

Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2011

Douglas County Board of Commissioners

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Douglas County Community Wildfire Plans

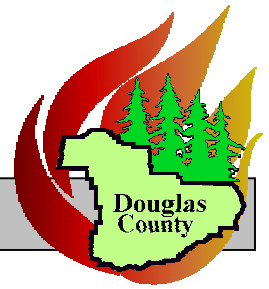


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DOUGLAS COUNTY COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Some of the region's most catastrophic fire events have taken place in Douglas County. Some years stand out above all others such as 1951 and 1987. In 1951, four large fires burned over 40,000 acres and took one life. The Hubbard Creek Fire accounted for much of the damage, burning 15,574 acres, a fire lookout tower and 19 homes. The most costly fire that year took place near Myrtle Creek on the Russell Creek Fire when a Good Samaritan lost his life while helping put the fire out. The uncanny Bland Mountain Fires of 1987 and 2004 started less than 100 yards apart from one another and followed the same path of destruction. The '87 fire burned 10,300 acres and took two lives, while the 2004 blaze scorched 4,700 acres. An additional 30,000 acres burned in 1987 that resulted from hundreds of lightning strikes during the Douglas Complex. The 1961 Clarks Branch Fire burned 5,000 acres and claimed the life of retired DFPA employee John J. Richards. Other significant fires in Douglas County are listed below.

2002 Tiller Complex:	68,862 acres
2002 Apple Fire:	17,600 acres
1980 Tye Mountain Fire:	1,056 acres
1979 Cougar Ridge Fire:	259 acres, one death.
1973 Doe Creek Fire:	2,300 acres

In addition to past large fires in Douglas County, recent fires in Oregon and across the western United States have increased public awareness to the potential losses to life, property, and natural resources. As a response to this threat to our forests, the President signed into law the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to reduce the threat of destructive wildfires.

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act emphasizes the need for federal agencies to work collaboratively with communities to develop hazardous fuel reduction projects. In addition, the act provides communities with an opportunity to describe where and how federal agencies implement fuel reduction projects on adjacent Federal Lands and how additional Federal funds may be distributed for projects on non-federal land. The mechanism for identifying these priority fuel reduction areas is the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Priority for fuel treatment areas is given for areas identified by communities in a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

In the summers of 2004 and 2005, the Douglas County Board of County Commissioners directed the County Planning Department to work with state and federal agencies, fire protection agencies and the County Emergency Management Director to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans for Douglas County's at-risk communities. This countywide effort was initiated to reduce wildfire risk to citizens, improve forest health, and quality of life within Douglas County.

Since the beginning of the CWPP planning process, wildfire professionals, county staff, emergency responders, state and federal agency representatives and Douglas County Citizens have worked together to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plans for thirty Communities at Risk (CARs) located throughout Douglas County. Upon completion of the thirty Community CWPP's, it became apparent that the County needed a cohesive regional CWPP boundary to successfully implement fuels reduction projects, fire prevention education campaigns, and other fire-related programs. The County CWPP helps Douglas County, and Federal, State and Local agencies within the County, stay competitive for federal funding programs such as the Rural Schools and Community Self-

Determination Act of 2000, PL 106-393, the National Fire Plan and FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program.

The Mission of the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

The mission of the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is to reduce the wildfire threat to life, property, and natural resources in Douglas County. The guiding principles of the fire plan are to:

- Engage in community-developed landscape-scale fuels treatment projects that reduce wildfire vulnerability to communities at risk on private and public lands.
- Improve survivability to people, homes, and the environment when wildfire occurs.
- Promote wildfire awareness and public safety;
- Support and enhance the roles and functions of the County's Fire Districts, Douglas Forest Protective Association, Coos Forest Protective Association, Western Lane District: Oregon Department of Forestry and Fire and Emergency Service Providers;
- Provide education and wildfire prevention knowledge to citizens located in wildfire risk areas

CWPP Planning History

Phase One of the Douglas County CWPP adopted (14) CWPP's on September 22, 2004. The (14) plans were for: Cavitt Creek, Days Creek, Dry Creek, Fortune Branch, Jackson Creek, Loon Lake, Milo, North Fork, North Umpqua Village, Nonpareil, Susan Creek, Tiller, Upper Olalla, and Willis Creek.

