

Community Wildfire Protection Plans: Willis Creek

COMMUNITY PROFILE:

Location

Willis Creek is a rural community located in Douglas County. Willis Creek is located on Willis Creek Road, Rice Creek Road and Kent Creek Road, approximately 1 mile south of Dillard on Old Highway 99 South and 3 miles west of Interstate 5 exit 113.

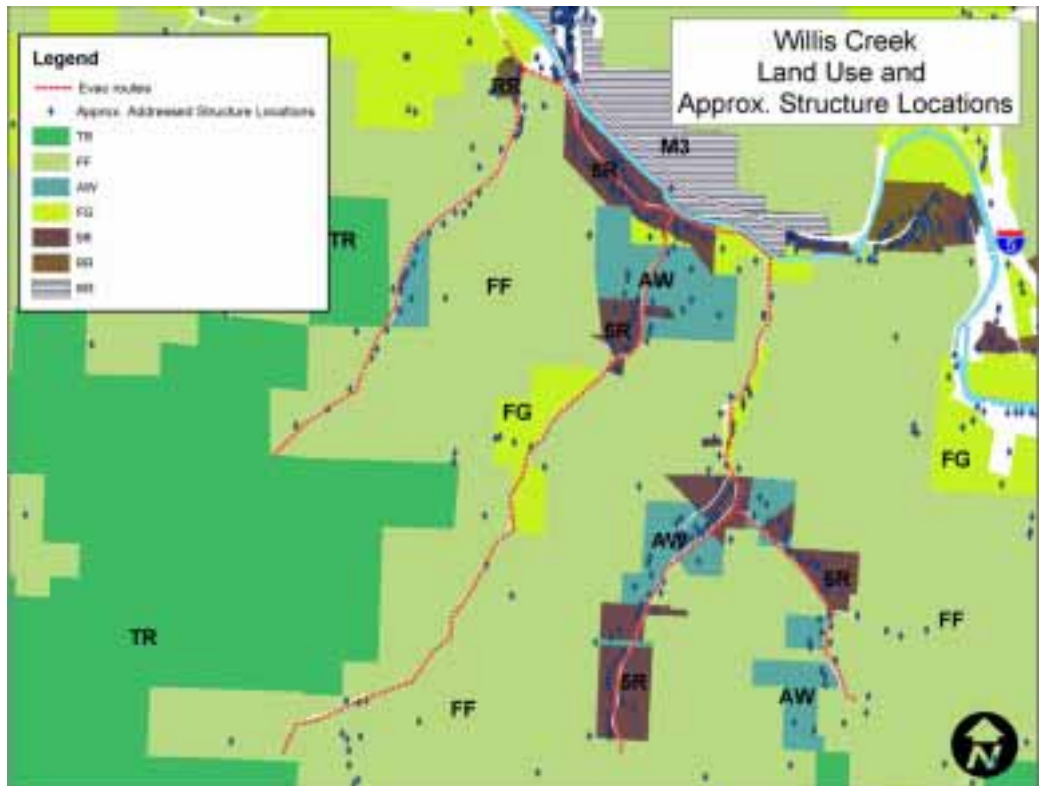
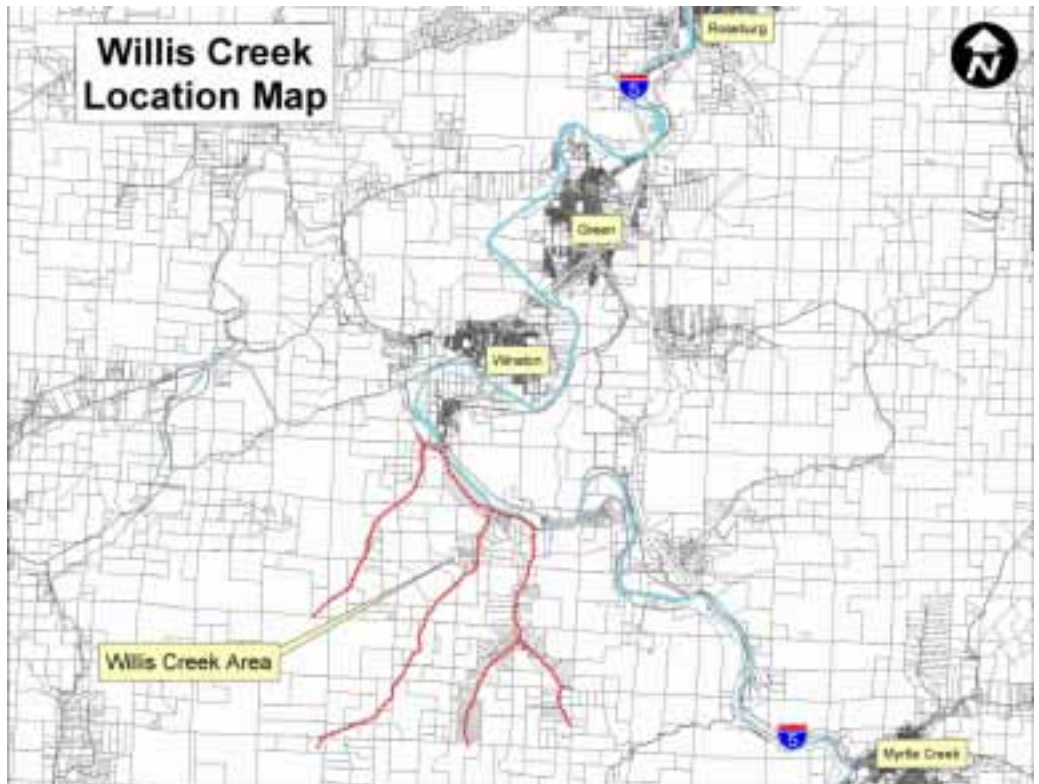
Population

