

# BEYOND THE FLAMES

THE STORY OF WILDFIRE IN CENTRAL OREGON

VOLUME 2 : 2008



*Skeleton Fire, 1996*



*“The residents of Sisters, Black Butte Ranch, and many other Central Oregon communities know first hand the risks they face from catastrophic fires on National Forest land. This threat will remain until we have a thinning program on a scale large enough to restore our forests to a healthy condition.”*

*- Senator Ron Wyden*



- 1 • From Patriotism to a Famous Bear
- 2 • Burning for Ecological Balance
- 3 • Fuels Treatment Programs Get Results
- 4 • Wildland Fire Use Given the Go Ahead
  - Rappel Program Takes Off
- 5 • Juniper—A Thief Among Trees
  - Branson Creek Prescribed Burn
- 6 • Citizens Strengthen Mitigation Efforts
- 7 • Demonstrations of Defensible Space
- 8 • Wildfire Can Burn Deeper Than You Know—The FireFree Program
- 10 • The Human Connection
- 12 • The Wildfire Insurance Connection
  - Your Vote Counts
- 13 • What You Need to Know Before You Go
- 14 • From Burn Pile to Biomass
- 15 • When Smoke Gets in Our Eyes
- 16 • From Responsibility to Requirement
- 17 • FEMA Grant Helps Prevent a Disaster
  - Caldera Springs Nationally Recognized
- 18 • Kids Page

## BEYOND THE FLAMES

is brought to you by Project Wildfire and the Central Oregon Fire Prevention Coop.



**Wildfire is Central Oregon's Natural Disaster. It can happen in the blink of an eye and change your life forever, regardless of where you reside. Being educated and prepared is key in protecting yourself and your loved ones... and that's why we are here.**



541.382.1675  
www.projectwildfire.org



541.416.6864



Design by: Every Idea  
541.383.2669  
www.every-idea.com

**Special Thanks to:** The Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, Central Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, Deschutes County, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, FireFree, Keep Oregon Green, Bowman Museum, Walker Range Fire Protection Association, and OSU Extension Service Crook County

**for more information visit [www.projectwildfire.org](http://www.projectwildfire.org)**

# FROM PATRIOTISM TO A FAMOUS BEAR

## *the history of wildfire prevention in American media*

Americans recognized the need for fire prevention years before Smokey Bear made an appearance. Large wildfires sparked by cigarettes, campfires, and careless use of mechanized equipment were consuming millions of acres of forests. Federal policy spread from commanding firefighters to "hit 'em hard and keep 'em small," to developing a public campaign to address human carelessness. However, before Smokey was created the Wartime Advertising Council slogans had a more patriotic emphasis.



In 1942, the spring after Pearl Harbor, a Japanese submarine surfaced near California and fired a salvo of shells near the Los Padres National Forest. Now, the country faced not only the threat of wildfires from careless people, but also from Japanese attacks. With low manpower to fight fires, it seemed a natural step to combine fire prevention and patriotism. The Wartime Ad Council flooded the market with posters crying "Forest Fires Aid the Enemy" and "Our Carelessness, Their Secret Weapon."

To help the campaign, Walt Disney loaned one of its beloved characters, Bambi, for one year. The Bambi poster was successful and proved that using an animal as a fire prevention symbol would work. On August 9, 1944, the first poster of Smokey Bear was prepared, depicting a bear pouring a bucket of water onto a campfire. Almost overnight, the bear was

Current research suggests that the main causes of human-related wildfires like unattended campfires and debris burning are still a problem. However, while Smokey's message remains relevant, public land managers are working to shift public opinion in favor of fire as a part of a healthy environment. While careless starts cost millions of dollars in damages, threaten lives and resources every year, and will always be suppressed, land managers are reintroducing fire as an important and necessary tool to manage an environment. As Smokey says, "A Careless Match Destroys," but perhaps a more modern take could include the important role of wildland fire use, prescribed burning and management ignited wildfires and add, "A Careful Match Can Heal."

## **Now, the country faced not only the threat of wildfires from careless people, but also from enemy attack.**

on his way to becoming a national symbol for fire prevention. In 1950, a tiny black bear, found charred and scared after a devastating wildfire burned through the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico, pushed the Smokey Bear campaign the rest of its way to stardom.

News about the injured cub rescued from a firestorm spread swiftly throughout the country and the New Mexico State Game Warden wrote an official letter to the Chief of the Forest Service, presenting the cub to the agency, with the understanding that the small bear would be dedicated to a publicity program of fire prevention and conservation. The go-ahead was given to send the bear to Washington, DC, where he found a home at the National Zoo, becoming the living symbol of Smokey Bear.

Since that time, Americans have been as familiar with Smokey Bear and the phrase "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires," as they have been with Santa Claus and Mickey Mouse. The only change to his message came in 2001, when, recognizing the need to address human carelessness on other public lands besides the forests, the Ad Council updated his slogan to say "Only You Can Prevent Wildfires."





# BURNING FOR ECOLOGICAL BALANCE

## *public agencies partner with fire for the greater good*

Forest Service and BLM fuels crews work year-round to improve rangeland and forest health, and to reduce the amount and continuity of fuel on the ground. They do this not to eliminate wildfire, but to create conditions that support low or moderate intensity fires rather than stand-replacing ones.

While fuels specialists often use a variety of mechanized techniques such as thinning, mowing, chipping, or mastication to accomplish their objectives, prescribed burning remains an economically viable and efficient means to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. The added benefit is that fire is a natural tool that has been improving ecological conditions throughout the fire-adapted areas of Central Oregon for centuries.

Prescribed burning can begin when the snow leaves the ground and can continue through the summer and into the winter when snowfall provides optimal conditions for burning slash piles. The high desert can dry out so quickly, fuels specialists can apply fire to small, open patches of fuels still surrounded by snow as early as March. By contrast, specialists can also apply “landscape level” fire when locations are favorable and predicted weather patterns indicate that smoke will disperse away from communities.

The following examples profile several of the many fuels projects completed by the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests, the Prineville BLM, and their partners.



### **Wagner Mountain Prescribed Burn**

Years after the last of the Rashneeshees, followers of the Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rashneesh, left their property northeast of Madras, the area now known as the Washington Family Ranch made the news again – this time for a 7200-acre prescribed burn. The Wagner Mountain Burn involved a partnership between the Prineville BLM and the Washington Family Ranch, managed by Young Life.

The Wagner Mountain Prescribed Burn was designed to reintroduce fire into a rangeland ecosystem to improve the overall health and diversity of vegetation, improve the water resources in and around the unit, increase forage for wildlife and livestock, and reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels in the wildland urban interface. And, unlike many burns where retaining trees is the goal, one of the best ways to restore rangeland conditions in this case is to control the spread of western juniper.

After two days of burning and several more days of monitoring, fuels crews were able to successfully complete the project and made significant progress toward meeting burn objectives – in particular, improving the safety of the residents and visitors to the Washington Family Ranch.

### **Crossroads Prescribed Burn**

The Deschutes National Forest, in cooperation with the Oregon Department of Forestry, conducted a series of controlled underburns near the city of Sisters last year. These low-intensity burns located primarily west of Sisters, were designed to reduce fuels on federal lands, providing buffers for communities in the wildland urban interface.

In particular, one prescribed burn was located west of Sisters, directly adjacent to the Crossroads subdivision. Although a small burn compared to some of the landscape level burns conducted on large tracts east of Deschutes County, this 60-acre underburn was designed to reduce brush and woody debris around the subdivision. By removing ground fuels and thinning out dense stands of small trees, fuels specialists have worked to improve the safety of residents living in the area. And although local residents had to put up with a few hours of smoke, they can now breathe a little easier. In recent years, they've had a few too many evacuation scares as wildfires such as the Black Crater Fire, the GW, Cache Mountain, and B&B have threatened their homes. These large-scale wildfires provide ample evidence of the need to improve defensible space in and adjacent to Central Oregon subdivisions.





# FUEL TREATMENT PROGRAMS GET RESULTS

*Incident #595 makes a minimal impact in contrast to a past wildfire in the area, the Eyerly Fire...*



## Incident #595

On July 29, 2007, Incident #595 was over almost before it started. News reporters didn't show up and fill their evening programs by highlighting suppression efforts and threats to lives and property. Incident #595 was swiftly held at six acres and didn't even get a name. For all intents and purposes, Incident #595 was insignificant...and for that, it's remarkable.

History shows us that wildfires burning in the juniper/shrub-steppe habitat in Central Oregon can have a very different outcome. Decades of fuel buildup have led to a combination of rapidly moving range fires, augmented by crown fires moving through

dense juniper stands, throwing embers miles ahead of the flaming front. For example, in 1996, the Little Cabin fire above Lake Billy Chinook burned 2,437 acres and came within 100 feet of homes. In 1999, the Elk Drive fire burned 538 acres and came within 1 1/2 miles of the Round Butte subdivision. And finally, in complete contrast to the outcome of Incident #595, the Eyerly fire roared through thousands of acres and consumed 18 homes in the Three Rivers area.