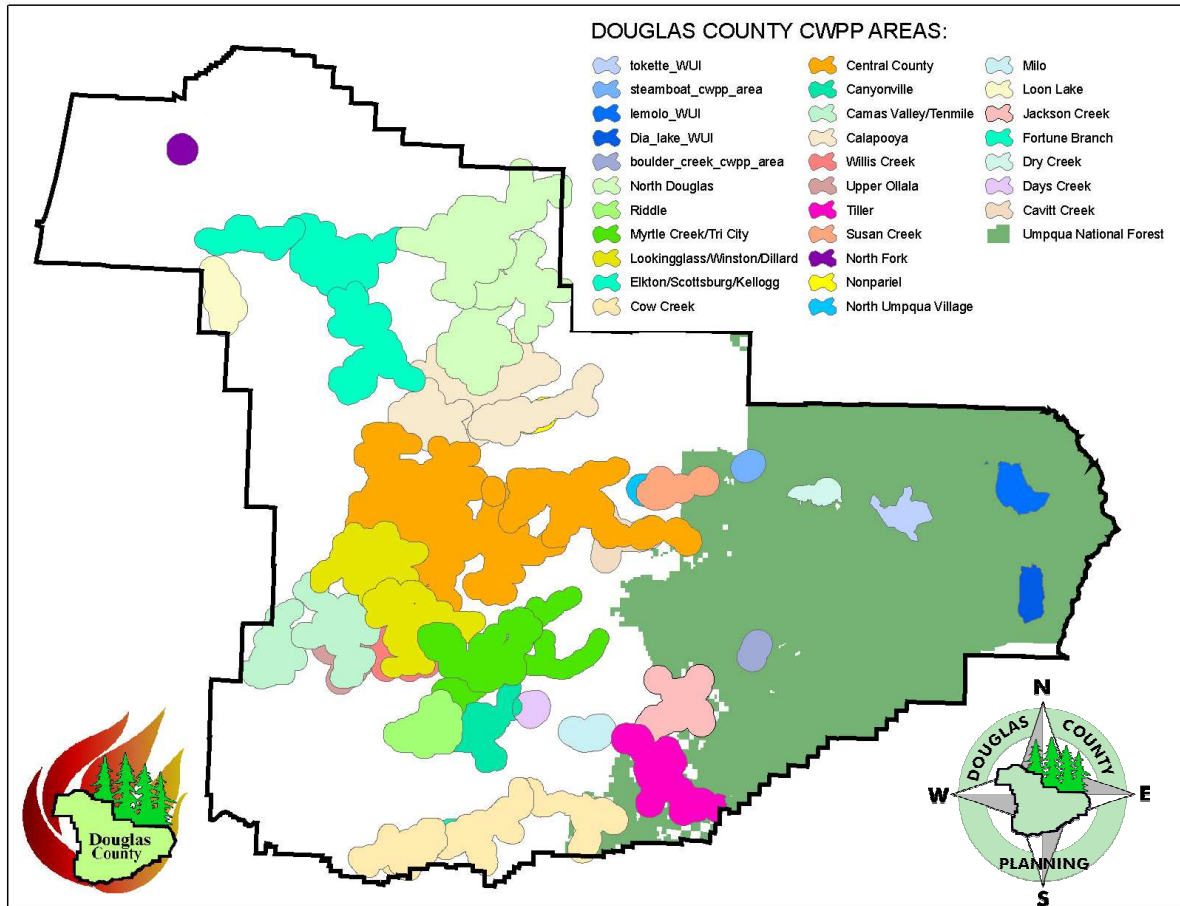
In 2005, Phase Two CWPP's were developed for the remaining rural and at-risk areas in the County. CWPP's were created for Calapooya, Camas Valley/Tenmile, South Umpqua/Canyonville, Central County East and West, Cow Creek, Elkton/Scottsburg/Kellogg, North Douglas (Yoncalla/Drain/Rice Hill), Lookingglass/Winston/Dillard, Myrtle Creek/Tri City, and Riddle. In addition to the Phase Two Communities, the Umpqua National Forest requested the addition of several more CWPP's. The areas added to the Douglas County CWPP included: Steamboat, Diamond Lake, Lemolo Lake, Toketee and Boulder Creek. The new CWPP's were developed, adopted and added to the CWPP's previously adopted in 2004.

For Phase Two, Fire District Boundaries plus a one mile buffer were used to identify the CWPP boundaries. The Steering Committee believed that utilization of the fire district boundaries would be the most efficient way of encompassing structures located in areas of wildfire concern, and also makes for a more easily understandable CWPP boundary.

The Umpqua National Forest also requested that the areas identified in their WUI be added to locations already within completed CWPP's. These areas are: Tiller, Susan Creek, Jackson Creek, Dry Creek, Cow Creek and Central County East CWPP Areas. The result of the addition of the Forest Service CWPP areas, and modification of existing CWPP boundaries adds 148,304.4 acres of Umpqua National Forest Administered lands to the Douglas County CWPP. The Phase Two CWPP areas were adopted by Resolution by the Douglas County Board of Commissioners on January 18, 2006.

