

10.4. Community as Risk: Colton Rural Fire District #70

Colton Rural Fire Protection District #70 has been identified as a Community at Risk (CAR) by the Oregon Department of Forestry. The District has participated in the Clackamas County CWPP planning process to evaluate capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond to potential wildfire events.

Colton Fire District Description

With over 50 years of service, the Colton Rural Fire District is made up of men and women, primarily volunteers and three-part time paid staff, who serve the citizens of Colton and Elwood. The Colton Rural Fire District was founded in 1956 and covers 46 square miles between Estacada and Molalla. Colton Rural Fire District protects the community with both Fire Service and Emergency Medical Care, and give Mutual Aid service to other agencies as needed.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

This area is an excellent example of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) because it is characterized by steep slopes with residential homes surrounded by heavy fuels. In addition, many of the neighborhoods here have only one way in and one way out with narrow, steep driveways and poor address signage. Water is limited throughout the District, especially in the Communities at Risk.

Heavy and continuous fuels dominate this area, and forests are actively managed for lumber and Christmas trees. Land ownership includes a variety of rural residential, private forest land, large industrial forests and public lands (Bureau of Land management). There are also many small woodlands that are not actively managed that are littered with dead and dying trees and ladder fuels that could take a fire from the ground into the crowns of the trees. Many local youth illegally access these forest landholdings to build campfires, use All Terrain Vehicles (ATV's) which increases the likelihood of potential ignitions. Fires that begin on public land or on smaller private residential lots can quickly threaten the communities and natural resources that thrive in the Colton Fire District.

Colton Fire District Wildfire Hazards

The Clackamas County CWPP wildfire hazard assessment assisted Colton Fire in identifying areas that may be at higher risk to potential wildfires. Map #4 illustrates the overall wildfire hazard risk in the Colton area and will be used to help target areas for wildfire prevention activities.

Structural Ignitability

Colton Fire Dist. Promotes the creation of defensible space, use of fire-resistant roofing and building materials, home sprinkler systems, specialized wildland sprinkler systems, and community preparedness in the WUI. Colton Fire Dist. works with the Clackamas County Department of Transportation and Development to provide input on access and water supply for new lots of record. Colton Fire Dist. provides alternatives to property owners who cannot meet the requirements for access and water supply. Clackamas County has upgraded their web site so the District can look up all building permit applications. There are some opportunities for improvement, and coordination between Clackamas County and Colton Fire Dist.

- The Fire Dist. is not notified of development that occurs on existing roads and or lots of record.
- The Fire Dist. is not notified of homes that are being remodeled that require new access and water requirements.

The Colton Fire Dist. is concerned with new developments not meeting Fire Dist. requirements.

Emergency Response

Emergency response is challenging at times in the Colton Fire District because our staff is almost entirely volunteer, with 3 part time employees, a fire Chief, Asst. Chief/Training Officer, Captain/Fire Marshal/Maintenance Officer. A major wildland urban interface fire in the Colton area would quickly exceed the resources and capabilities of the District. For this reason, the district has Mutual Aid agreements in place which allows for the sharing of resources across the county and state if necessary in the event of a large scale disaster, including wildfires such as the Pit Fire. The district has one small very old type 6 brush rig, 3 class 1 structural engines, and two 3,000 gal. water tenders that may become inadequate on a large wildland urban interface until other resources arrive.

Although the District can support annual wildland fire training (S-130 and S-190), the lack of live fire experience makes it difficult to retain wildland qualifications. Colton Fire Dist. would like to work more directly with the USFS, ODF, and other land managers to take advantage of opportunities to participate in live fires and training.

Burning of yard waste and debris is unique in the Colton Rural Fire District because it is outside of the DEQ boundary, which means that the area residents can burn until regulated burn regulations are in effect. The Fire Dist. adheres to the Open Burn Policy adopted by the Clackamas County Fire Defense Board. The lack of staff and resources make it difficult to catch every illegal fire.

Radio coverage is generally good throughout the district using the 800MHz system, but the VHS system still in use for dispatching is no longer maintained by CCOM, when the system fails we will have to find alternative ways to alert volunteers to emergency calls. A new county wide radio system upgrade is due by early spring 2018. This upgrade will include much needed new mobile and portable radios.

