

**10.12. Community at Risk: Silverton Rural Fire Protection District #2**

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

**Silverton Fire District Description**

The Silverton Rural Fire Protection District #2 is a nearly all volunteer. Silverton Fire District provides emergency medical services as well as fire services to an area of about 106 square miles and serves a population of over 20,000 from five stations. The current staff consists of seven full time employees, and over sixty volunteers. Both volunteers and paid staff work under the direction of the Fire Chief.

**Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)**

Silverton is the location of the largest wildland fire in Oregon’s history, burning over 1 million acres of timber in 1865. There have been few large fires since then, which has led to heavy fuel loading that could cause another large fire to ignite.

Silverton’s Fire District is a rural area on the eastern edge of Clackamas County adjacent to large tracts of federal, state and private forests. The terrain is steep, causing access and communication limitations. The area attracts campers, hikers, anglers, ATV users, hunters and other visitors the diverse use of the area which can potentially start wildfires that could carry from public land to the residential communities.

The area is characterized by rural residential homes surrounded by heavy fuels and steep slopes. In addition, many of the neighborhoods here have only single access (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 Silverton Fire District.

**Silverton Fire District Wildfire Hazards**

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

**Structural Ignitability**

Silverton Fire District promotes the creation of defensible space, use of fire-resistant roofing and building materials, and community preparedness in the WUI. The Silverton Fire District works with the City of Silverton, the City of Scotts Mills and Clackamas County to integrate these concepts at the regulatory level by providing input on access and water requirements for new development.

The City of Silverton provides land use planning and building permit services within the city. Coordination with the City is excellent, as the City Planner is also a volunteer firefighter. Unincorporated areas are served by Clackamas County Land Use Planning and Building

Departments. Silverton Fire has experienced some difficulties coordinating with the County, and is not always notified to provide information on fire flow and access for new lots of record. Additionally, many homes are being built on existing lots of record with no input from the Fire District on access and water. This issue has been identified as a County-wide issue and therefore is articulated as a need in the Clackamas CWPP Action Plan. Silverton Fire also does not have access to the County's Velocity Hall System which catalogues pending and approved building permits. The need for enhanced communication between Clackamas County and Silverton Fire has been noted in the Silverton Fire CWPP Action Plan.

## **Emergency Response**

Emergency response is challenging in the Silverton Fire District because staff are almost entirely volunteer, with only 7 paid staff. A major wildland urban interface fire in Silverton would quickly exceed the resources and capabilities of the District. For this reason, Silverton 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.

The Silverton Fire District is able to support annual wildland fire training, which includes S-130, S-190, S-13 as well as all others required for engine boss. Silverton Fire is fortunate that they can work with local farmers to implement prescribed field burns that provide the live fire experience critical to retaining wildland fire qualifications.

During a multi-agency response, interoperability is going to be an issue for Silverton Fire because their used 800 MHz radios are poor quality; many of which do not display radio frequencies. The District is also in need of 85 new generation fire shelters. Silverton Fire has applied for VFA and RFA grants multiple times to fill District need, but has not yet been successful.

Because Silverton Fire District does not have a hydrant system that extends to rural areas, it is important to begin identifying and improving potential water sites. This is especially important for homes that have long narrow driveways that will not support water tenders.

In the event of a large wildland fire, evacuations may be necessary. This rural area presents some difficulties due to the large number of single access roads with poor addressing. There are also a significant number of private bridges with unknown load capacity, especially along South Butte Creek Road. Silverton Fire has been working with ODF to improve address signage in vulnerable areas, and will continue to work with the Clackamas County Fire Co-op to implement address signage in the Communities at Risk (CAR).

Burning of yard waste, agricultural and other debris is challenging in the Silverton Fire District because backyard burning is allowed in all areas. Silverton Fire District tries to be consistent with neighboring jurisdictions' backyard burning programs but does not have staff or resources to regulate burning in Silverton. The District is also home to many Christmas tree operations that have authority to burn an incredible amount of material all year long regardless of the severity of fire danger or air quality restrictions. Silverton Fire would like to work with ODF to develop a better strategy for dealing with Christmas tree waste such as a chipper cooperative. This has been identified in the Silverton CWPP Action Plan.

## **Community Outreach/Education**

One of the Missions of the Silverton Fire District is to provide Public Education in Fire Prevention. Some of the ways that we provide this is to visit classrooms to talk with students and Station tours for school and youth groups. The Fire Silverton District also participates in activities throughout the area which include Healthy Kids Day, First Fridays, July 3rd Fireworks Display, Homer Davenport Days Festival, Food & Toy Drive and many other Community events.

Silverton Fire is also a 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, fire safety house displays, community and school programs.

## **Local Communities at Risk (Strategic Planning Areas)**

Silverton Fire also 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 #19 and listed in Table 10.12-1. Silverton Fire officials considered the following factors to determine the local CARs including:

- Need for defensible space
- Access limitations (narrow driveways, lack of address signage, single access
- 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**

A core focus of the CWPP is reducing hazardous fuels around homes, along transportation corridors and in surrounding forested lands which can significantly minimize losses to life, property, and natural resources from wildfire.