Appendix A, the "North Umpqua CWPP" was adopted by resolution on June 23, 2010, following coordination and collaboration with Federal, State, and Local Fire Fighting agencies. Appendix B, the "South County CWPP" was adopted by resolution on June 29, 2011, following coordination and collaboration with Federal, Tribal, State, and Local Fire Fighting agencies. These agencies also participated as the 2011 CWPP Steering Committee, which gave direction on how to define the CWPP and CWPPR boundaries.

CWPP Areas in Douglas County:



Chapter 2: HEALTHY FOREST RESTORATION ACT

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act, signed into law by President Bush in 2003, calls for the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans. This section describes these requirements.

Healthy Forests Restoration Act / Healthy Forests Initiative

In 2002 the President announced the Healthy Forests Initiative (HFI) designed to identify and remove barriers to the implementation of projects that were developed to restore the health of the nation's forests. HFI was focused on renewed efforts to be more effective and efficient in carrying out restoration projects. Under HFI, new categorical exclusions were developed to allow the agencies to move quickly through NEPA under appropriate circumstances, streamlined administrative review processes for NEPA and created new regulations under the Endangered Species Act for National Fire Plan projects to streamline consultation with federal regulatory agencies. It also set the stage for extensive discussion between the administration and Congress that resulted in new legislation addressing forest health.

Congress enacted the Healthy Forests Restoration Act in November 2003. It provides new tools and additional authorities to treat more acres more quickly to expedite our restoration goal. It strengthens public participation and provides incentives for local communities to develop community protection plans. It limits the complexity of environmental analyses for

hazard reduction projects and provides a more effective appeal process and instructs the Courts that are being asked to halt projects, to balance the short-term affects of implementing the projects against the harm from undue delay and long-term benefits of a restored forest.

Title I of the Act addresses vegetation treatments on certain types of National Forest System and Bureau of Land Management lands that are at risk of wildland fire or insect and disease epidemics.

- Encourages streamlined environmental analysis of HFRA projects;
- Provides for administrative review of proposed HFRA projects on National Forest System lands before decisions are issued;
- Contains requirements governing the maintenance and restoration of old-growth forest stands when the Forest Service and BLM conduct HFRA projects in such stands;
- Requires HFRA projects in the Forest Service and BLM to maximize retention of larger trees in areas other than old-growth stands, consistent with the objective of restoring fire-resilient stands and protecting at-risk communities and Federal lands;
- Encourages collaboration between Federal agencies and local communities when community wildland fire protection plans are prepared;
- Requires using at least 50% of the dollars allocated to HFRA projects to protect communities at risk of wildland fire if identified in Community Wildfire Protection Plans;
- Requires performance to be monitored when agencies conduct hazardous-fuel reduction projects and encourages multiparty monitoring that includes communities and other interested parties; and
- Encourages courts that consider a request for an injunction on an HFRA-authorized project to balance environmental effects of undertaking the project against the effects of failing to do so.

Community Wildfire Protection Plans

Title I of the HFRA encourages the development of Community Wildfire Protection Plans under which communities will designate their Wildland Urban Influences (WUIs), and where HFRA projects may take place. Half of all fuel reduction projects under the HFRA will occur in the community protection zone as defined by HFRA. HFRA also encourages biomass energy production through grants and assistance to local communities to create market incentives for removal of otherwise valueless forest material.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) is linked to the Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, PL 106-393, through funding provisions found in two separate Titles of PL 106-393. Title III provides counties with funds for expenditure on projects that fall within certain categories, one of which is county planning efforts to increase the protection of people and property from wildfire. The CWPP planning process under HFRA is clearly an authorized use of Title III funds under PL 106-393, and Douglas County utilized Title III funds to create its CWPPs. In addition, Title II of PL 106-393 allows counties to direct the expenditure of federal funds on projects recommended by local Resource Advisory Committees (RACs) if projects are conducted on federal lands or affect federal resources. Reducing potential wildfire fuels on federal lands or near federal lands easily meets this standard. The fuel reduction strategies proposed in Douglas County's CWPPs qualify for selection by RACs as Title II projects, and they will be submitted to the appropriate RACs for approval at the next available opportunity.

Chapter 3: Community Wildfire Protection Plan Requirements

Requirements for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan

1. Collaboration: A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and with input from the public.

How addressed in the Douglas County CWPPs: A Core Team including wildfire specialists from The Douglas Forest Protective Association, The Roseburg Office of The Bureau of Land Management, the Umpqua National Forest, Douglas County Sheriff Office of Emergency Management and The Douglas County Planning Department was developed to identify fuel reduction areas for each community, develop prioritized fuel reduction strategies and create solutions to reduce dangerous fuel areas and protect life property and natural resources in each community.