The difference between the ferocity of the Eyerly fire and Incident #595? A collaborative fuels treatment designed by Central Oregon Fire Management Service and Jefferson County Rural Fire District #1, which reduced the potential for a high intensity

wildfire on the Crooked River National Grassland next to private property on Round Butte. The fuels treatment thinned juniper and removed branches near the ground.

Based on observations and discussions with firefighters who were on scene when the fire was spreading, the combined efforts of the fuels treatment and the suppression crews prevented the wildfire from not only destroying lives, property, and a nearby power substation, but also from costing the agencies time, money, and personnel hours for an extended suppression and rehabilitation effort.

## The GW Fire September 4, 2007

*"The Governor of the State of Oregon invoked the Conflagration Declaration last night at 8:30 pm... Approximately 20 additional engines and water tenders from the counties of Clackamas, Yamhill, Linn, and Benton are expected to arrive this morning at 9 am... All perimeters of the fire were active yesterday. Gusty, 30 mph winds moved the fire in a northeasterly direction, which prompted the decision to evacuate Black Butte Ranch."*

Although Black Butte Ranch residents had to deal with being evacuated again, this time the threat was over quickly, and no homes were lost. Almost as soon as the wildfire began its terrifying run toward the community, it was over – several factors lead to this result including; fuel being taken away by previous fuels treatments, determined efforts by firefighters, and a change in weather that reduced heat and brought in a little moisture.

The GW Fire was stopped only a 1/2 mile west of Black Butte Ranch, thanks, in part, to a fuels treatment designed to restore a

ponderosa pine stand and reduce the threat of wildfire in the wildland urban interface. Over the course of several years, the Deschutes National Forest thinned and burned the area just west of the Ranch, creating a healthier stand of trees and a more open site that was less capable of supporting a crown fire (high-intensity fire that burns through the tops of the trees). The opened stand reduced fire behavior in some areas and allowed crews to quickly find and suppress spot fires started by embers from the main fire. Ultimately, taking advantage of the decrease in fire intensity and a reduction in winds, eight dozers, five hand crews, and five engines worked throughout the night to create and hold seven miles of fireline.

Without the fuels treatments, the outcome could have been different. Only a few years before, the Cache Mountain fire roared into Black Butte Ranch, quickly



consuming two homes and threatening hundreds of others. The char pattern from the finger of fire that extended into the Ranch still exists today.

## September 6, 2007

*"The infrared flight last night showed very little heat on the perimeter of the fire with a few spots located in the interior of the fire with little risk of moving beyond the fire lines..."*

# WILDLAND FIRE USE GIVEN THE GO AHEAD

Learn more about Wildland Fire Use-Ochoco National Forest: Dave Owens at 541-416-6500 or Craig Letz at 541-416-6700. Cascade Crest Wilderness Areas: Sue Olson at 541-383-5300.

Last year, the Prineville BLM and Deschutes National Forest developed a plan to allow wildland fire use in the Brothers area 60 miles southeast of Bend. By the time the 2008 fire season arrives, Forest Supervisors for the Ochoco, Deschutes, and Willamette National Forests hope to add two more wildland fire use areas in Central Oregon. As a result, residents in Central Oregon may see wildland fire use added to the list of tools being used on the Ochoco National Forest and in the Cascade Crest: Three Sisters, Mt. Washington, and Mt. Jefferson Wilderness Areas.

Unlike prescribed fire, wildland fire use begins with a naturally occurring wildfire that may be allowed to burn under very specific conditions. As a tool, fire in the wilderness and in the Ochocos can be used to protect, maintain, and enhance forest and wilderness resources and allow fire to function in its natural ecological role.

This is not to say that fire suppression will take a back seat in the management of these areas. A high level of protection still needs to be provided to help protect life, property, and natural resources. When making the decision to allow wildland fire use on the ground, forest supervisors must weigh the benefits with the potential costs. A successful wildland fire use program will permit fire to operate at all levels of the ecological spectrum, which, as past wildfire history indicates, will benefit both wildlife and vegetation.



Once a wildfire ignites in one of the new areas, the forest supervisor will determine if the fire is a "wildland fire that meets resource benefits," or a "wildland fire that needs to be actively suppressed." Given the go-ahead, a wildland fire use fire would be allowed to burn as long as it stays within the predetermined prescription. At any time, if conditions change and the wildland fire becomes unwanted, fire management officers would take appropriate suppression actions. Examples that indicate a fire becoming unwanted include; a fire growing beyond established boundaries, changes in weather that would point to an increase in fire behavior, or potential threats to

homes or other infrastructure. In addition, even while allowing wildland fire use, crews can take action to ensure the protection of key resources like cultural or historic sites, recreation areas, or critical wildlife habitat such as an eagle nest tree.

As with every aspect of fire management, wildland fire use is a program with inherent risk; however, according to forest supervisors and fire managers, the primary goal is to manage these fires "for firefighter safety and the protection of life, property, and resources." All wildfires in the Ochocos and in the three wilderness areas will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to ensure an appropriate balance between economic, social, and natural resource needs.

## RAPPEL PROGRAM TAKES OFF

What's the old adage? Why would you want to jump out of a perfectly good airplane? Well, how about "why would you rappel out of a perfectly good helicopter?" The answer: to fight wildfire.

In 2007, fire suppression personnel in Central Oregon responded to almost 400 wildfires and contained all but 11 to fewer than 100 acres. Often, the ability to keep a fire small means arriving on scene before the fire has had a chance to grow. In most cases, local lightning maps and fire lookouts provide the first glimpse of new wildfire starts, with engine crews quickly arriving on scene. But what happens when the fires are in remote areas or engine crews are tapped out?

In the past, forest and rangeland managers for the BLM and Forest Service have had resources like smokejumpers parachute into

the incident or helicopters set down to let helitack crews out as near to the fire as possible. This summer, a new tool will be available to deliver firefighters to remote, inaccessible fires: rappel crews.

Already used in many areas throughout the West, Central Oregon Helitack, a combined Forest Service and BLM resource based out of Prineville, Oregon, is developing a rappel program for the 2008 fire season. These aerially delivered firefighters will be trained to rappel from helicopters and access wildland fires in remote areas. "The benefit of this program," said Amy Kazmier, Helicopter Program Manager, "is that these firefighters can deal with small wildfires before they take off. Once on scene, rappellers are trained to be self-sufficient for 36 hours, and can hike out once the fire has been suppressed."

An added benefit of running a rappel program is that once the crew has been delivered, the helicopter can stay and assist with suppression if needed, by bringing in additional supplies, water, or more personnel.

"This program won't replace any of the great resources we already have in place," said Kazmier. "We're already doing well – this will just give us a new tool to use when we fight fire." All in all, given that less than two percent of wildfires in 2007 escaped initial suppression efforts, the rappel program will serve to augment an already successful fire suppression program. As long as humans are careless with fire (causing 182 wildfires in Central Oregon in 2007) and the area is still referred to as "lightning alley," (with five lightning storms lasting three or more days), there will always be the need and room for expert and innovative suppression resources.



# JUNIPER – A THIEF AMONG TREES

Look at the burn plans for many projects and you'll see the goal is often to preserve trees – check out a plan written for the juniper-dominated high desert and you'll find the goal is to remove or reduce the amount of juniper. So, what's the problem with it? Sure, it's scraggly, full of pollen, and kind of stinky when the woodrats nest in it. But, it's interesting to look at, provides habitat for wildlife, makes great firewood (if you can cut it), and furniture (if you have the patience to work it) and, well, it's a TREE.

## Now, juniper number in the millions and are out-competing many other native species.

Past land management activities have not taken into account the important role that wildfire plays in the environment, particularly in the spread of western juniper. The problem is that juniper, although a native to Central Oregon, is invasive. By striving to reduce wildfire we have in fact removed juniper's only weakness.

Look at a photo of Prineville taken around the turn of the 20th century and you'll see slopes with only scattered juniper. Today, those slopes are filled. Instead of adapting to fire, western juniper has adapted to low water conditions. Juniper specializes in developing deep rooting systems designed to take advantage of very limited water sources. In fact, much of a juniper's first 50 years is spent developing an underground root system, instead of growing above-ground. As a result, it

has been highly susceptible to the wildfires that moved through the rangelands every 10 to 50 years – call it their Achilles Heel if you will. Prior to more than a century of fire suppression, junipers were restricted to rocky areas where wildfire normally couldn't reach. Now, juniper number in the millions, spreading throughout most of the high desert, consuming about 50 gallons of water a day in the summer months, and out-competing many other native species.



A look at historic Prineville's barren slopes shows how juniper has spread over the years.

Today, public land managers are dealing with the consequences of reducing fire on the landscape. In many areas they've lost above-ground streams because juniper are so efficient at getting water. They're losing important grasses and forbs because juniper can limit the growth of other vegetation, and once the other vegetation is gone, there's nothing to hold the soil in place, so they're dealing with erosion. To try to repair some of the effects, they're reintroducing fire through prescribed burns and removing juniper from drainages to see if they can get more of the grasses and water back. It's a long, uphill battle to fix the past 150 years, but every year they make a little more progress.

