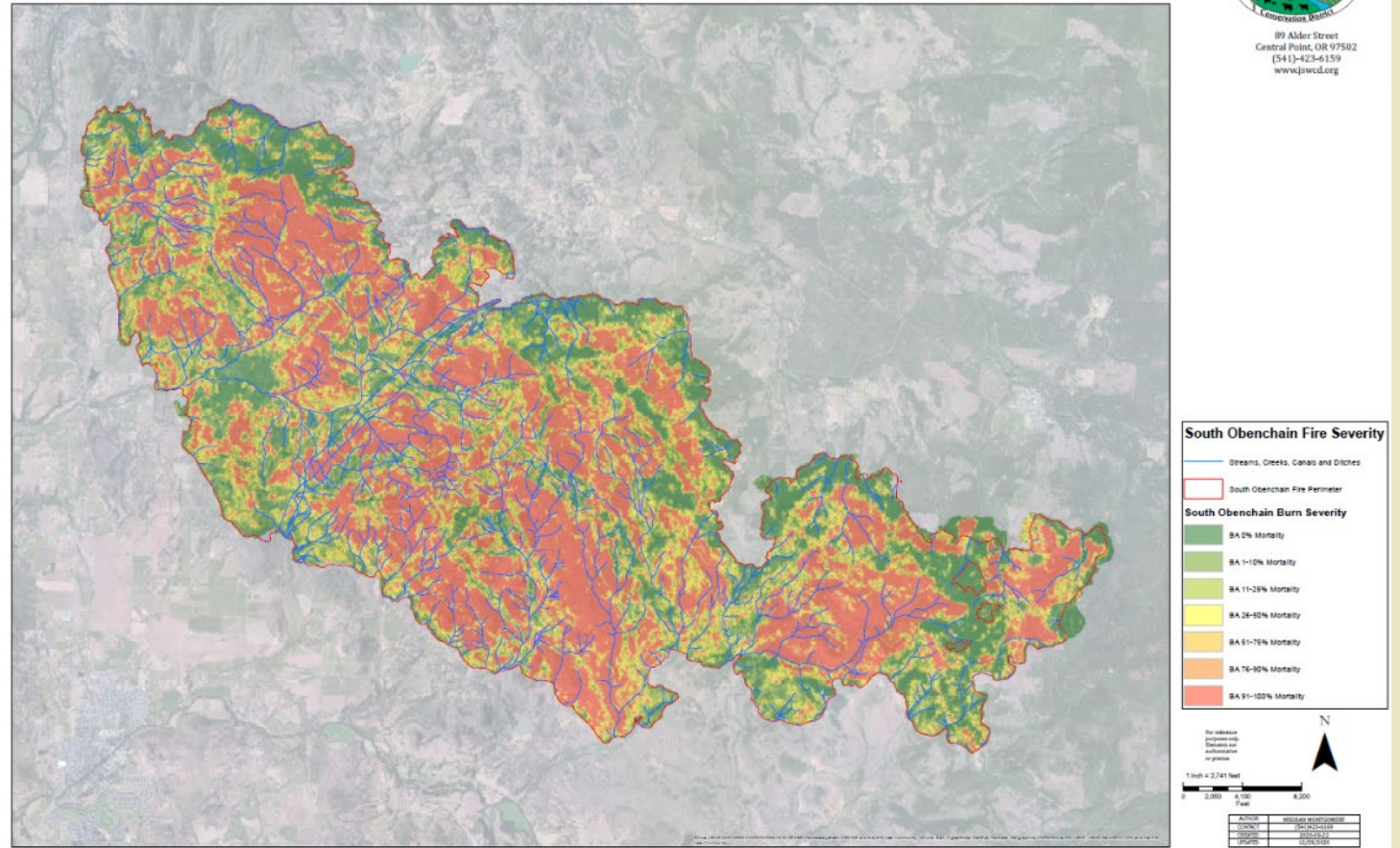
- ▶ Restoration Recommendations

- ▶ Navigating Implementation Barriers: sourcing materials, connecting neighbors, addressing labor constraints

# Fire Severity: Threats and Impacts

- ▶ Fire had mixed severity across the landscape, but pronounced effects at the taxlot scale
- ▶ No hydrophobic soils
- ▶ Highest severity: burned almost all woody and herbaceous vegetation
- ▶ Recommend seeding, soil protection with mulch, and strategic re-planting of trees and shrubs

