

10.1 Community at Risk: Aurora Rural Fire Protection District #63

The Aurora Fire District has been identified as a Community at Risk (CAR) by 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.

Aurora Fire District Description

The Aurora Rural Fire Protection District #63 is a full-service fire and rescue agency with a force of 4 career employees, 42 volunteer firefighters and 6 resident student firefighters who serve the District's 6,000 citizens from 2 fire stations. The District organized on May 4, 1948 with 26 volunteer firefighters. It is a special service district that serves residents of Marion County and Clackamas County and is governed by a board of five publicly elected officials. 2 fire stations.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

The Aurora Fire District has areas that are excellent examples of the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). These areas are characterized by residential homes surrounded by heavy fuels and steep slopes. In addition, many of the neighborhoods here have only one way in and one way out with narrow, steep driveways and poor address signage. Heavy and continuous fuels dominate this area, so fires that begin on public land or on smaller private residential lots can quickly threaten the communities and natural resources that thrive in the Aurora Fire District.

Aurora Fire District Wildfire Hazards

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

Structural Ignitability

Aurora Fire promotes the creation of defensible space, use of fire-resistant roofing and building materials, and community preparedness in the WUI. However, the District does not always have the opportunity to provide input regarding access and water supply for new development. Using the State Fire Code as a regulatory tool in establishing adequate access and water supply is critical to reducing structural ignitability. The need for Aurora Fire to increase capacity for participating in land use reviews to provide input of new development is identified as an action item in the Aurora CWPP Action Plan.

Emergency Response

A major wildland urban interface fire in Aurora would quickly exceed the resources and capabilities of the District. For this reason, Aurora Fire has Mutual Aid agreements in place which allows for the sharing of resources across the county in the event of a large scale disaster including wildfires. Aurora Fire employees and volunteers receive somewhat regular wildfire training. The District would like to work with ODF to support regular the S-130 and S-190 training.

In the event of a large wildland fire, evacuations may be necessary. Evacuating this rural area safely does present some safety challenges due to the large number of one way in and one way out roads

and bridges. Burning of agricultural waste and yard debris is a very common occurrence in this area that is dominated by agriculture. Aurora residents would benefit from periodic reminders of safe burning practices and techniques to ensure that debris burns do not escape.

Community Outreach & Education

Aurora Fire is dedicated to fire prevention, and uses a variety of forums to promote residential fire safety, defensible space, and safe burning practices. The community is very supportive of the Fire District and participates in activities throughout the year, some of which include smoke detector, fire prevention and other programs. Aurora Fire is also an active member of the Clackamas County Fire Prevention Cooperative which is a consortium of structural and wildland fire protection professionals that work together to deliver programs such as team teaching in the grade school fire safety programs, safety fairs with car seat inspections and community and school programs.

Local Communities at Risk (Strategic Planning Areas)

Aurora Fire recognizes that there are smaller-scale Communities at Risk that have unique wildfire hazards to be addressed at the more local level. Communities that have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to wildfires are illustrated in Map#8 and are listed in Table 10.1-1. Aurora 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

Effective fuels reduction projects include the creation of defensible space around homes as well as vegetation treatments (shaded fuels creaks, thinning, limbing) onto adjacent forested land and natural areas. 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 Aurora Fire (Map #8).

Fuels Reduction Priorities include:

Champoeg State Park

Whiskey Hill

Eilers Road Area

Butteville Road

Aurora Fire District Action Plan

Aurora 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 Aurora Fire and the Local CARs therein is provided in Table 10.1-2

Table 10.1-1 Aurora Fire 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
Aurora Fire Communities at Risk														
Eilers Road/ Myley Road near Charbonneau, Brownsdale Farm Road, Glass and Beck Roads	High	X	X	X							X		X	This community is characterized by many homes surrounded by heavy timber, poor access, and limited water supply. Brownsdale Farm Road and Mylee Road are very difficult for emergency service vehicles to access. This area also needs to be targeted for address signs.
Butteville Road	High	X		X							X		X	This is a fairly new community that has a high concentration of homes adjacent to heavy timber, and steep slopes. Access is good, but water supplies are limited. Defensible space is needed.
Whiskey Hill/ Meridian Rd.	High	X	X	X							X		X	Whiskey Hill is a high priority community at risk because there are homes adjacent to heavy timber, there are steep slopes, little water and access is extremely limited.
Cedarbrook Lane	High	X		X							X		X	Cedarbrook Lane is in a gully, which means that a fire here can carry upslope very quickly. Although access is good, address signs are needed here. Water supplies are also limited.

Table 10.1-2. Aurora Fire Action Plan			
Action Item	Timeframe	Partners	CAR
Aurora Fire Action Plan			
Develop relationships with Clackamas County Sheriffs office for potential evacuations.	Short term	CCSO, CCEM	Aurora Fire District
Increase capacity for communicating with other fire agencies by obtaining 3-4 portable 800 MHz radios.	Short term	CCEM, CCFDB	Aurora Fire District
Work with Marion County to update map numbers.	Long Term	Marion County	Aurora Fire District
Work with Clackamas County Land Use Planning and Building Depts. to provide input on access and water requirements in new development.	Short Term	CCDTD	Aurora Fire District
Partner with ODF to assist training staff and volunteers in wildland fire initial attack (S-130 and S-190).	Short Term	ODF	Aurora Fire District
Aurora 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	Eilers Road Area, Butteville Road, Whiskey Hill, Cedarbrook Lane
Complete home addressing in Communities at Risk.		ODF, Fire Co-op	All; Eilers Road and Meridian Road
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, DEQ, 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
Obtain structural ignitability data by conducting structural triage assessment data collection (including GPS points) for homes in Communities at Risk.	Ongoing	ODF	All CAR's
Develop a community-driven pre-disaster plan including evacuation routes, telephone call down trees, and other strategies for strengthening community response.	Ongoing	CCEM, CCFDB	All CAR's
Implement road addressing (including length of driveways) and other signage for emergency response.	Ongoing	ODF	All CAR's
Seek grant funding to support fuels reduction and creation of defensible space around homes.	Ongoing	ODF	All CAR's
Conduct Community Clean Up Days to reduce hazardous fuels. Identify opportunities to recycle or compost vegetative material instead of burning.	Ongoing	ODF	All CAR's