The Colton Fire district has not been successful in acquiring RFA and VFA grants to purchase wildland PPE (nomex shirts, pants, and fire shelters), and is in need of all new PPE.

Because the Colton Water District does not have an extensive hydrant system, it is important to identify and improve water sites. This is especially important for homes with long narrow driveways that will not support water tenders. The Fire District and ODF have been working together to improve address signage in many of the most vulnerable areas and water sites.

Colton Fire CWPP Community Involvement

Colton Fire is dedicated to fire prevention, and uses a variety of forums to promote defensible space, fire-resistant building materials, and safe burning practices. Colton Fire partners with ODF to have wildfire prevention programs in local area schools. The District also holds annual events at the main fire station that are paired with prevention messages. The District would like to be more

proactive about educating the public about the need for access, water and defensible space and plans to partner with the Molalla Pioneer to create a driveway outreach program designed to advise people about lack of access and promote creation of turn-around space.

Local Communities at Risk (Strategic Planning Areas)

Colton Fire also recognizes that there are smaller-scale Communities at Risk that have unique wildfire hazards to be addressed at the more local scale. Communities that have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to wildfires are illustrated in Map # 11 and listed in Table 10.4-1. Colton Fire Professionals considered the following factors to determine the local CARs including:

- Need for defensible space
- Access limitations (narrow driveways, lack of address signage, one way in/one way out)
- Steep slopes that can hinder access and accelerate the spread of wildfire
- Lack of water available for wildland fire fighting
- Heavy fuels on adjacent public lands
- Potential ignition sources from recreationists and transients
- Agricultural and backyard burning
- Lack of community outreach programs to promote wildfire awareness
- Communications difficulties

Fuels Reduction

Fuels reduction projects should be accomplished at the local level, by the creation of defensible space around homes, wildland sprinkler suppression systems, and the landscape scale to extend vegetation treatments onto adjacent forested land and natural areas. The Colton Fire Dist. will continue to facilitate cooperation between public and private organizations, and local area residents to ensure that fuel reduction work continues and benefits homeowners, public, and private lands.

To ensure that landscape-level treatments are paired with projects to create defensible space around vulnerable communities, priority fuels reduction projects have been overlaid with the Communities at Risk Identified by the Fire District. (Map #11).

Fuels Reduction Priorities include:

High Risk

Boomer Springs/Schieffer

Deardorf

Fernwood/Young Rd Area

Walton/Tiffany

Medium Risk

Dhooghe

Elwood/Engstrom

Holt Rd

Hunter Rd

Colton Fire District Action Plan

Colton Fire has developed a list of actions to build capacity at the Department scale and has identified actions that can help to make the local CARS more resilient to potential wildfires. The action plan for Colton Fire and the local CARs therein is provided in Table 10.4-2.