## BRANSON CREEK PRESCRIBED BURN

Along Highway 19, northeast of Dayville, the Prineville BLM partnered with the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument and local landowners to reintroduce fire into a rangeland ecosystem. The main goals: to control the spread of western juniper and improve the health and diversity of vegetation and wildlife habitat in the area.

Like many other parts of Central Oregon, western juniper has moved out of the rocky scab flats common to the John Day Fossil Beds region and onto the lower slopes and plains, bringing a shift in vegetation. Once established, western juniper can out-compete other vegetation and can reduce or eliminate the growth of other grasses and shrubs around its base. As a result, although highly susceptible to fire once established, the lack of vegetation makes it hard for any fire to carry.

For fuels specialists working in the area, the time was right to reintroduce fire. Although juniper had significantly expanded over the past century, there was still enough other vegetation present to help carry a fire. Over the course of two years, fuels crews worked to reduce 70 – 90 percent of the juniper in the units. They burned under summer-like conditions to mimic a naturally occurring fire and burned in a mosaic pattern – leaving almost half of the project area untouched; again, this was to mimic the natural way a wildfire would move through an area. The end result would be a better balance of vegetation. Water, previously used by the rapidly expanding juniper, would be available to improve the growth of grasses and shrubs. The steep slopes, at risk from erosion, will begin to stabilize as more grasses and shrubs fill in. The mosaic nature of the burn will provide a variety of habitat types for wildlife, as well as provide fuel breaks and defensible space for nearby ranches, communities and the Fossil Beds National Monument.





# CITIZENS STRENGTHEN MITIGATION EFFORTS



## Citizen-Driven Solutions to Reduce Wildfire Risk

In 2005, the Park Fire forced the evacuation of 700 people from La Pine State Park and nearby subdivisions. In 2003, the Davis Fire burned 21,181 acres and threatened Wickiup Acres. In 2001, the Pine Forest Fire threatened one of the basin's largest subdivisions. Residents of southern Deschutes County, all too familiar with ash falling into their front yards, are taking action to stop the threat of catastrophic wildfire in their neighborhoods.

Thanks to the National Fire Plan (NFP), seven neighborhoods have received grant money to reduce vegetation around their subdivisions. These neighborhoods: are Ponderosa Pines, Oregon Water Wonderland I and II, and Deschutes River Recreation Homesites 1-5 and 6, Newberry Estates, and the community of Sunriver.

Ponderosa Pines created a fire-resistant buffer around the neighborhood and reduced flammable vegetation along roadways and on commons property. Oregon Water Wonderland and Deschutes River Recreation Homesites, as part of the Upper Deschutes River Coalition, have partnered their NFP funds with grant money from the State of Oregon, to implement fuel reduction, as well as reach non-resident owners of undeveloped lots – the source of hundreds of acres of hazardous fuels. Sunriver is using their grant funds to implement a ladder fuels reduction treatment throughout large portions of the community.

These groups will continue to find ways to remove some of the excess vegetation. By reducing the fuel load, residents feel they will be better able to protect their lives, property, and the environment against a wildfire. And as neighbors in the southern part of the county, all of the projects link together to benefit everyone.

## Fremont Canyon Project

In 2007, Deschutes County partnered with COCC to create a unique opportunity in Fremont Canyon between Redmond and Sisters. After researching the area and completing site visits, students in the Forestry program created a land management plan to reduce the amount of juniper and sagebrush, as well as promote the growth of ponderosa pine. As a result, the county was able to reduce fuels on 400 acres, while students at COCC got an exceptional chance to gain experience. Looking at the landscape level picture, "strategic fuels treatments in this area will tie in with federal projects to help protect Panoramic Estates, a subdivision considered one of the highest priorities in the Greater Sisters Community Wildfire Protection Plan," commented Joe Stutler, Deschutes County Forester.



## Walker Range Fire Protection Association

Using a lot of people-power and grant dollars, members of the Walker Range Fire Protection Association have been helping landowners throughout northern Klamath County create defensible space for years – one house at a time – with a free chipper program and a low-income assistance program.

Walker Range FPA uses their chipping service to solve one deterrent to removing fuels: what to do with all the material? Once a property is cleaned up, local residents can make an appointment to have their debris piles chipped. The chips can be blown back out to act as mulch, spread for dust abatement on roads and trails, or removed.

## "In 2006, we had a wakeup call – two wildfires in the Canyon below our home"

In addition to chipping services, low income, senior citizen, or disabled residents can receive a free property evaluation, as well as help reducing hazardous fuels on their property. All of these programs are designed to help residents improve the ability of their property to withstand a wildfire.

## Preparing the Cliffs

Ben King is familiar with wildfire. For years he has watched as homes and forests have burned up in Oregon and California. A resident in the Cliffs Subdivision, King lives on the rim of Redmond's Dry Canyon. With thick vegetation lining the walls of the canyon, residents feared a wildfire moving up the slopes and into their yards.

"In 2006 we had a wakeup call – two wildfires in the Canyon below our home" recalls King. With several common areas inside the subdivision that extend from the top of the rim into Dry Canyon, King and his neighbors realized that although some of the hazardous landscape was the responsibility of the homeowners association, Dry Canyon itself needed to be treated.

In an effort to maximize the fire protection, the group worked to create defensible space around their homes and subdivision, and partnered with the City of Redmond to reduce fuels in Dry Canyon. The collaboration has paid off, and if a wildfire starts in the Canyon this summer, the reduced fuels will make it much harder for fire to make a run up the Canyon wall.



# DEMONSTRATIONS OF DEFENSIBLE SPACE

*local agencies take the lead in creating attractive, fire-safe landscaping*

## The Broad Line Between Moonscaping and Landscaping

As fire season approaches, people begin to talk about creating defensible space. The immediate perception is that in order to be safe, homeowners have to remove everything living, cover their home in metal, and lay in a swath of concrete 30 feet around the home. While this would be pretty effective in improving a home's ability to survive a wildfire...it's neither practical nor aesthetically pleasing. There are a lot of simple modifications that a homeowner can make to existing landscaping, and some amazing and beautiful choices for fire-resistant plants.



## Walker Range Demonstration Garden

Head south to Crescent this spring, take a left at the sign for the Walker Range Fire Protection Association, and just walk around. In a just a few steps you'll begin to see that creating defensible space doesn't mean a ring of bare dirt around a home. The members of Walker Range have created a spectacular garden (photo at left) to provide a living, outdoor classroom, full of examples of fire-safe landscaping and defensible space options.

The staff recognizes that the most important resource in protecting a house from wildfire is not a firefighter, but the property owner. And it's the action taken by the owner before wildfire strikes that is most critical.



## Demonstration Sites

Sometimes you just have to see it to believe it...so, Oregon Department of Forestry and OSU Extension/ Crook County have taken it upon themselves to demonstrate defensible space. Recognizing that not everyone can afford professional landscaping and trying to overcome the myth that FireFree landscaping means moonscaping, these organizations helped two local landowners improve the chances that their homes would survive a wildfire.

In Deschutes River Woods, a densely wooded subdivision on the south side of Bend, workers thinned ponderosa pine and removed highly flammable bitterbrush. The end result is a house that still maintains a level of privacy, with breaks between the trees and less material on the ground to carry a fire.



South of Prineville, crews spent several days tackling the overgrown vegetation around a property in Juniper Canyon. With the potential for rapid fire spread due to the light, dry fuels, it was critical to create defensible space. Days later, a new property was revealed – minus some juniper and a whole lot of grass.

For more information about fire-resistant plants, please access the Fire Resistant Plant Guide online at: <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/html/pnw/pnw590>

For more information about creating defensible space, keep reading, or access the FireFree website at [www.firefree.org](http://www.firefree.org)



# WILDFIRE

*can burn deeper than you know...*

*In 2007, more than 9.3 million acres burned in wildfires across the United States.*

*The wildfires of San Diego County, in 2007, claimed 10 lives.*

*Insurance can protect some of your material possessions, but what about the things in your life you cannot replace?*

*Photos, heirlooms, pets... family...*

*Defensible space is PROVEN to help safeguard your home and your property.*

**As a wildfire raced toward them, Merritt Williams and his family had one short hour to look around their home and decide which memories they would take with them...**

On July 18, 2001, the Eyerly Fire seemed to be beaten. The flames had died down more than 5 miles from Merritt Williams' home. Firefighters were on scene and everything was under control. Until a weather pattern moved in bringing 80 mile per hour winds. In seconds, a firestorm was racing toward him, and in a little more than an hour, it was on them. "It came like a freight train. We had fire trucks nearby, but we all just had to run for our safety spots," said Williams. "We grabbed the photos off the walls, my guns, and tried to put the equipment and vehicles in a cleared area outside." The fire was crowning through the canopies of the juniper and ponderosa pine, and heading toward homes. Williams' home was one of the 18 structures consumed by the fire that day.

It's been almost seven years since the Williams' lost the home they'd had since 1972, when they moved to the Three Rivers area south of Lake Billy Chinook, and they still miss things that couldn't be replaced by an insurance check...an old pine table handed down through generations, with kids' names signed underneath...the leatherwork he had made himself in his workroom...the family crystal.

