

Siskiyou Fire, September, 2009, Ashland, OR

The U in WUI: Tackling Wildfire Mitigation 1/10 Acre at a Time

**Backyards & Beyond Conference
November 16, 2013**



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scotthardingphoto.com



Learning Objectives

- Become familiar with a small city's multi-faceted approach to wildfire safety in a limited regulatory environment
- Learn how WUI models & methods have been adapted for urban areas
- Learn how efforts of many different partnerships have led to evolution of Fire Adapted Community approach

Ashland, Oregon



Photo courtesy of Shawn Bagshaw

Ashland, Oregon



Ashland, Oregon

Wildfire is a part of Ashland's natural environment



Ashland, Oregon



Wildfire Hazard Zone

Definitions of WUI

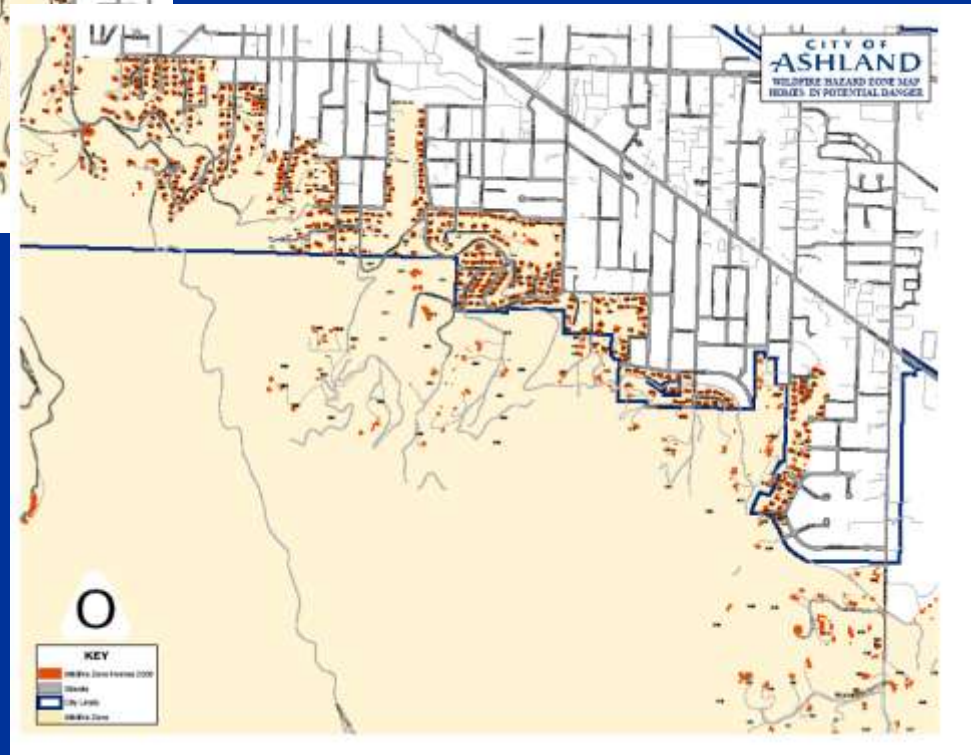
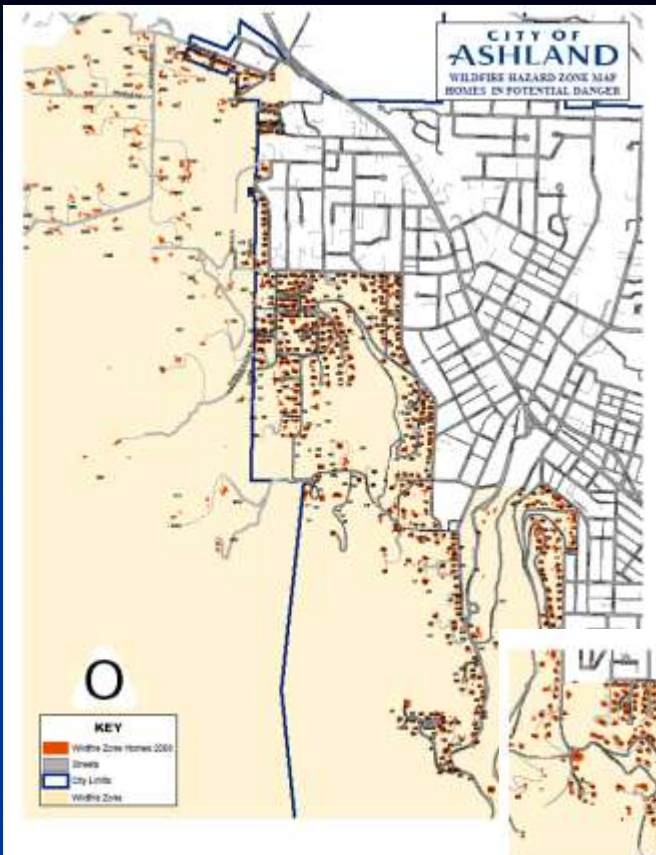
- Where the built environment meets the natural environment
- “where wildland vegetation meets urban developments, or where forest fuels meet urban fuels (such as houses).”
 - Schlosser, 2005
- Other?