The CWPPs were presented to the public in Douglas County through the Douglas County Planning Department's Planning Advisory Committees (PACs). Citizens in the community staff the PACs and their meetings are announced in the local newspaper beforehand. There are nine PACS in Douglas County, with five PACs containing communities identified in CWPPs.

Enclosed in this document is a sign off sheet, which gives official approval to the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plans by each of the agencies represented by the Core team.

2. Prioritized Fuel Reduction: A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and method of treatments to protect at-risk communities and essential infrastructure on private and public lands

How addressed in the Douglas County CWPPs: Each of the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plans contains a section, which identifies the individual communities priority fuel reduction area. The CWPP Core team determined fuel reduction areas for the communities based on a community's boundary, evacuation routes or unique topographic and physical factors.

Upon identification of the fuel reduction areas of concern, specific areas within the fuel reduction areas were prioritized based on the primary goals of protection of life and property, and secondly determining areas that will have the greatest effect on making the communities more resistant to catastrophic wildfire.

In addition, It was the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plans Core Team's conclusion that the most efficient way to identify fuel reduction areas of concern in the Umpqua National Forest was to Utilize Wildland Urban Interface Areas previously mapped by The USFS.

Guidance provided in the 10 year Comprehensive Strategy of the National Fire Plan, the Healthy Forest Restoration Act and the Umpqua National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan, in addition to the designation of Communities at Risk in the Federal Register, directed the designation of the Wildland Urban Interface Areas included in this CWPP.

On occasion, based on topography, the Priority Fuel Reduction Area may be in excess of the CWPP fuel reduction area, this decision will be made based on fire suppression and resource management tactics and determined in the field, The Core Team identified that the area should be defined as “to ridgetop” for resource management and fire fighting.

Finally specific types and methods of fuel reduction activities were discussed for the priority fuel reduction areas for each community.

3. Treatment of Structural Ignitability: A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

How addressed in the Douglas County CWPPs: Each of the Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plans contain action items for reducing structural ignitability, and educating homeowners on the importance of defensible space for their homes. Below is the text from each of the CWPPs:

Structural Ignitability

Structural ignitability, defined as the home and its immediate surroundings, separates the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) structure fire loss problem from other wildfire management issues.

Highly ignitable homes can be destroyed during lower-intensity wildfires, whereas homes with low home ignitability can survive high-intensity wildfires.

Structural ignitability, rather than wildland fuels, is the principal cause

of structural losses during wildland/urban interface fires. Key items are flammable roofing materials (e.g. cedar shingles) and the presence of burnable vegetation (e.g. ornamental trees, shrubs, wood piles) immediately adjacent to homes, also referred to as “defensible space”



Image and Text Source: *Emerging Knowledge about Wildland-Urban Interface Home Ignition Potential*; Jack D. Cohen, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory

Action Items:

- Education of homeowners in reducing structural ignitability, and promotion of reduced ignitability building products and development of defensible space adjacent to homes
- Seek assistance (technical, financial) for homeowners to replace highly ignitable building materials and thinning of burnable vegetation adjacent to homes

In addition to addressing structural ignitability in a separate action item, each of the CWPPs contains a section that indicates educational and community outreach action items. Below is the text from each of the CWPPs:

Additional needs:**Education**

Promote existing education and outreach programs (an example would be the Firewise Program, www.firewise.org) and develop community specific education programs which enhance and implement information on community escape routes, wildfire mitigation activities and reducing the risk to citizens, property and community values.

Action Items:

- Use and maintain Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plans website for wildfire status and evacuation plans (<http://healthyforest.info/cwpp/Oregon/Douglas/>)
- Identification, and public awareness of community wildfire escape routes
- Presentations and awareness campaigns to local schools
- Structural ignitability awareness and assistance for replacement of flammable building materials

Training:

Many small rural fire departments would not be in existence today if it were not for community members volunteering their time to keep them afloat. Recognized as volunteer firefighters, the fire fighters must adhere to the same Oregon State training guidelines as career paid firefighters. Constant training refines skills that are necessary to stay prepared for the diversity of calls that fire fighters are summoned to on any given day, at any given time and in all types of weather conditions. Decisions often need to be made in a quick, logical manner in a sometimes hectic and chaotic scene. The needed level of training will be funded through Title III funding from the Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, PL 106-393.

Past Fuel Reduction Efforts:

The following map indicates past fuel treatment projects/WUI (Wildland/Urban Interface) Projects that have been undertaken in Douglas County from 2001-2003. Phase One and Phase Two CWPP areas have been overlaid on the map to give an indication of the prioritization of these areas as CWPP Communities at Risk.