An insurance check – even if you have replacement value on your home – will never replace memories. While Williams is grateful that he and his family survived the terrible fire, he still misses things given to him by his parents or grandparents. "They maybe had no insurance value, but they meant everything to me."

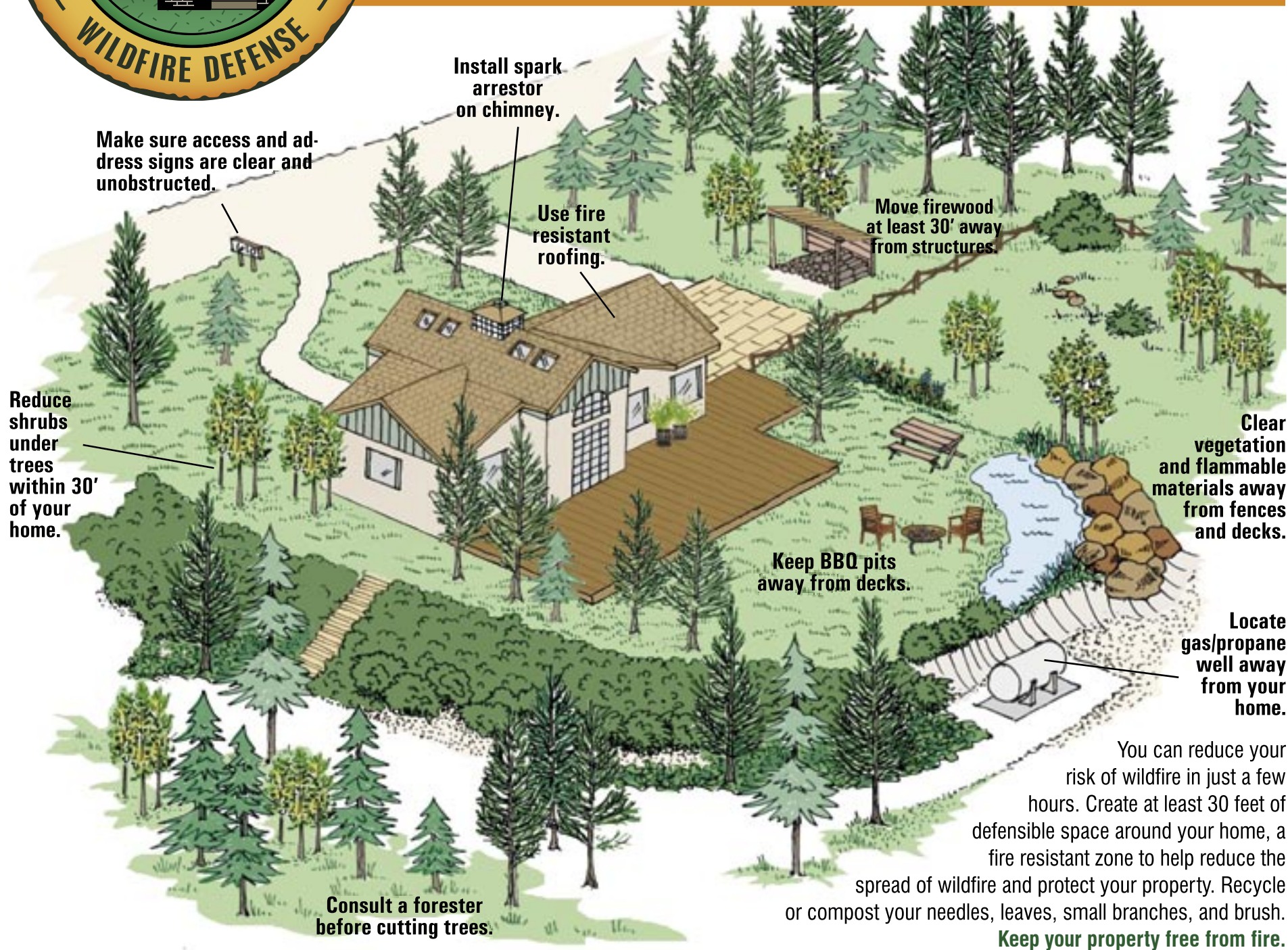






# Protect Your Zone, Protect Your Own

Wildfires strike quickly and without warning. Protect yourself, your family, and your home by following these simple FireFree tips to define your defensible space!



You can reduce your risk of wildfire in just a few hours. Create at least 30 feet of defensible space around your home, a fire resistant zone to help reduce the spread of wildfire and protect your property. Recycle or compost your needles, leaves, small branches, and brush.  
**Keep your property free from fire.**

## 2008 FireFree Recycle Days

For additional information visit:  
[www.firefree.org](http://www.firefree.org)

Get started now and take advantage of the free recycle days at local collection sites. Bring your needles, leaves, small branches, and brush to area landfills free of charge!

### Bend

April 19-27  
 Knott Landfill

### Sisters

May 3-4  
 Cloverdale Transfer Station

### La Pine

May 3-4  
 La Pine Transfer Station

### Madras

April 19-20 & 26-27  
 Box Canyon Transfer Station

### Sunriver

May 3-4  
 Compost Site

### Redmond

May 3-4  
 Negus Transfer Station



# THE HUMAN CONNECTION

## tips & guidelines for responsible burning in Central Oregon

# CAMPFIRES

- Cathy O'Brien and Renee Lamoreaux

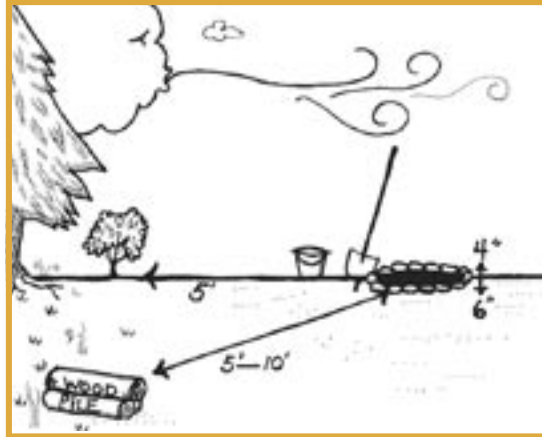
Every year unattended campfires have the potential of costing millions of dollars in suppression and lost resources. On federal lands these campfires are the number one cause of human-caused fires. Most abandoned campfires stay small and are easy for firefighters to suppress, but it only takes one to jeopardize lives, destroy property, and change a beautiful area forever. Here are some simple steps to properly build and extinguish a campfire.

- **Keep fire small & manageable.**
- **Keep fire contained inside a fire ring.**
- **NEVER leave a campfire unattended, no matter how small.**

### Before you go!

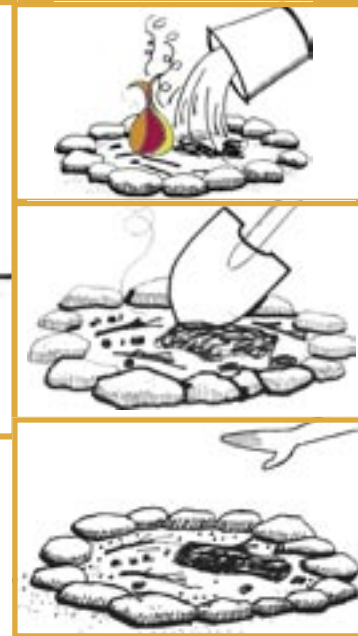
Check for campfire restrictions at: [www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/fire](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/centraloregon/fire).

### Before you start:



- **Have a shovel and water very close by.**
- **Choose a level area with no overhanging branches.**
- **Clear away all vegetation, including pine needles.**
- **Circle fire ring with rocks.**
- **Pile firewood upwind 10 feet from ring.**

### When you're done:



**Slowly add water to put out all flames.**

**Scatter, scrape, and separate coals.**

**Add more water until the steaming stops. Feel for heat above. If no heat is rising, feel close to coals. If heat is rising, continue to add water until cool.**

## Tourists and Wildfire

Sometimes what you don't know CAN hurt you...

Central Oregon is a spectacular place to visit, particularly in the summer when the days make hiking, camping, golfing, or four-wheeling a lot of fun; however, there are a few things to consider when it comes to dealing with wildfire. In this part of the state, human-caused wildfires are very real. Last year 182 wildfires were caused by people. Learn what causes wildfires – from carelessly discarded cigarettes and barbecue briquettes, to abandoned campfires, to driving your ATV off-road through easily ignited vegetation. Use common sense and follow these tips to make your visit safe.

### Before a wildfire starts:

- Know the local rules and regulations – check with local land management agencies or staff at hotels and resorts about what is and isn't allowed seasonally.
- Make a plan to meet up with family members in the event of an emergency – wildfires can strike quickly.
- Know the evacuation routes from your campground, resort, or other location.
- Let someone know where you're going. Whether you have an accident, get lost, or a wildfire starts, emergency personnel can get to you faster if they know where you are.