Table 10.4-1 Colton Fire District Local Communities at Risk

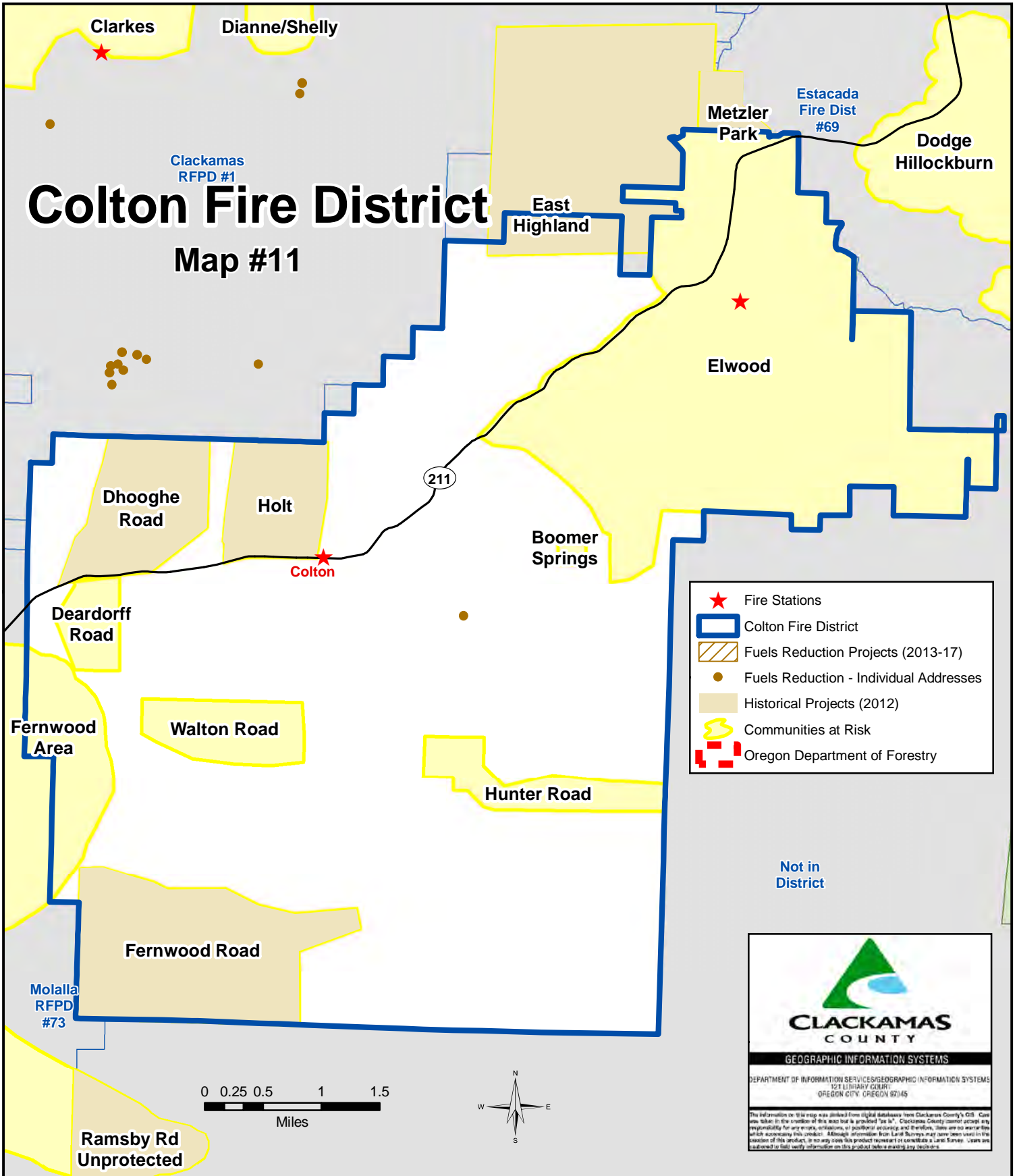
Community At Risk	CAR Priority	Defensible Space	Access	Water	Public Forest Lands	Private Forest Lands	Recreators/ Transients	Protection Capabilities	Burning	Preparedness	Communications	Steep Slopes	Description
Colton Fire Local Communities at Risk													
Deardorf	High	X	X	X				X	X	X		X	This community has only one way in and out with very narrow, steep roads and driveways. There are many homes in this area that have dense vegetation and need defensible space. There is no water here. People in this community are not aware of the high wildfire risk here.
Boomer Springs/Schieffer	High	X	X					X	X	X		X	There are not many homes in this community, but those that are located here have long, narrow driveways with no turn-around. There is no water here and there are very steep slopes.
Walton/Tiffany	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	This community has many have long, narrow driveways with trees overhanging and encroaching. There is no water here and homes are in great need of defensible space. Industrial forest lands surround the community and could be potential ignition sources.
Fernwood/Young Road Area	High	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	This Community has very limited access with many roads being one way in and out and access is very narrow. Rounds Road is a very narrow, gravel road. Water is limited. There is a creek with a pond but they are difficult to access. The community is adjacent to Port Blakey and Weyerhaeuser industrial forest operations. ATV's illegally access the Weyerhaeuser land where there is a great deal of slash from previous timber operations. Residents here burn all year, so they a great deal of fuel around homes is removed during the winter and spring, but there are some people who wait until summer to burn. OSU also has a managed forest here. ODF crews plan to brush out end of Odeen.
Dhooghe	Medium	X	X	X		X		X	X	X			This area is relatively flat, but access is still difficult because many homes have long, narrow driveways. There is also a very narrow bridge that is one way in and out. Frank Road is in very poor condition. There is no water here. There is active logging in the heavily managed, private forest lands adjacent to the community. This forested area has a lot of ladder fuels on the western portion and could be targeted for Fuels Reduction.
Holt Road	Medium	X	X			X			X	X		X	The access in this community is extremely limited because Holt Road is now closed, making it one way in and out. It is also very steep. There is a good creek at the bottom, and about half of this community has hydrants. There are small, private forest lands surrounding the community. The managed woodlands look good, but the unmanaged woodlands have heavy fuels loading.
Hunter Road	Medium	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	This community only has one way in and out and it is very steep. There is a cluster of homes that need defensible space. Port Blakey and Weyerhaeuser own industrial forest lands that surround the community. Many local youth illegally access these areas to hang out, smoke cigarettes and start campfires.
Ellwood Engstrom/Area	Medium	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	This community has good water with creeks and ponds from which pumps can draw. There are many homes here with narrow driveways. there is also a small bridge that fire apparatus cannot access. Gillet is a one way road that has no turn-around which is a very big issue. Port Blakely manages industrial forest land adjacent to this community.

