

# Community Wildfire Protection Plans: North Fork

## COMMUNITY PROFILE:

### North Fork Location Map:

#### Location

North Fork is an unincorporated community designated as a Rural Service Center by the Douglas County Comprehensive Plan. North Fork is located approximately 50 miles west on Lower Smith River Road from the intersection of Highway 101.



#### Population

The population of North Fork, according to the 2000 census, was approximately 37 people.

#### Housing/Land Use

Using the Douglas County Planning Department's addressing plats, there are 12 structures within the North Fork Community.

The majority of these are homes, but there are also commercial and industrial structures within the rural community. Outside of the community, there are 9 addressed structures, primarily houses.

North Fork is split almost in half with a land use designation of CRS (Rural Service Center Commercial),



which contains a mobile home park and a restaurant/bar/ service station. The rest of the rural community is zoned M2 (Medium Industrial). The lands surrounding North Fork are zoned with resource designations of TR (Timberland Resource), FG (Farm Grazing) and FF (Farm Forest).

### **Transportation**

Roads: Transportation to and from North Fork is handled primarily via Lower Smith River Road. Secondary entrance/egress is available on the west side of the community via Upper Smith River Road, which is primarily dirt/gravel until you exit the road in north of Drain. North Fork Smith River Road continues to Mapleton on USFS gravel roads.

### **Critical Infrastructure**

The bridge across North Fork of Smith River on Lower Smith River Road was identified by the CWPP Core team as an important infrastructure point for ingress and egress of the community in an emergency.

## **WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **History**

Fire History information is from the Coos Fire Protection Information and includes all historic fires from the Coos District in the years from 1980-1999. Fires listed may be located outside of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan Area.

- 1938 Smith River Fire - 28,239 acres
- 1951 Vincent Creek Fire - 28,165 acres
- 1966 Oxbow Fire - 43,000 acres

### **Emergency Equipment and Staffing Inventory**

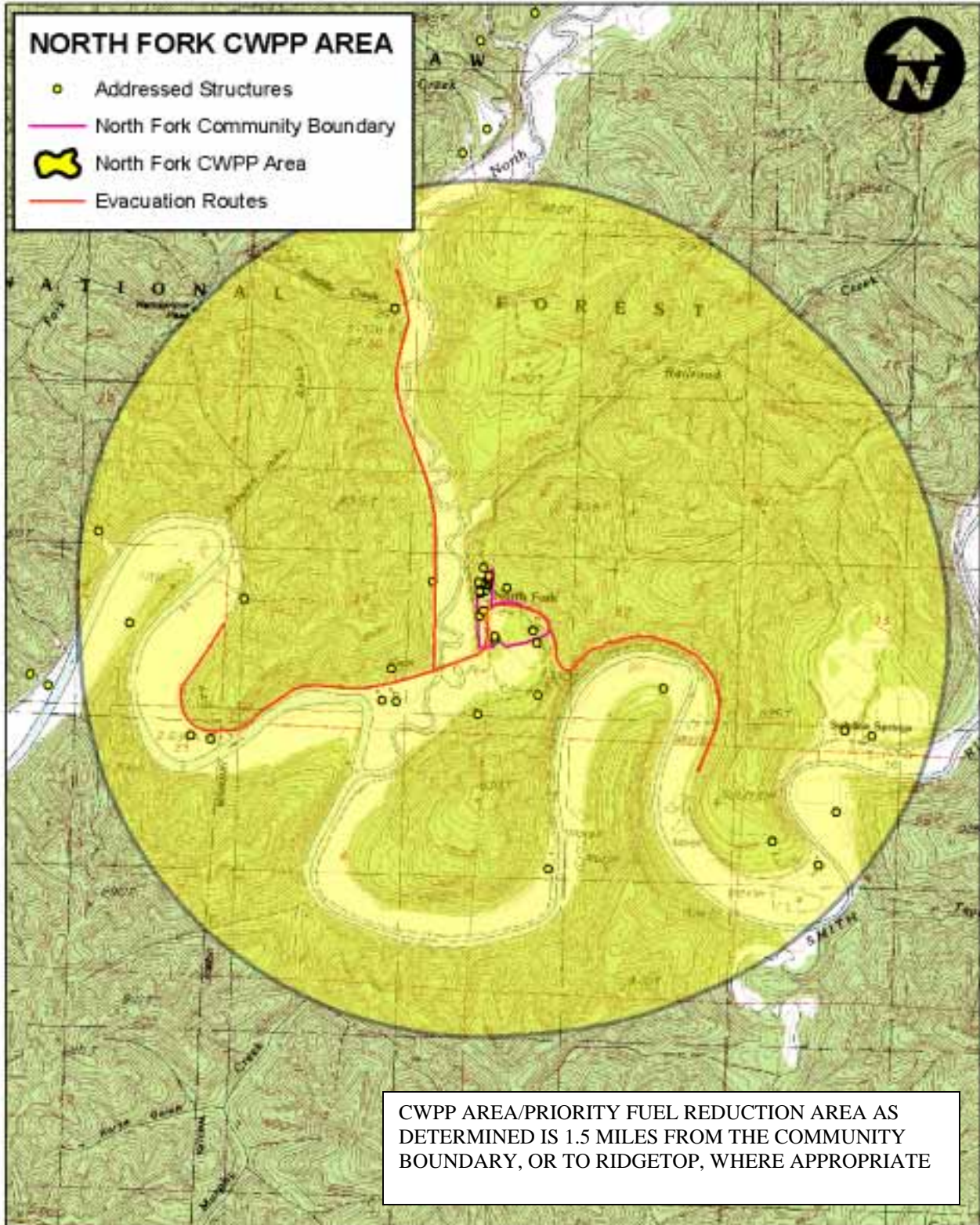
North Fork has no rural fire district. The West Lane District of the Oregon Department of Forestry provides wildland fire protection.