### If a wildfire starts in your area:

- Get to a safe place and call 911 to report it. Try to give the best description of the location as you can.
- If you're in an area being evacuated – Don't panic, but take it seriously. **Do not try to finish your round of golf.** Leaving late endangers you as well as personnel trying to stop the fire.
- Make sure you check in with an evacuation center – even if you're heading home or to stay somewhere else. Family members may be trying to find you and evacuation personnel can let them know you're safe.



"Yeah, yeah... okay, an evacuation, I get it... Let me just finish this round."



## New Debris Burning Regulations in the City of Bend

Burning within the Bend City Limits is only permitted for two (2) days in November for land parcels 2 acres in size or greater with an approved burn permit issued by the Fire Department. Call 322-6309 for more information. Need an alternative to burning? Check out the FireFree information on the center spread!

### DEBRIS BURNING – the number one cause of human-caused fires!

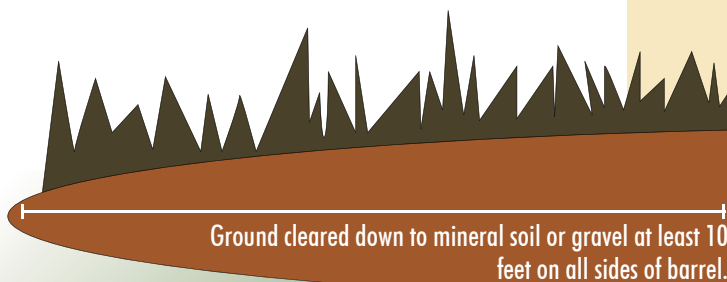
Talk to the staff at Keep Oregon Green (KOG) and they'll be happy to give you the low-down on debris fires. That's because escaped debris pile or burn barrel fires are the leading cause of wildfires on state and private lands in Oregon. Although preventing these wildfires is an individual's responsibility, the fact that in the last year alone there were 273 debris burning fires that cost \$345,000 to suppress – gives KOG a mission.

#### If you are going to burn please follow these tips:

- IF BURNING IS ALLOWED, obtain a permit from your local fire district.
- CALL BEFORE YOU BURN: conditions can change throughout the day.
- Postpone outdoor burning if your area is experiencing dry or windy conditions.
- Burn only yard debris (no construction materials or household waste).

- Have hand tools, water, and enough people on hand to keep the fire in check when burning.
- Keep burn barrels away from structures, overhanging branches, or vehicles.
- Keep piles small and add debris carefully to the pile.
- Make sure that your fire is out - DEAD OUT - and then monitor it for a minimum of 2 hours.

**Call 911 right away if your burn escapes!**



## Burn Barrel Guidelines



## Celebrate the birth of our country... without scorching a piece of it

Fireworks regulations can vary from city to city throughout Central Oregon. As fire, emergency, and police personnel spend valuable time responding to incidents with people "bending" or even breaking the rules, residents in many areas are in danger of losing the privilege of using fireworks. Tempting as it is, remember that a legal firework in another state is not necessarily legal in Central Oregon. When in doubt – contact your local fire department. In the meantime, help your family have a safe 4th of July by following these tips:

#### Use fireworks responsibly:

- Store fireworks out of children's reach.
- Keep your pets indoors – they're easily frightened by the loud noises and may run away.

- Always have an adult light fireworks and keep lighters and matches away from children.
- Have a bucket of water or a charged garden hose nearby.
- Only use fireworks outdoors.
- Light only one firework at a time and move away quickly.
- Never throw lighted fireworks or hold them in your hand.
- Soak used fireworks thoroughly in a bucket of water.
- Never re-light a "dud" firework; wait 20 minutes and then soak it.

## FIREWORKS AND WILDLANDS DON'T MIX

Many residents and visitors to Central Oregon spend their 4th of July out on Forest Service or BLM lands camping, hiking, riding ATVs, or just enjoying the scenery. Help keep the wildlands safe and leave the fireworks at home. **Remember: Possessing, discharging, or using any kind of firework or other pyrotechnic device on public lands is illegal.**



# THE WILDFIRE INSURANCE CONNECTION

- Contact your insurance agent to learn what your carrier expects for mitigation of fire hazards on your property.
- Conduct an annual insurance policy check-up to make sure you understand what is and is not covered under your homeowner's policy.
- Visit [www.firefree.org](http://www.firefree.org) for ten easy steps you can take to make your home defensible and survivable against wildfire and ember showers.
- Create a home inventory that includes lists, pictures, or videos of the contents of your home.

When it comes to the threat of wildfire and customer safety – insurance companies in Oregon are playing a major role in homeowner education. In Central Oregon – it's not a new role. In the 1990's, when the Awbrey Hall and Skeleton Fires destroyed 41 homes in the Bend area, Safeco Insurance partnered with Bend Fire & Rescue to establish the immensely successful FireFree wildfire awareness program.

The alliance formed in the 1990's continues today, with structural and wildland fire experts calling on the insurance industry to help motivate residents to take steps to make their homes defensible. Insurance companies are responding by asking customers to take preventive measures to protect their property, conducting on-site inspections, and helping policyholders mitigate wildfire hazards to help protect their homes and keep them insurable.

"Simple, preventive steps can help you protect your home against the threat of wildfire and help protect the things that an insurance policy cannot replace," says Gary Githens, an agent for Lumbermen's Insurance. Local insurance agents are reaching out to their clients to work with them before a wildfire strikes. By encouraging policyholders to take preventive measures such as creating 30 feet of defensible space around a home, using fire-resistant building materials, and trimming ladder fuels, insurance agents are helping residents safeguard their families and property.

The industry has faced millions of dollars in losses due to wildfires in recent years. And while the bottom line is financial, insurance companies agree

that education and preventive measures make the difference between a simple loss and the catastrophic loss of lives and irreplaceable property.



## YOUR VOTE COUNTS

### Proposed May 2008 Levy Information

The proposed five-year levy rate of \$.23 per \$1,000 of assessed value will replace the expired levy. For example, for a home with an assessed value of \$200,000, the homeowner will pay \$46.00 annually for 911 services. That's equal to just ONE gallon of gas or ONE latte a month for a year.

### Deschutes County 911 Levy

May 20, 2008

In Deschutes County, 911 operators take over 745 non-emergency calls and 193 emergency calls per day. That's 938 calls per day, or one call every 1½ minutes, 24 hours a day. If the levy doesn't pass, and the contingency fund runs out, Deschutes County 911 Services will have to look at ways to cut costs. Layoffs are a possibility, which could change the ability to process calls in a timely manner.

In 1981, Oregon established 911 as the official emergency number, and in 1985, Deschutes County opened its 911 Operations Center. Keeping up with

....the 911 Center now serves as the only emergency communication center for 19 public safety agencies...

an ever-expanding population can be challenging, but the 911 Center now serves as the only emergency communication center for 19 public safety agencies in Deschutes County including: police, fire, and medical response personnel. In addition, 911 personnel are trained and certified to give lifesaving emergency medical instructions to callers until emergency personnel arrive.

Deschutes County 911 is funded partially through a statewide emergency communication tax. This tax is set at \$.75 per phone line, including cell phones. The state returns \$0.435 to counties and cities for operations at Public Safety Answering Points like Deschutes County 911.

The balance of Deschutes County 911 operating budget comes primarily from two categories of property taxes: a "permanent tax rate" of \$.16 per \$1,000 of assessed value and a voter approved local option levy. Currently, in spite of record growth throughout the region, Deschutes County 911 is operating without a local option levy since the last levy expired in 2007.

In the May 2007 election, a similar levy received a "yes" vote, but did not pass because voter turnout fell below the required 50 percent. This year, voters will again be asked to vote on a proposed five-year option levy that will provide funding to operate the 911 Center in the Deschutes County 911 Service District.





# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

It's a typical summer day in Central Oregon and you see a smoke column rising up in your area. It may seem like it's off in the distance, but wildfires can move rapidly and you may have to evacuate. The Tillamook Fire in 1933, for example, burned the equivalent of 220,000 football fields in just nine hours! While this may be an extreme case – that's what you should prepare for.

In the event that an incident happens near your home, here are some actions that could occur. REMEMBER: NO TWO EVACUATIONS ARE THE SAME and these are general guidelines:

- You may be given 2-day, 1-day, or 2-hour warnings – or no notice at all. The Park Fire, in La Pine State Park, triggered an evacuation of several hundred campers only minutes after it started!
- The Reverse 911 system may call to warn you that you may be asked to leave your home or business.
- If an evacuation occurs, 911 Services activates the Emergency Preparedness Network, which gives instructions for the evacuation. DO NOT CALL 911 back to ask questions. Tune to a radio station for more instructions and information.
- Law enforcement agencies will drive through the area with a High-Low siren to alert you that an evacuation is happening.
- Check in with Red Cross even if you're not staying in the shelter. This will allow Red Cross to provide information to family members if they call to ask about you.