Table 10.4-2. Colton Fire District Action Plan

Action Item	Timeframe	Partners	CAR
Colton Fire Action Plan			
Pursue grant funding to purchase Wildland PPE to replace outdated PPE (fire shelters)	2 Years	ODF	Colton Fire
Work with Clackamas County to ensure coordination regarding the new development on Rolliewood Road. As new homes are built, the District should be notified because no parking signs are required to be posted on all legal roads.	6 Months	Clackamas DTD	Colton Fire
Work with Clackamas County to ensure coordination regarding development on existing lots and roads of record.	2-3 Years	FDB, SFMO	Colton Fire
Work with Clackamas County to use the total square footage of the home including any remodel expansion as the threshold for contacting Fire Agencies for access and water requirements.	2-3 Years	FDB, SFMO	Colton Fire
Work with ODF, USFS and other land managers to identify opportunities to participate in Live Fire Training.	Ongoing	ODF, USFS, BLM	Colton Fire
Partner with the Molalla Pioneer to create a driveway outreach program designed to advise people about lack of access and promote creation of turn-around space.	1 year	Molalla Pioneer	Colton Fire
Work with Clackamas County to receive notification of occupancy permits through monthly emails and request access/training to use the Velocity Hall System.	6 Months	Clackamas County, SFMO	Colton Fire
Colton Fire Local Communities at Risk Action Plan			
Conduct a Community Meeting to educate the community and solicit feedback on wildfire prevention projects the community would support.	Ongoing	ODF	Deardorf
Work with CCFD#1 to educate residents of Holt road about the importance of being prepared since response time is increased with the closure of the road.	Ongoing	CCFDF#1	Holt Road
Begin identifying and improving potential water sites in Communities at Risk.	Long-Term	ODF	All Car's
Work with Port Blakely and Weyerhaeuser to post signage and develop additional strategies to discourage illegal trespassing on forest land.	Ongoing	Port Blakely, Weyerhaeuser	Walton/Tiffany, Fernwood/Young Road Area, Hunter Road
Complete home addressing in Communities at Risk.	Ongoing	ODF	All CAR's
Partner with the Fire Co-op to create and distribute outreach materials that promote responsible burning, defensible space and reduction of structural ignitability within the Home Ignition Zone.	Ongoing	Fire Co-op	All CAR's
Promote legal, safe and responsible debris burning through public outreach and education.	Short-Term	ODF, Fire Co-op	All CAR's
Reduce hazardous fuels in the ROW of potential evacuation routes. Engage residents adjacent to primary evacuations routes to extend treatments onto private land.	Ongoing	ODOT, Clackamas County Roads	All CAR's
Seek grant funding to support fuels reduction and creation of defensible space around homes.	Ongoing	ODF	All CAR's

Colton Fire District

Map #11



	Fire Stations
	Colton Fire District
	Fuels Reduction Projects (2013-17)
	Fuels Reduction - Individual Addresses
	Historical Projects (2012)
	Communities at Risk
	Oregon Department of Forestry

Not in District

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