**SOUTH OBENCHAIN FIRE BURN SEVERITY**





## Erosion Threats and Impacts

### Steep Slopes and Sensitive Soils

- Distributed seed mixes to establish vegetation on high-severity burn areas and steep slopes, also competition against invasive species
- Hazard trees cut, laid across slope to catch sediment and debris
- Straw and wood chip mulch to protect soil surface
- Waterbars across roads or bulldozer lines

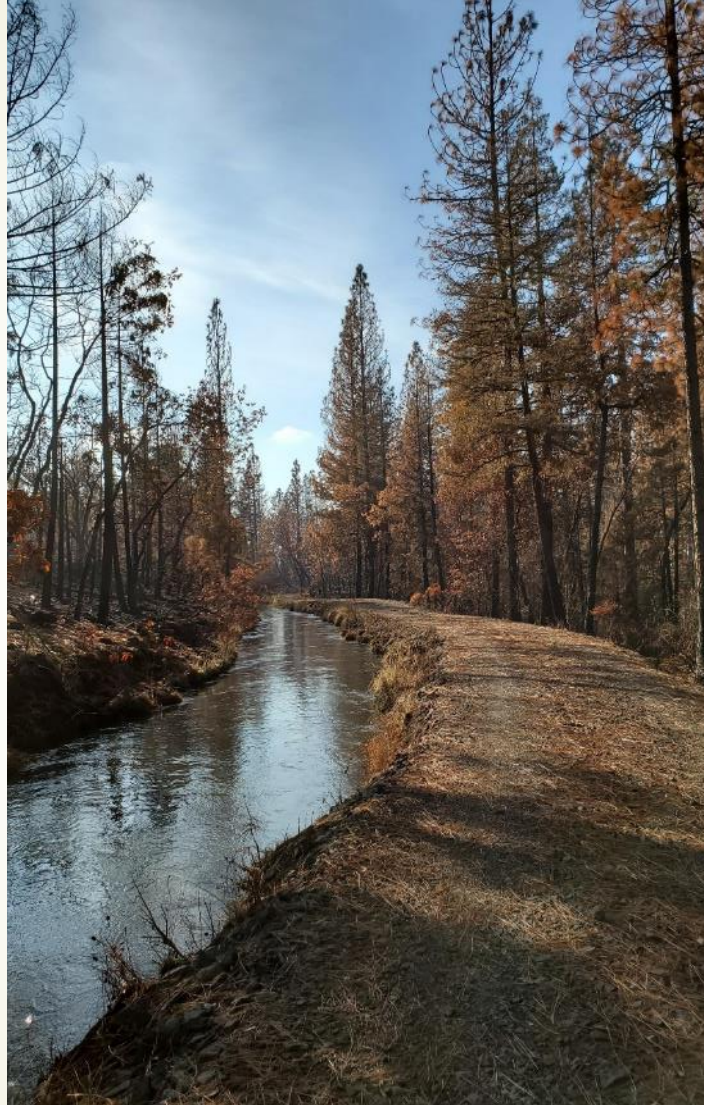
# Erosion Threats and Impacts: Disturbance from Fire Suppression Activities

- ▶ Bulldozed fire lines
  - ▶ Not contoured to slope
  - ▶ Many cross streams or ephemeral drainages
  - ▶ Loose soil
- ▶ Treatments:
  - ▶ Seeding
  - ▶ Straw mulch covering
  - ▶ Waterbars, armored, to prevent severe erosion



# Infrastructure Recovery

- ▶ Pasture and rangeland restoration: re-seeding burned areas, monitor for establishment
- ▶ Forest Restoration: merchantable conifer species, managing re-growth of oak, manzanita, and madrone
- ▶ Built Infrastructure
  - ▶ Fencing replacement
  - ▶ Gap in support for recovering irrigation, buildings, equipment for those without adequate insurance



# Invasive Species


## Impacts

- ▶ Blackberry was a smaller component of this fire than Alameda, but still present throughout waterways, irrigation, and pastures
- ▶ Annual Grasses: medusahead, hedgehog dogtail, bromes
- ▶ Yellow star thistle
- ▶ Other herbaceous invasive plants
- ▶ Herbicide treatment for blackberry,
- ▶ Seeding for competition





# Ongoing Needs and Anticipated Challenges

- ▶ Variable burn severity
  - ▶ Patchy public/private ownership
  - ▶ Lack of a cohesive burn severity/impacts assessment
  - ▶ Individual landowner context
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Questions?