## 72 Hour Evacuation Kit

It's a lot easier to evacuate if you're prepared! The following items are just some suggestions of things to gather into a large container:

- Flashlight with plenty of extra batteries.
- First aid kit, prescription medications, and eyeglasses.
- Water (at least one gallon per person), and food that does not require refrigeration or cooking.
- Sleeping bag and clothing for each family member. If there are infants or elderly residents, include all essential equipment and devices.
- Take important documents such as proof of residence, insurance policies, birth certificates, prescriptions, wills, and deeds.
- Since pets, other than service animals, aren't allowed in most shelters, find out in advance which friends would be willing to take your pet, or which motels takes pets.



## Wildfire Strikes Close to Home for Residents of Crooked River Ranch

By T.J. Johannsen, resident of CRR

Wildfire season arrived early in 2007, surprising many people around Central Oregon, but none more than residents living in Crooked River Ranch. Dry vegetation, a windy day, and an ignition source, brought wildfire to the forefront as a 350-acre wildland fire roared to life, immediately threatening homes and property in the resort community north of Redmond. The early summer sky was quickly filled with a large black and brown plume of smoke after the fire began on a ridge bordering private property and public lands on the southern edge of the Ranch. Winds pushed the fire, burning in the dry sagebrush and juniper fuels, toward residential structures at about 1:30 p.m., and continued to drive the blaze south toward BLM land throughout the afternoon. The thick smoke prompted fire officials to issue a voluntary evacuation notice, affecting about 40 households and over 100 residents.

Crooked River Ranch Fire Chief, Larry Langley recalled that "the fire evacuation efforts were undoubtedly the most terrifying element of the fire for our residents; many stated that they felt unprepared for a fire evacuation."

Emergency officials and the American Red Cross established an evacuation center at Terrebonne Elementary School. Ironically, the Red Cross was only a few days away from their annual evacuation

training exercise – now an early wildfire had them practicing on an actual incident. For residents of the Ranch the situation was all too real and all too terrifying. People trying to get to the Ranch after work were stopped by Deschutes County Sheriff's Officers to establish whether or not individuals could safely travel to their homes without obstructing current fire and emergency services operations. Due to the severity of the fire, many homeowners were turned around without being allowed to collect their belongings, and asked to report to the evacuation center in Terrebonne.

Fire crews from structural and wildland agencies worked together, supported by an air tanker and a helicopter dropping retardant and water until daylight ran out. In the end, their efforts were successful, no structures were lost, and fire lines were held. Fire officials said about 50 homes and outbuildings had been threatened, but none had fallen to the flames.

**"We need to realize that we live in an area that is at high risk for wildfire," said Crooked River Ranch Fire Chief Larry Langley. "Taking the time to prepare now will make an emergency evacuation less stressful."**

By nightfall, the fire calmed and smoke dissipated, but many residents remained in the shelter with no idea of how much damage had occurred. "We could see the black smoke and smell it, and it was frightening," said Nicole Cannon-Powell, watching the fire from the evacuation center. Going back to unburned homes was ultimately a positive end to a terrible day.

Joan Johnson



# FROM BURN PILE TO BIOMASS

## local organizations turn debris into energy

As a result of past management and fire suppression, Central Oregon forests have too few mature trees, too many high-intensity fires, and too many small trees crowded together. While carefully planned and implemented thinning can help solve these problems, one of the key challenges of thinning

treatments is managing the leftover piles of tree tops, limbs and small logs.

Most of this material, called biomass, is typically burned in piles rather than left to provide fuel for a future wildfire. Currently, many organizations and businesses in Oregon are looking for alternatives that could turn these piles from a management liability to an economic product or energy resource. Using the material for products, or burning it under controlled combustion conditions in a stove or boiler, can mean less smoke in the air and less reliance on natural gas and heating oil.



### More Than Just Firewood

Robin Snyder & Phil Chang, COIC

The face of the forest products industry is changing, and Central Oregonians are seeing energy potential in the acres of dense forest and rangeland

**“it means jobs, energy independence, clean air, and a healthy ecosystem.”**

surrounding our communities instead of smoke. Markets are supporting an entirely new forest industry designed to convert the leftover debris from forest and rangeland thinning projects into heat. One group focusing on this developing market is the Central Oregon Partnership for Wildfire Risk Reduction (COPWRR), a collaborative effort among local environmentalists, forest products industry representatives, community safety advocates, and government agencies.

Burning biomass under controlled conditions in a wood-fired boiler system produces heat and steam, which can be used to heat buildings, for manufacturing processes such as drying, or to run a turbine to create electricity. Using forest scraps for

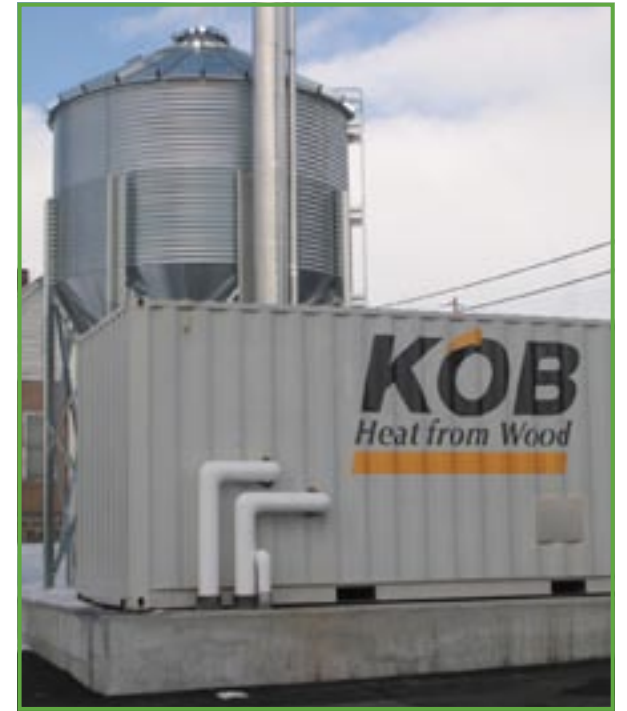
fuel can also save money and reduce dependence on imported energy. “Basically, if you’re heating over 50,000 square feet of building space or using over 1 million BTUs per hour of natural gas or 500,000 BTUs per hour of heating oil, you should see how a

**BIOMASS:**  
Plant material, vegetation, or agricultural waste used as a fuel or energy source.

biomass system would pencil out for your facility,” says Robin Snyder, coordinator for the Biomass Initiative at Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council. “Schools, hospitals, correctional institutions, commercial buildings, or industrial plants are prime candidates.”

One of the first public agencies in the region to express an interest in biomass heat is the Crook County School District, currently examining the feasibility of replacing a natural gas fired boiler with a wood-fired boiler to provide winter heat to both the middle school and Cecil Sly Elementary School. School Superintendent Steve Swisher admits to practical and lofty considerations for looking into biomass heating. “For the Crook County School District, it is critical to look at every avenue to conserve energy and reduce fossil fuel consumption, both to conserve the taxpayers’ dollars and to care for the future of the world. In this region where biomass fuel is such an abundant local resource, it makes sense to explore this opportunity.”

The potential fuel cost savings the School District might realize are dramatic. “The cost of a decatherm worth of natural gas is around \$11 in Prineville, and the cost of a decatherm of wood chips is between \$2 and \$4,” explains Libby Rodgers of OSU Crook County Extension. “An entity with large heating needs can save a lot of money on fuel every year by choosing a biomass-fired heating system.” Beyond



the fuel cost savings a biomass heat project could also be eligible for state and federal tax credits, as well as for grants to purchase and install biomass boiler systems. “These incentives will reduce the cost for retrofitting facilities like the Crook County schools by over 50 percent. But woody biomass heat doesn’t just save us money in Central Oregon,” comments Snyder, “it means jobs, energy independence, clean air, and a healthy ecosystem.”



### Interested in learning more about biomass?

Check out the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council’s *Community Development* pages at: [www.coic.org](http://www.coic.org)

### WOODY BIOMASS HEAT: MAKING IT WORK FOR COMMUNITIES

May 1-2, Bend Oregon

Explore woody biomass heating potential for schools, recreational facilities, public and commercial buildings and industrial drying processes and network with fellow project proponents. For more information: <http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org/community-biomass-workshop> or call 503-346-0661 or 541-504-3310.



## Federal Agencies and Biomass – Partnerships on the Rise

Cindy Glick, Deschutes National Forest

The piles of leftovers from thinning projects completed on Forest Service and BLM lands in Central Oregon are finding a new home – as “hogg fuel” sold to one of the 61 biomass energy plants in the state of Oregon. The federal agencies, in partnership with many local organizations, are doing their part to make Oregon, as Mark Kendall, Senior Policy Analyst for the Oregon Department of Energy states “the Saudi Arabia of Renewable Energy.” Currently, about half of the biomass slash (750,000 bone dry tons) statewide is converted into energy– producing about four percent of the state’s electricity needs.