Fuels reduction projects can and should be accomplished at the local level, which includes the creation of defensible space around homes, as well as the landscape scale to extend vegetation treatments onto adjacent forested land and natural areas. Silverton Fire District will facilitate cooperation between public and private organizations to ensure that fuels reduction work occurs strategically to benefit homeowners as well as adjacent public and private lands.

The Bureau of Land Management, private industrial landowners and small woodland owners have many heavily forested landholdings that are adjacent to homes in the Wildland Urban Interface. As Silverton Fire District targets the residential communities for creating defensible space, there is an opportunity to engage private, state and federal partners in reducing fuels on this adjacent public land. This has been identified as an action item.

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 Silverton Fire (Map #19).

Fuels Reduction Priorities include:

Boy Scout Camp

South Butte Road

South Maple Grove Road

Groshong Road

### **Silverton Fire District Action Plan**

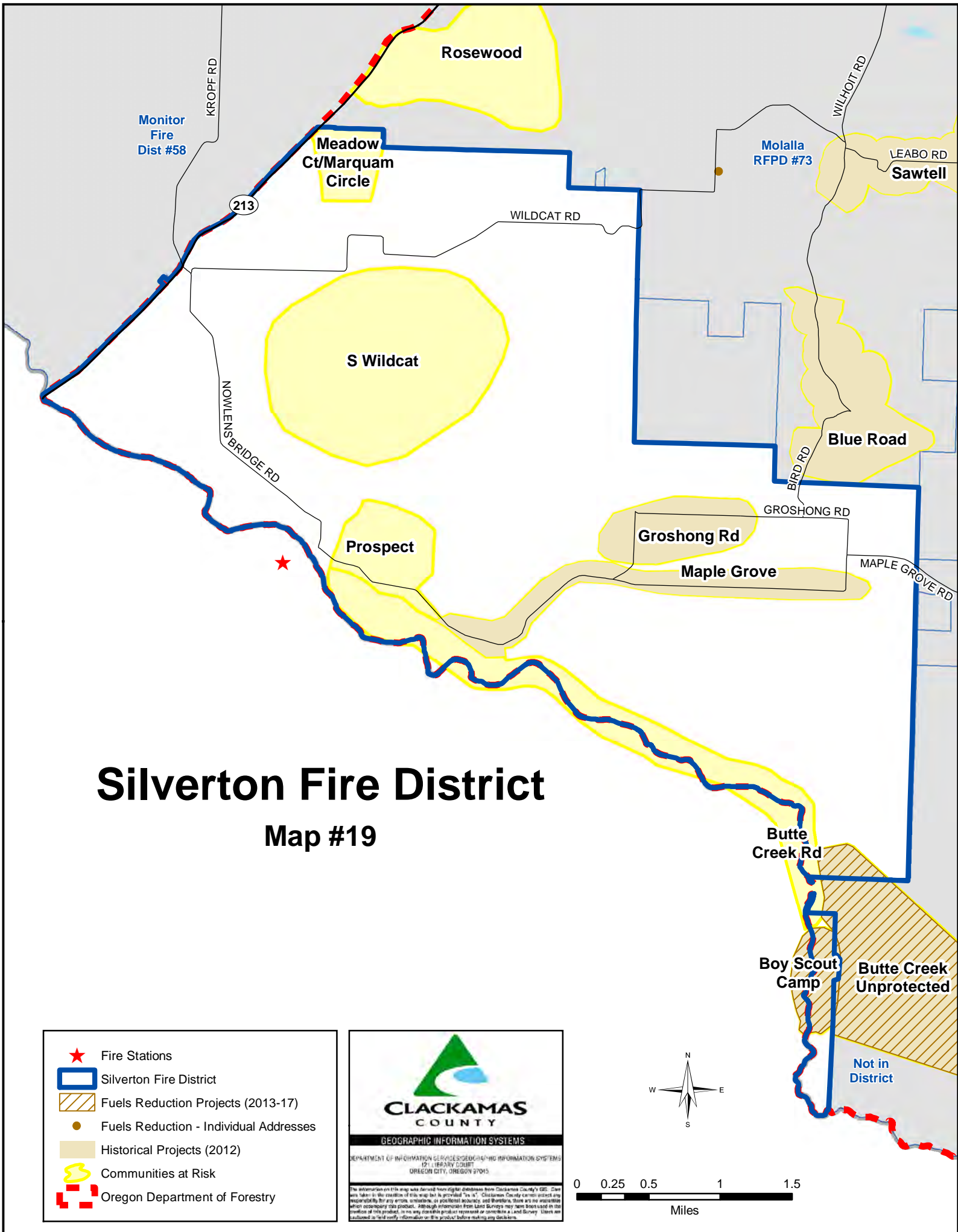
Silverton Fire District has developed a list of actions to build capacity at the Department level and has identified actions that can help to make the local CARs more resilient to potential wildfires. The action plan for Silverton Fire and the local CARs therein is provided in Table 10.12-2.