Categories of WUI

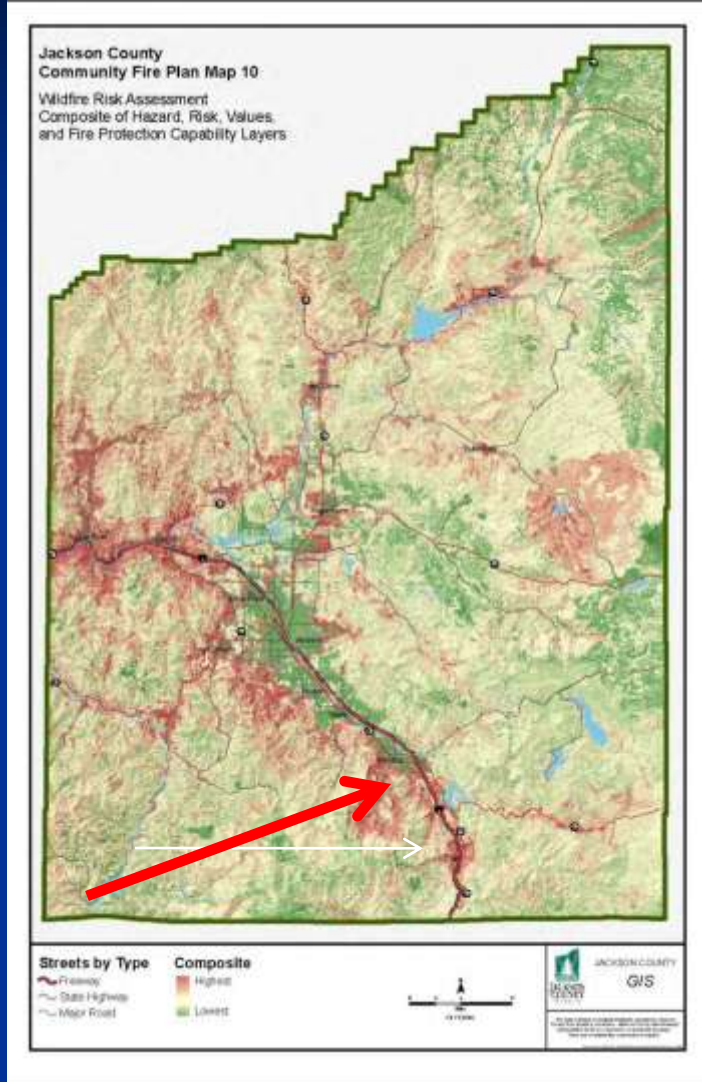
- The *Classic* wildland/urban interface exists where well-defined urban and suburban development presses up against open expanses of wildland areas.
- The *mixed* wildland/urban interface is more typical of the problems in areas of exurban or rural development: isolated homes, subdivisions, resorts and small communities situated in predominantly in wildland settings.
- The *Occluded* wildland/urban interface where islands of wildland vegetation exist within a largely **urbanized** area.