And because the federal agencies are working to develop and monitor a consistent supply of biomass material, many businesses in the local area are stepping up to make use of material that formerly had little or no market value. Not only are piles being converted to energy, but more of the smaller tree biomass is also being removed to be converted into other forest products such as post and poles,

### Oregon is becoming a model state for use of a renewable resource like biomass for wood products as well as energy.

dowel wood, firewood, compost, mulches, and shavings for animal bedding. Juniper, formerly even a challenge to use as firewood, has been removed and hauled to Klamath Falls to make specialty products or to be ground up as a key component in the manufacture of hardboard. In fact, in the last year, over \$2.9 million dollars has been invested by private industry in producing biomass wood products with much of the biomass material coming from public lands. This means that Oregon is becoming a model state for use of a renewable resource like biomass for wood products as well as energy.

In this day and age, “renewable” is an important concept, and with an ever-growing supply, this potential fuel source is plentiful. “Our data suggests that there are several hundred thousand tons of material available at sites in Central Oregon every year,” says Cindy Glick, Assistant Forest Silviculturist for the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests. For reference, when thinking of biomass for energy applications, a 100,000 square foot school might need 1,600 green tons of biomass per year to meet its annual heating needs (the biomass component from about 130 acres of forest thinning). That means that in Central Oregon, a lot of buildings could be cutting back on heating costs, a lot of material already being produced as a by-product of forest and rangeland projects could be used, and a lot of other regions could be going green...with envy.



## WHEN SMOKE GETS IN OUR EYES...

The relationship between humans and fire was developed a long time ago. Originally a necessity for warmth and cooking, fire now means much more. From the glow of a candle to the comforting crackle of a campfire, people have developed an emotional bond with fire...a bond that does not extend to smoke.

Wildfires, burning for weeks under hot, summer days can produce a significant amount of smoke, which can affect human health in the form of particulate matter. Depending on the atmospheric conditions, smoke can settle in and affect air

quality for days. Just ask Sisters, Camp Sherman, and Black Butte residents – the B & B, Cache Mountain, Black Crater, and GW wildfires left them socked in for days at a time. Even residents without respiratory problems can experience effects – raspy throats and itchy eyes – with extended exposure.

### Why Do We Burn?

- It is a cost-effective and efficient way to reduce hazardous fuels and lessen wildfire intensity.
- It reduces the intensity of a future wildfire, allowing firefighters to safely protect homes and lives.
- It can maintain and improve forest and range health by recycling nutrients and decreasing competition for water and sunlight.
- It can improve wildlife habitat by increasing food supplies such as native grasses, forbs, and shrubs.
- Prescribed fires often produce lower levels of particulate matter than wildfires.

### What About the Smoke It Creates?

For prescribed burn managers, the goal is always to have prescribed fires burn quickly, cleanly, under control, and for smoke to be carried up and away from the area. Although every effort is made to avoid smoke drifting into neighborhoods, predicting weather patterns and smoke dispersal is not a perfect science. Forecasts, even those received hours before a prescribed burn, can change. For that reason, conditions are watched constantly and many times, scheduled burns are cancelled at the last minute if things aren’t right for meeting that goal.

### Want More Information?

Federal and state agencies make every effort to notify residents about up-coming burning operations, because we know that while smoke makes some people uncomfortable, it can be hazardous for some people with respiratory problems. We use print, radio, and television press releases and have established a variety of contacts with homeowners associations, road districts, and individuals who want to be notified about a burn in their area. For more information about smoke management or prescribed burning, contact the following organizations:

**Bureau of Land Management**  
541-416-6700

**Deschutes National Forest**  
541-383-5300

**Ochoco National Forest**  
541-416-6500

**Oregon Department of Forestry**  
541-447-5658

**Walker Range Fire Patrol Association**  
541-433-2451



# FROM RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUIREMENT

## Senate Bill 360 continues in Central Oregon

It's hard to imagine getting into a car and driving off without putting on a seatbelt. Yet, not too many decades ago the seatbelt use rate in the state of Oregon was less than 50 percent. Public service campaigns showed repeatedly that the injury and fatality rate would drop if people wore seat belts, but people didn't change their behavior. In the late 80s, the State of Oregon enacted seatbelt legislation, and what was a conscious decision by motorists to avoid a citation, has now become an instinctual behavior for almost 95 percent of Oregon drivers.

Defensible space has become the seatbelt campaign for Oregon's forested communities. The Oregon Legislature and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) are hoping to prompt similar changes in attitudes and behaviors about homeowners' responsibility to reduce the risk of wildfire. In 1997, after decades of unsuccessful public service campaigns and many homes lost to wildfire, the legislature passed the Oregon Forestland Urban-Interface Fire Protection Act (commonly known as Senate Bill 360). The statute recognized that the scope of the wildland urban interface fire problem was beyond what suppression forces could handle. Too much fuel - in the form of wooden houses and

excessive vegetation around houses -- was a key contributor to the problem. Indeed, research proved that homes were burning because they supplied fuel for wildfires. If fuel was reduced on and around a home, then a home's chances of surviving a wildfire increased dramatically. Focusing on this, lawmakers declared that meaningful fuel modification on residential property could only be done by the homeowners themselves.

### Implementation Update

Residents on lands protected by the ODF in Crook, Jefferson, Wasco, and Klamath Counties should receive their initial certification packet in the mail this spring (2008). The deadline to certify property will be two years from the mailing date (Spring 2010). The deadline for Deschutes County certification was February 2007.

For residences not meeting the certification deadline, the state is empowered to collect up to \$100,000 in suppression costs from a landowner if:

- A landowner does not certify his or her property.
- A fire originates on the property.

- The fire spreads within the protection zone around a structure and driveway that does not meet the standards.
- And, the Oregon Department of Forestry incurs extraordinary costs for suppression.

### Questions?

If you have questions about Senate Bill 360, want to know how to contact a credited assessor, or want to find out if you need to certify your property, contact Tom Andrade, the Central Oregon District's wildland-urban interface coordinator by:

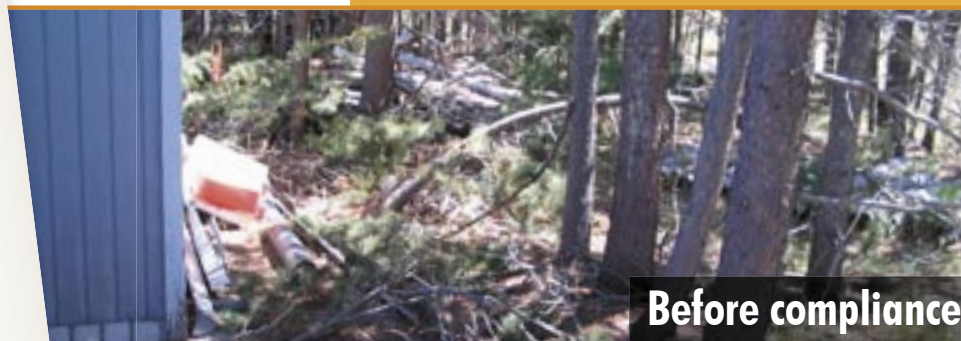
- Calling (541) 549-6761
- E-mailing to [tandrade@odf.state.or.us](mailto:tandrade@odf.state.or.us)
- Or, take a look at information specific to your county – and possibly your neighborhood - at the following web address: <http://egov.oregon.gov/ODF/FIRE/SB360/sb360.shtml>

## Senate Bill 360

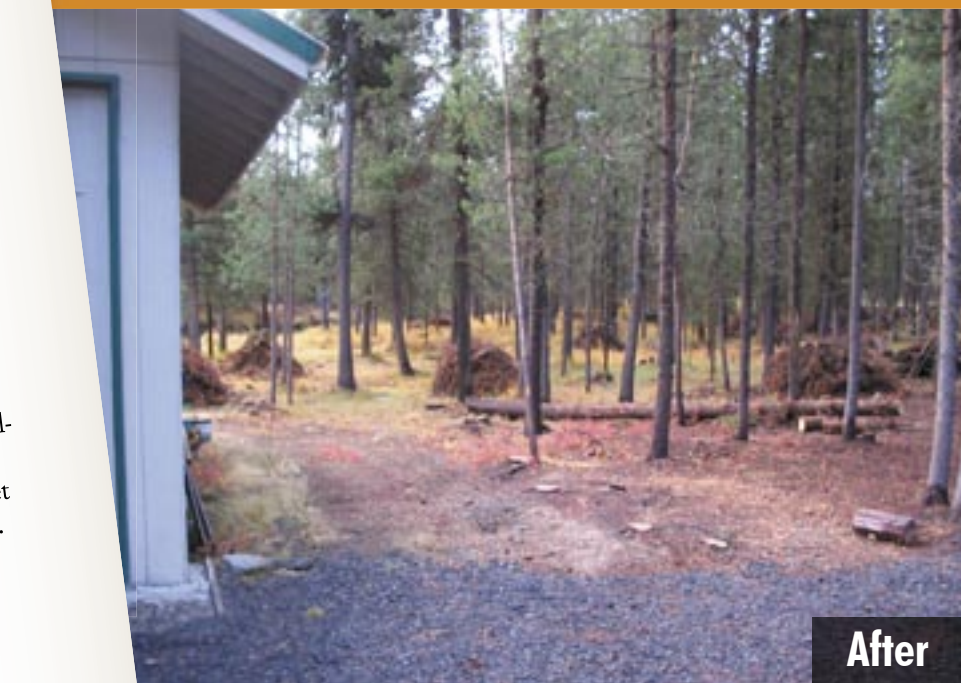
To comply with the act, a landowner needs to take measures to reduce a property's vulnerability to wildland fire, particularly in the first 30 feet around the structure (See the center spread in this newspaper for tips on how to create defensible space around your home and property). In many cases, meeting Senate Bill 360 requirements involves:

- Establishing a fuel break around structures and along driveways.
- Removing tree limbs within 10 feet of a chimney.
- Ensuring that flammable material is removed from beneath wooden decks.
- Moving or enclosing firewood piles during the fire season.