**Table 10.12-1. Silverton Fire District 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
<b>Silverton Fire Communities at Risk</b>													
Boy Scout Camp	High	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	The Boy Scout Camp is an area of concern because it is heavily vegetated, has limited access and water, and is densely populated in the summer months. The canyon going into the camp reduces radio coverage. This is also an excellent location for community outreach.
South Butte Creek Road	High	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	South Butte Creek Road has many homes in heavily forested areas. Access here is impaired by private bridges, one way in and out roads that are steep and narrow, sharp curves and blind corners. There are very few address markers here, and Silverton is working with ODF to install some in 2012. Butte Creek Road is a dead end road. The canyon area presents communication issues, and is also conducive for severe fire behavior as well as landslides. Public education and outreach is needed here to work with traditionally adversarial homeowners and to reach teenagers that recreate on BLM and Private forest lands.
South Maple Grove	High	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	The Maple Grove area has very steep terrain with canyon areas, farmland, tree farms and residential properties. Access is limited with narrow driveways, private bridges, and one way in and out roads. Communications are good here and although there are a couple of ponds and swimming pools, water will still be an issue, so response would require water from monitor and Molalla. Cooper Lake is a great fill site.
South Wildcat Road	High	X			X	X			X	X			South Wildcat Mountain road is characterized by managed farm lands with a great deal of field burning. Brand from these large scale field burns threaten nearby forest lands. There are not many homes in this area, but those that are located here have long narrow driveways.
Marquam Circle Area	Medium	X	X	X					X	X		X	Marquam Circle has a high concentration of homes, with fuels consisting of tall overgrown brush blackberries and other flashy fuels. Meadow Court is one way in and out and turns into gravel. Water is the biggest issue besides defensible space.
Groshong Road	Medium	X	X	X					X	X		X	Groshong Road is a high priority for fuels reduction in heavily forested areas. Access is good but water is an issue.
Prospect	Medium	X	X	X					X	X		X	Prospect has very limited access because it has only one way in and out and is a narrow road. It would be difficult to get a type one engine into this area. There are many homes at the top of the slope where a fire could potentially run.


**Table 10.12-2. Silverton Fire District Action Plan**

Action Item	Timeframe	Partners	CAR
<b>Silverton Fire Action Plan</b>			
Inventory private bridges to determine whether or not they have had an engineer certification and encourage landowners to upgrade them to meet the 60,000 pound requirement for emergency service vehicles.	Long-Term	Clackamas County, CCEM	Silverton Fire
Build capacity and support for a more involved Burning Program including staff to educate local residents and regulate the Burning Program.	Long-Term	ODF, DEQ, Fire Co-op	Silverton Fire
Work with local Christmas Tree growers to develop and implement a chipper program to reduce excessive burning of woody material.	Long-Term	ODF, CCFA	Silverton Fire
Work with Clackamas County Emergency Management and the Sherriff's Office to discuss evacuation planning especially in communities with only one way in and out.	Short-Term	CCSO, CCEM	Silverton Fire
Develop and implement a driveway program to ensure that driveways are wide enough with adequate clearance for emergency service vehicles.	Long-Term	CCSO, CCEM	Silverton Fire
Work with the Clackamas Fire Defense Board to replace outdated 800 MHz radios with newer equipment.	Long-Term	FDB	Silverton Fire
Procure 85 new generation fire shelters and other wildland PPE for staff and volunteers.	Ongoing	ODF	Silverton Fire
Work with Clackamas County Land Use Planning and Building Depts. to provide input on access and water requirements in new development.	Ongoing	CCDTD	Silverton Fire
Utilize Silverton's First Friday event as a venue for public education.	Ongoing	ODF	Silverton Fire
Continue to work with ODF and other partner fire agencies to maintain wildland fire training credentials and work with local area farmers to develop opportunities to participate in live fire exercises.	Ongoing	ODF, FDB	Silverton Fire
<b>Silverton Fire Local Communities at Risk Action Plan</b>			
Conduct a Community Meeting to educate community on defensible space, safe burning practices, and required access for emergency response vehicles.	Ongoing	ODF	All
Develop working relationships with natural land managers including USFS and the BLM to address wildfire hazards and potential response capabilities for public lands adjacent to Communities at Risk.	Short-Term	USFS, BLM	Boy Scout Camp, S. Butte Creek Rd., S. Maple Grove Rd., S. Wildcat Rd.
Implement road addressing (including length of driveways) and other signage for emergency response.	Ongoing	ODF	All
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
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
Seek grant funding to support fuels reduction and creation of defensible space around homes.	Ongoing	ODF	All
Conduct Community Clean Up Days to reduce hazardous fuels. Identify opportunities to recycle or compost vegetative material instead of burning.	Ongoing	ODF, OAN	All



# Silverton Fire District

## Map #19

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



**CLACKAMAS COUNTY**  
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