Ashland WHZ

~ 1245 structures and
1257 acres in city limits,
but
not = to 1 structure/acre

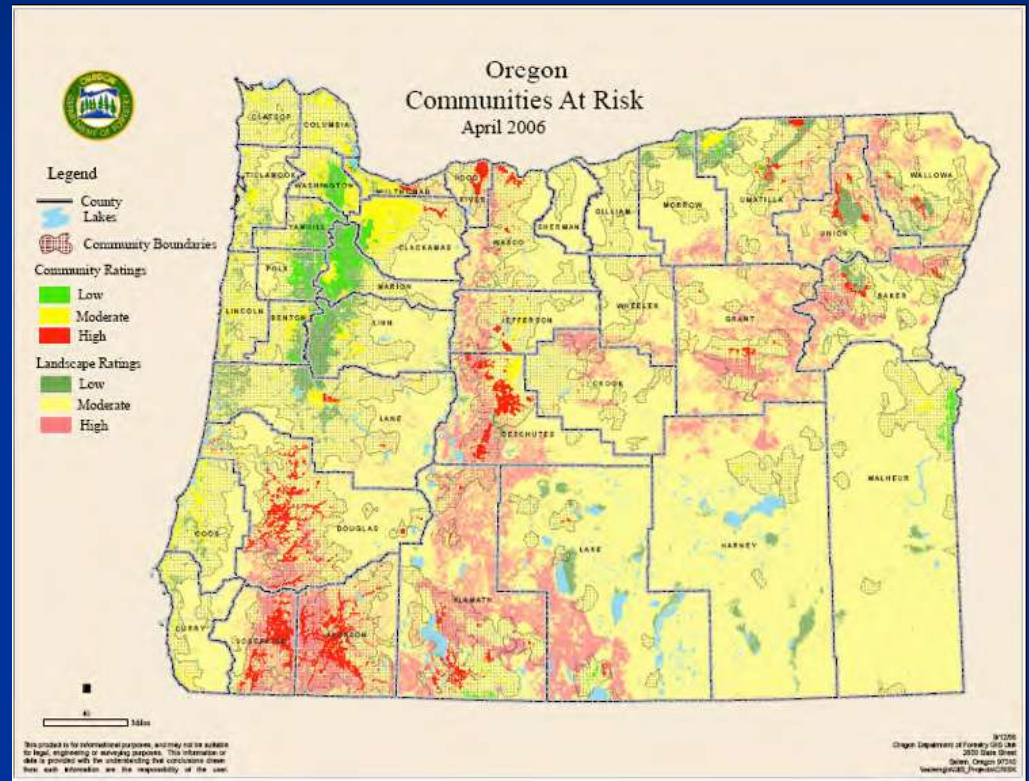


Jackson County and Oregon WUI



Jackson County, Oregon

WUI



Oregon

Oak Knoll Fire

Ashland, Oregon 2010



Ashland, Oregon



Oak Knoll Fire



**ROW OF LELAND
CYPRESS**

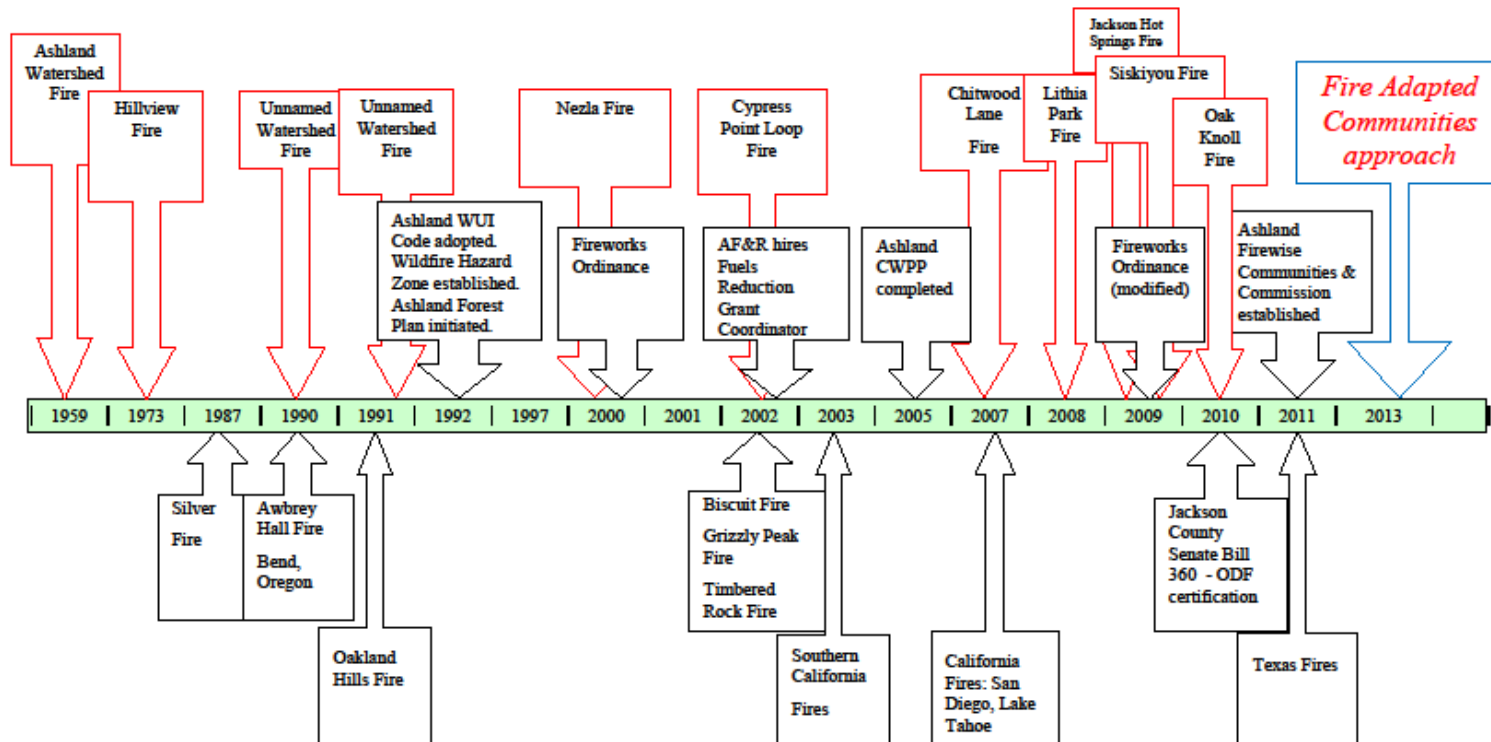
- August, 2010
- Spread by embers over 1/3 mile, crossing 4 lane interstate
- Embers ignited dry grass, brush and wood shake roofs, fire spread home to home

Home Loss in the Wildland-Urban Interface

<u>Fire</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Structures Lost</u>
Awbrey Hall, Bend-1990	3,353	22
Oakland Hills, CA-1991	1,600	2,886
Spokane Fires, WA-1991	26,381	114
Sage Flat, OR-1992	991	9
Skeleton, OR-1996	17,736	22
Southern CA – 2003	800,000	3,710
Southern CA – 2007	500,000	1,500
Oak Knoll, OR – 2010	16	12