If they need help, property owners may call an accredited assessor for assistance. An accredited assessor is someone who can evaluate a residential property for compliance with the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act's fuel-reduction standards; write a plan, if necessary, for work that needs to be done; perform whatever work is required to meet the standards; and sign a property owner's certification card.



Before compliance



After



# FEMA HELPS PREVENT DISASTER



**After Mitigation**

## Deschutes & Crook Counties to Benefit from \$1 Million Grant

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) selected Deschutes and Crook Counties to receive more than one million dollars in funds through the agency's pre-disaster mitigation program. The two counties will partner to reduce wildfire risk on private lands. "Mitigation saves our nation \$4 for every dollar spent" said R. David Paulison, administrator of FEMA. "This program encourages local leaders across the nation to look ahead and plan against what could be catastrophic events."

While in Washington D.C. a year ago, Deschutes County Commissioner, Mike Daly, worked to educate FEMA officials about the need to receive the pre-disaster mitigation grant. His efforts obviously made

an impact, as the two counties were one of the only areas in the entire country to receive assistance to address the risks associated with wildfire. "This is an absolute interagency effort between Project Wildfire, both counties, the Central Oregon Fire Chiefs Association, the six community wildfire protection plan steering committees, elected officials, and administrators at Deschutes and Crook Counties. We hope to maximize our efforts with this grant money so we can receive the maximum use from these dollars to increase safety buffers between public and private lands," said Deschutes County Forester, Joe Stutler.

Properties that could be eligible to receive wildfire fuels treatment in conjunction with the grant are those designated at high risk in the Deschutes and Crook Counties Natural Hazards Mitigation Plans and Community Wildfire Protection Plans. "We continue to recognize wildfire as the greatest threat to [our] citizens. These valuable grant funds will help us address this issue through on-the-ground hazard reduction and greater public awareness and preparedness," said Crook County Judge Cooper. The counties will begin implementing these fuel reduction projects this spring.



**Before**

# CALDERA SPRINGS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED

On February 15, 2008, Caldera Springs became the second Oregon community recognized for their defensible space efforts by *Firewise Communities USA*. Firewise is a national program designed to help support communities, through coordinated efforts by each state's forestry department and local fire agencies, to reduce a neighborhood's risk to wildfire.

Oregon's only nationally recognized *Firewise Communities USA* neighborhoods are in Deschutes County: Fall River gained recognition in 2004, followed last year by Caldera Springs. Caldera Springs is unique because Firewise Standards in new developments were included in the design and development of the community and in their Homeowner Association CC&Rs. This adaptation is because Deschutes County, as a supporter of the *Firewise Communities USA* program, now requires defensible space standards.

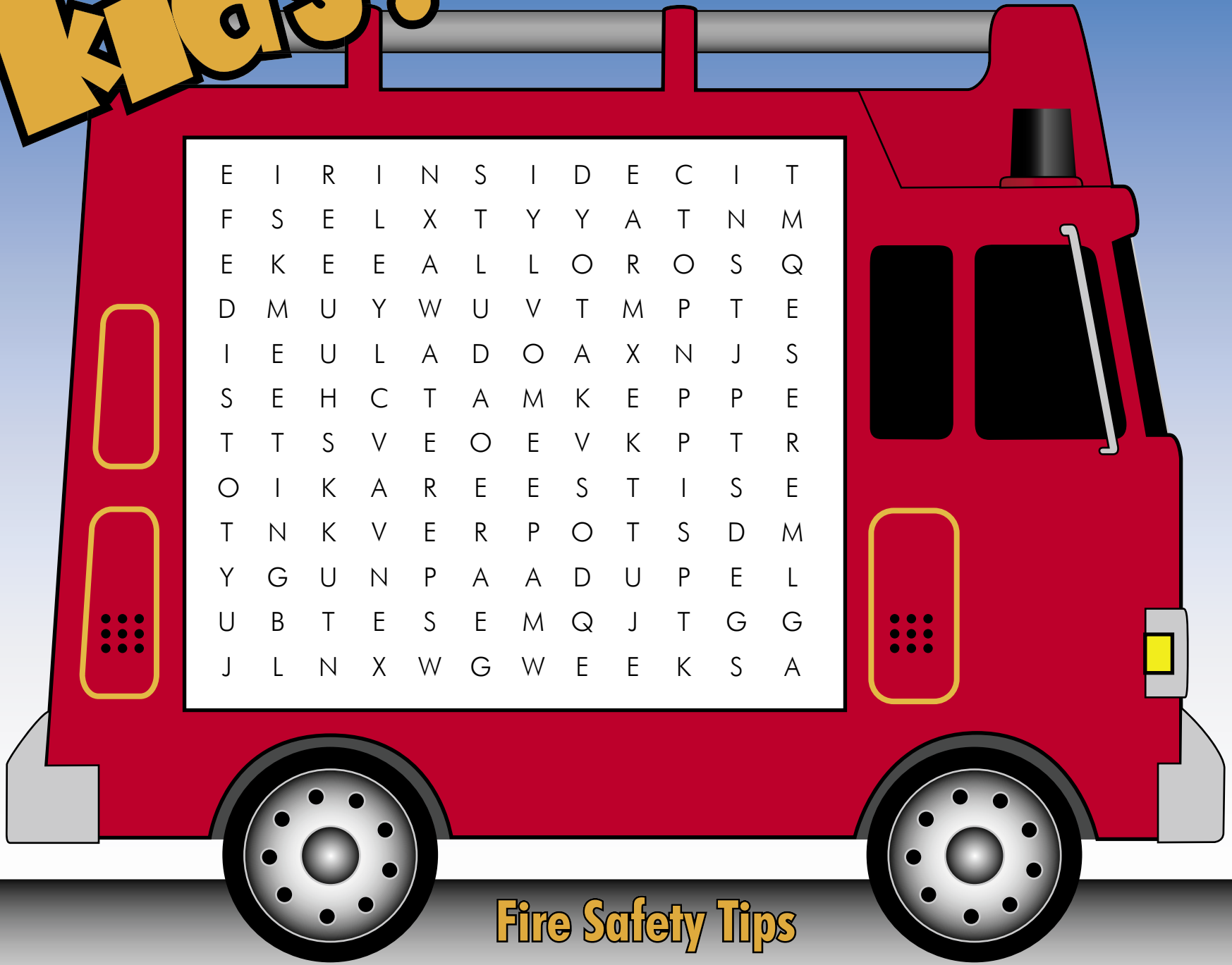
*Firewise Communities USA* supports the same simple steps as Central Oregon's own FIREFREE program, and parallels the basic fuels reduction standards of Senate Bill 360 (opposite page).





# Kids!

Solve the missing Fire Safety words to find the hidden words on the fire truck.



E	I	R	I	N	S	I	D	E	C	I	T
F	S	E	L	X	T	Y	Y	A	T	N	M
E	K	E	E	A	L	L	O	R	O	S	Q
D	M	U	Y	W	U	V	T	M	P	T	E
I	E	U	L	A	D	O	A	X	N	J	S
S	E	H	C	T	A	M	K	E	P	P	E
T	T	S	V	E	O	E	V	K	P	T	R
O	I	K	A	R	E	E	S	T	I	S	E
T	N	K	V	E	R	P	O	T	S	D	M
Y	G	U	N	P	A	A	D	U	P	E	L
U	B	T	E	S	E	M	Q	J	T	G	G
J	L	N	X	W	G	W	E	E	K	S	A

## Fire Safety Tips

Fill a bucket with \_\_\_\_\_ to put out your campfire.

If your clothes catch fire, \_\_\_\_\_, drop and \_\_\_\_\_!

Keep your pets \_\_\_\_\_ on the 4th of July. The sounds of fireworks may scare them away.

Make sure all candles are \_\_\_\_\_ when you leave the room.

Smokey Bear says "Only you can \_\_\_\_\_ wildfires."

If you find \_\_\_\_\_ or lighters, give them to a trusted adult like your parents or a teacher.

Only \_\_\_\_\_ should light candles, fireworks, or campfires.

If your home is on fire, get out and go to your family \_\_\_\_\_ place.



### Summertime Fire Safety Events!

Smokey Bear is coming to the Bend Elks this June!

Practice getting out of your house in case of a fire at the Cascade Children's Festival this Summer!



Take the Firefighters' Challenge at the Deschutes and Crook County Fairs!