### **Escape Routes**

In the event of a wildfire, the community would utilize the main evacuation route of Lower Smith River Road to flee to the west. In the event that the western route was unusable, the evacuation would be eastward on Upper Smith River Road and northward on North Fork Smith River Road.

### Priority Fuel Reduction Area Identification

The Douglas County Community Wildfire Protection Plans Core Team has identified priority fuel treatment areas for the community of North Fork. Using concentrations of homes, maintaining evacuation routes, and vegetation types as a guide, the following map was created, identifying priority treatment areas:





## MITIGATION ACTION PLAN

### Fuels Reduction

#### Identification and prioritization of treatment areas

Treatment Areas 1: Clearing 100' from homes and structures and critical infrastructure areas concentrated in the Rural Community Boundary and west on Lower Smith River Road, where homes and structures are located. Narrow escape routes to be cleaned and widened where needed. Thinning for structures to 300'. Maintain all roads for fire fighting access during initial and extended attack.

Treatment Areas 2: Escape routes for homes located west of the Rural Community Boundary to be thinned 300'.

Treatment Areas 3: Areas located beyond the Rural Community Boundary to be thinned.

#### Type of fuel reduction treatment

Mechanical clearing and thinning in fuel reduction areas identified by the Community Wildfire Protection Plan Core, including harvesting, thinning, mowing, chipping, cutting and piling.

Chemical treatment is to be done where appropriate and consistent with State and Federal Regulations.

Prescribed burning where appropriate shall be pursued as a method of fuels reduction.

Biologic treatment of areas (Grazing, etc.) is to be encouraged where use would be a benefit to agriculture as well as fuel reduction projects.

#### Structural Ignitability

Structural ignitability, defined as the home and its immediate surroundings, separates the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) structure fire loss problem from other landscape-scale fire 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 "survivable 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 regarding reducing structural ignitability, and promotion of reduced ignitability building products and development of survivable space adjacent to their homes
- Seek assistance (technical, financial) for homeowners to replace highly ignitable building materials and thinning of burnable vegetation adjacent to homes

**Education**

Promote existing education and outreach programs (an example would be the Firewise Program, [www.firewise.org](http://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 the 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 replacement of flammable building materials

Through involvement and consultation in the development of the Douglas County Wildfire Protection Plans, the Western Lane District, Oregon Department of Forestry hereby agrees to the final contents of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan:



Rick Rogers

Western Lane District, Oregon Department of Forestry



Date