A Timeline of Wildfire in Ashland

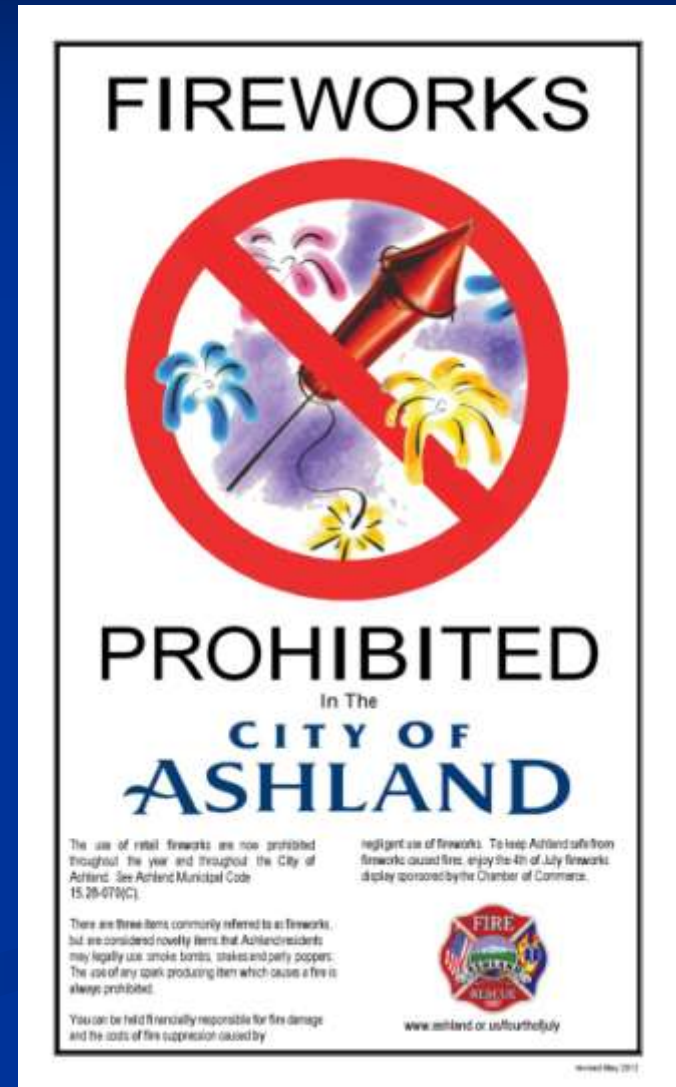
A History of Wildfire & Wildfire Safety Initiatives in Ashland



A timeline demonstrates Ashland's active wildfire history, history of wildfire safety codes, ordinances and programs initiated to address the wildfire hazard, and proposed Fire Adapted Communities approach.

WHZ Codes & Ordinances

- **Building and Development**
 - Vegetative fuel breaks up to 100 ft from structure
 - Class A roofs
 - Access for apparatus
- **Fireworks: Citywide ban on all fireworks in the City limits. Yes, even sparklers...**



Wildfire Mitigation

- 2005 grant for Wildfire Evacuation Planning and signs
- Ready Set Go! coming soon!
- Grant programs for fire-prone vegetation around homes



HOME IGNITION ZONE

Home Ignition Zone: The home in relation to its surroundings within 100 to 200 feet



