

Chapter 5: Hazardous Fuels Reduction

Fuels Reduction in Clackamas County

Reducing hazardous fuels around homes, along transportation corridors and at a landscape scale can significantly minimize losses to life, property and natural resources from wildfire, which is a core focus of the Clackamas Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

Fuels Reduction Objectives

- I. Implement fuels reduction projects in high-risk areas.
- II. Coordinate administration of a county-wide fuels reduction program.
- III. Consider opportunities for biomass utilization and adding value to extracted vegetation.
- IV. Integrate fuels reduction into natural resources management plans to balance public safety with sustainable ecological management and economic activities.

Fuels Reduction Accomplishments

Since 2005 the Clackamas CWPP served as a tool to enable partners to be highly competitive for grant funds to implement fuels reduction projects in communities at risk and adjacent public and private forest lands. In fact, over 1.1 million dollars has been procured to support fuels reduction projects since 2012. The majority of fuels reduction projects implemented in the County have been led by the ODF, the North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District and the Clackamas Soil and Water Conservation District, using Title III and Western States Fire Manager's grant programs. Below please find the total funds received and fuels reduction acreage treated since 2005. For more information regarding the specific grants and project components, please see Table 1-2. CCWPP grant Funded Projects 2012-2017.

- Fuels Reduction Dollars: \$1,121,957
 - ✓ Federal Acres: 2
 - ✓ Public/Private Acres: 380

Total Treated Acres: 382

Fuels Reduction Actions

The Fuels Reduction Action Plan has been updated since 2012 to reflect accomplishments and ensure that the action plan remains relevant to current issues (Table 1-1.2012 CCWPP Action Plan). The high priority risk assessment actions to be addressed by the wildfire planning team will be to:

- 1) Develop and maintain an inventory of potential and successful FR projects by meeting with parks and natural lands managers.
- 2) Continue securing funding to implement projects/ hire seasonal ODF staff.

ODF Cost-Share Program

Clackamas County is home to over 10,000 small woodland owners, and is rich in forest resources. However, many of these forest land owners have limited budgets for implementing fuels reduction projects. In addition, there is a compelling need to educate landowners about wildfire potential on their forest lands how to mitigate for fire while protecting and enhancing forest stands.

For this reason, the Molalla Unit of the Oregon Department of Forestry procured grant funds to support a fuels reduction program to provide technical and financial assistance to individuals and communities that have significant risk to wildfires.

The current grant programs encompass three scopes of interest: the promotion of healthy forests across the landscape, the development of defensible space around individual homes near forested lands, and the provision of support services to help communities near the forest become Firewise Communities. The cost share program is designed to offset the costs associated with forest health and defensible space projects, and are typically paid using a 75% (ODF), 25% (landowner) ratio.

ODF Fuels Reduction Crew

Crew 58

The ODF Fuels Reduction Crew (Crew#58) was an eight to twelve-member seasonal crew responsible for implementing fuels reduction projects on public land or in community common areas. Crew#58 supplemented the cost share program, which targeted individual landowners. The crew was also trained in initial wildland fire response tactics, providing them with professional skills and enhancing ODF's ability to respond to local fire ignitions. Crew#58 had been funded by Title III grants for more than ten years and became an essential element in fire prevention and response for the Molalla Unit of ODF. Unfortunately, the reduction in funding levels and eventual sunset of the Secure Rural Schools and Self-Determination Act (Title III) jeopardized ODF's ability to continue supporting the Fuels Reduction Crew. In 2014 the crew lost funding and has been unable to reinstate since.

Coffee Creek Crew

With the loss of Crew#58 the Molalla Unit of ODF lost an essential element in fire prevention and response. In order to fill the void ODF partnered with the Department of Corrections to create two 10-women inmate crew from the Coffee Creek Corrections facility. The crews were trained as a fuels reduction/fire suppression crews. One crew performed fuels reduction four days a week, while the other crew was on standby for fires or as fuels reduction substitutes. Coffee Creek Crew did similar work as Crew#58, but with more of a focus on creating 200 ft. of defensible space for individual landowners. The Coffee Creek crew was highly successful and accomplished defensible space on over 150 homes in 2 summers. While at the same time responding to 22 different fires for a combined total of 37 days spent on fire. Unfortunately, funding for the crew only lasted through the 2017 season. The crew is still available for fire suppression past the 2017 season, but it will be hard to keep the crew trained properly without the day to day experience with fuels reduction.

Clackamas Parks Wildfire Management Plan

The *Clackamas Parks Wildfire Management Plan*² provides direction for reducing wildfire risk in parks managed by Clackamas County Parks (CCP) and North Clackamas Parks and Recreation District (NCPRD). Both agencies will use this plan to guide park management activities and help make park ecosystems more fire resilient, fire resistant, and where appropriate, fire adapted.

The Wildfire Management Plan provides a county wide assessment of park fire risk, with descriptions, maps and recommendations to manage wildfire risk. The project was initiated in response to findings from the 2005 CCWPP, which found that some parks, such as Mt. Talbert Nature Park, had potentially high concentrations of natural fuels near developed residential areas. As a result, the current planning effort was undertaken to provide fire management planning for parks with the highest risk for wildfire.

The project team assessed fire risk for all 89 CCP Parks and NCPRD parks and open spaces. The list was narrowed to 50 priority parks that were divided into high, moderate and low fire risk categories. Wildfire management strategies were developed for each of these sites, and park managers began implementing these recommendations for the highest priority parks in the Spring, Summer and Fall of 2012. For more information, please see the *Clackamas Parks Wildfire Management Plan*.

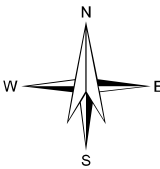
² <http://www.clackamasparkswildfire.org/>

Fuels Reduction Projects 2013-2017

- Fire Districts
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Fuels Reduction Projects (2013-17)
- Fuels Reduction - Individual Addresses
- Historical Projects (2012)
- City Boundaries
- Mt Hood National Forest

Fuels reduction projects proposed or completed prior to 2013 (historical) were identified with input from City, County and State Parks, Metro, USFS, ODF and other natural land managers to reduce hazardous fuels and create wildfire resilient landscapes. Newer project input came predominantly from ODF.

Map #5



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Miles








CLACKAMAS COUNTY

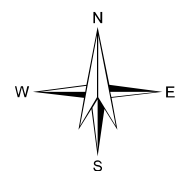
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CCWPP Communities at Risk and Fuels Reduction Projects 2017

-  Fuels Reduction Projects
-  Oregon Department of Forestry
-  City Boundaries
-  Fire Districts
-  Communities at Risk
-  Mt Hood National Forest
-  Clackamas County

Map #6



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Miles



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