The approximate population of Willis Creek (Which includes portions of the population of areas to the south, east and west of Willis Creek Road, Rice Creek Road and Kent Creek Road, depending on Census Block Location), according to the 2000 census, was approximately 766 people.

Housing/Land Use

Using the Douglas County Planning Department's addressing plats, there are approximately 332 addressed structures within the Willis Creek Area (including structures to the west, east and south of Willis Creek Road, Rice Creek Road and Kent Creek Road.

The majority of these are homes.



Willis Creek has zoning designations of RR (Rural Residential 2) on the northwest side of Kent Creek Road, 5R (Rural Residential 5) along the lower parts of Willis Creek Road, and continuing up

Willis Creek (where the majority of homes are located) and Rice Creek Road. Properties adjacent to the three roadways are zoned with resource designations of TR (Timberland Resource), AW (Agriculture and Woodlot), FG (Farm Grazing), and FF (Farm Forest).

Transportation

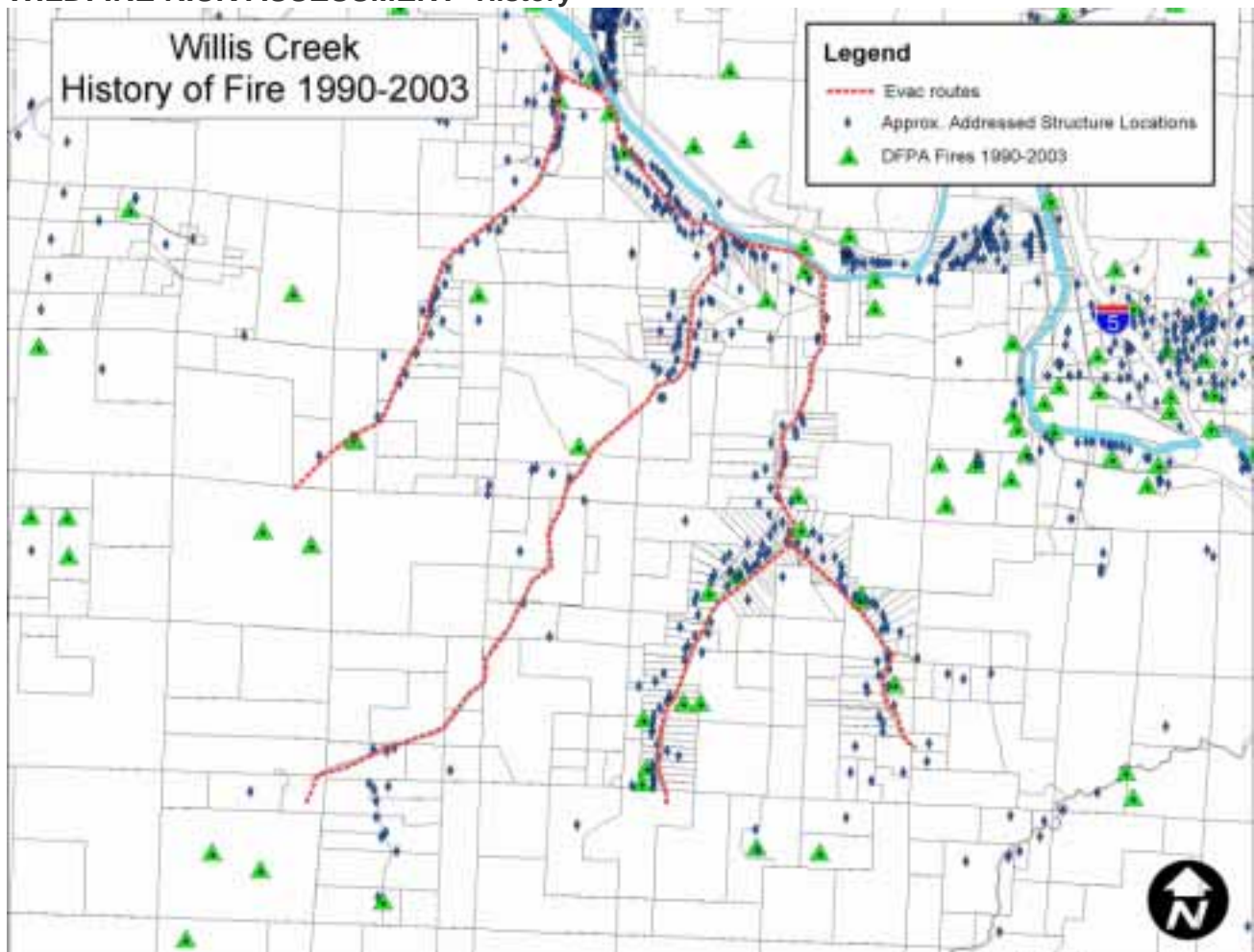
Roads: Transportation to and from Willis Creek is handled via Old Highway 99 South from Winston and Dillard, approximately 1 mile to the north of Willis Creek, Willis Creek Road from Brockway, or from Interstate 5, exit 113, to Old Highway 99, located approximately 3 miles to the east of Willis Creek.

Critical Infrastructure

Critical infrastructure in Willis Creek includes the following identified by the Douglas Planning Advisory Committee:

- Critical bridge located between Rice Creek Road and Upper Willis Creek Road which would carry the mass of evacuees in a wildfire event
- Water towers located on Willis Creek Road and Rice Creek Road
- Pump facilities located off Willis Creek Road on a private landowners property
- Areas along evacuation routes that could be used as effective “safe zones” on evacuation routes in the event of wildfire

WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT- History



Emergency Equipment and Staffing Inventory

The Winston/Dillard Rural Fire District services the community of Willis Creek. Below is the current equipment inventory as of this writing:

- 15 firefighters
- 3 Type 1 Class A structural engines
- 1 Type 2 Class A structural engine
- 1 Type 6 Wild land engine
- 1 Type 2 water tender
- 3 ALS ambulances

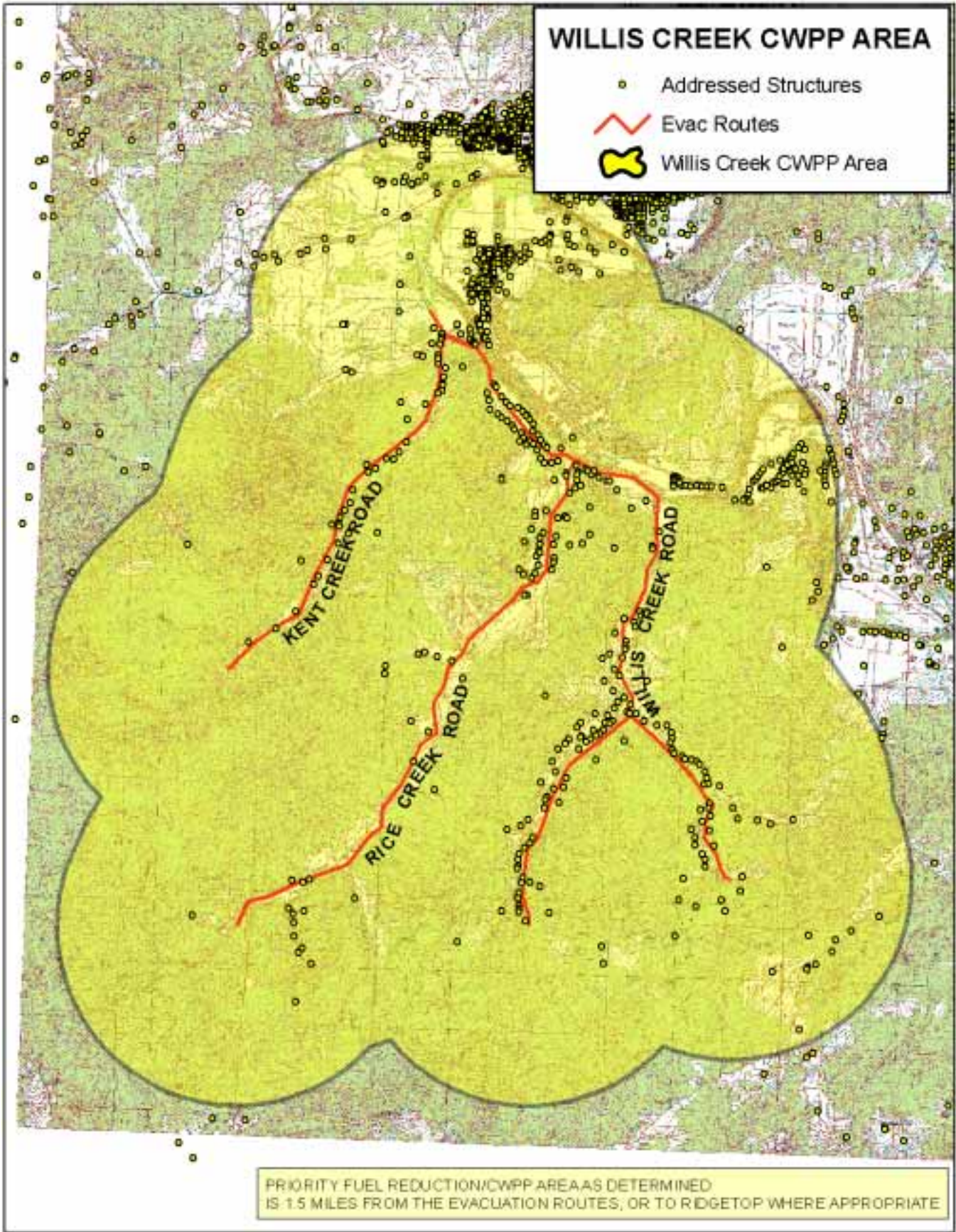
Escape Routes

In the event of a wildfire, the community would utilize the main evacuation routes of Willis Creek Road, Rice Creek Road and Kent Creek Road towards the river, then either across the river towards Dillard, or north on Willis Creek Road towards Brockway.

Priority Fuel Reduction Area Identification

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

SEE CWPP AREA/PRIORITY FUEL REDUCTION MAP ON NEXT PAGE



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 priority fuel reduction areas. 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: Maintain and enhance escape routes for homes located on Willis Creek Road, Rice Creek Road and Kent Creek Road to be thinned 300'. Develop cleared safe areas along escape routes

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) 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 Local Rural Fire Protection District hereby agrees to the final contents of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan:



Robert Nicholls
Chief , Winston-Dillard Rural Fire Protection District

Signed 2/3/2005