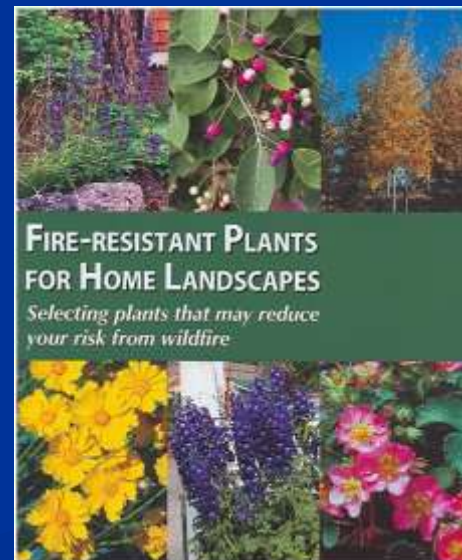
Home Ignition Zone in Urban Areas



Two hundred feet in any direction can include multiple properties and structures

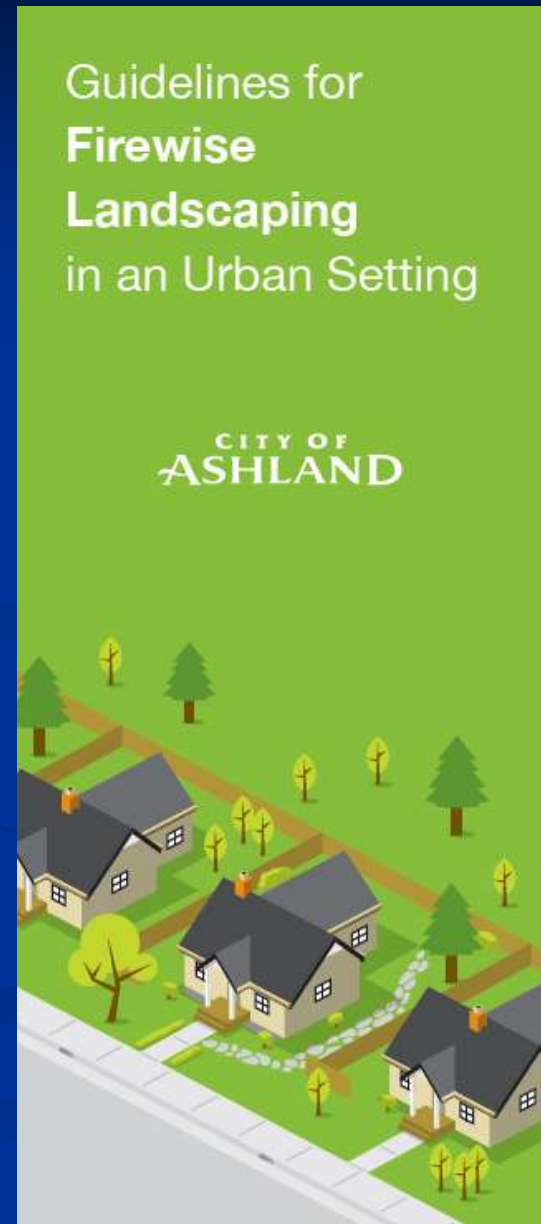
How to achieve protection in shared HIZ?

- Utilize fire-resistant landscaping
- Utilize fire-resistant building materials
- Encouraging neighbors to work together



Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting

- Brochure contains custom recommendations for Ashland's unique urban Firewise landscaping needs
- Urban areas require guidelines that apply city wide, not just in wildfire hazard zone



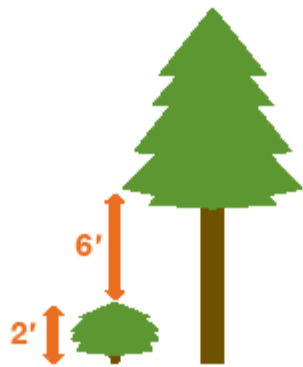
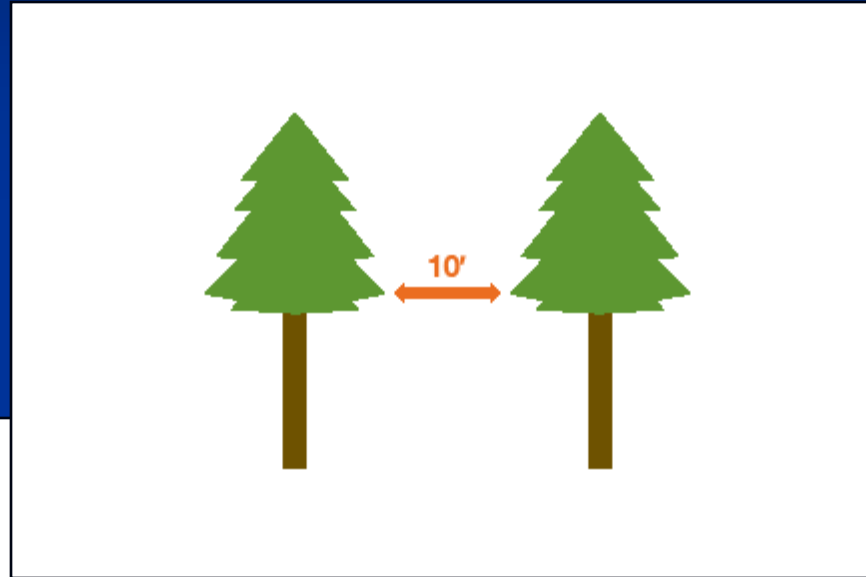
Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting

- Specific to Ashland - model can be used for other communities



Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting

- Spacing and clearance standards & graphics



Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting

- Models include neighbors and structures = more realistic for urban communities



Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting

- Includes fire-prone plants to avoid
- Firewise landscaping tips and recommendations
- Local contacts and websites for more information

Firewise Tips

A wildfire can occur in any neighborhood in Ashland.

Follow Firewise recommendations to minimize fire risk to your home and neighborhood.

- Avoid fire-prone plants along your property line. Instead, use fire-resistant plants to create visual screens. Suggestions include: lilac, holly, phloxes, honeysuckle, azaleas, and rhododendrons.
- Consider the use of noncombustible structures like metal roofs or fences with fire-resistant linings or cladding plants.
- Resist planting tightly spaced conifer vegetation that will provide excessive fuel in dense neighborhoods or close to houses.
- Establish a fuel break in the vegetation in your yard by installing rock or concrete pathways.
- Keep a half fire zone 3-6 feet near your house.
- Use rock or pavers instead of bark mulch next to house.
- Plant moisture rich succulents, annuals and perennials near your home.
- Resist all vegetation watered, free of dead material, and maintained to prevent fire spread.

Call us!

Still not sure? Call Ashland Fire & Rescue for answers or a free wildfire assessment!

Ashland Fire & Rescue
441-482-2775
TTY: 800-735-2900

Other resources

info@firewise.org
The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Firewise Communities program encourages local solutions for wildfire safety by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, firefighters, and others in effort to protect people and property from the risk of wildfires.
You all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and each other from the risk of wildfire.
Ashland, CA residents
More fire-resistant plant recommendations are available on the City of Ashland's website.

CITY OF ASHLAND

Guidelines for Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting

CITY OF ASHLAND



Recommendations

Control the density and placement of highly flammable vegetation within 30 feet of your home or up to your property line, including attachments such as decks and carports.

Modify vegetation to meet Firewise landscaping recommendations. In some cases, removal instead of modification, will be the best solution.

By managing fire-prone vegetation, you can minimize the risk of home ignition and spread of wildfire in your neighborhood.

Inappropriate clearing of vegetation that plays an important role in erosion control is not recommended. Instead, evaluate the placement of fire-prone vegetation that could ignite from power equipment or embers.

And remember, all vegetation is potential fuel for a wildfire if not pruned periodically.



deciduous coniferous

Deciduous plants lose their leaves seasonally and present a lower fire risk than conifers. Conifers are evergreen, staying green with higher resin content and present a higher fire risk.

Avoid these plants

Fire-Prone Trees

- Arbutus
- Cedar
- Cypress
- Douglas Fir
- Eucalyptus
- Fir
- Juanen
- Palm
- Redwood
- Slash Pine
- Sequoia
- Spruce
- Tan

Fire-Prone Grasses, Shrubs, Ground Covers

- Buckbrush
- French Bean
- Himalayan Blackberry
- Juncos
- Moroccan
- Mugo Pine
- Parsons grass
- Rosemary
- Scotch broom
- Spanish broom

These and other shrub plants are considered fire-prone because they are known for the amount of dead material that accumulates in and around them, and high oil, high resin, or low moisture content of their leaves and branches.

All plants are flammable if not pruned periodically and the material in any one plant can be easily dispersed in a wildfire. The key is to not have too much dead material around any one plant.

Modify existing plants

Fire-prone vegetation should be removed or modified within 30 feet from any building or structure including decks and combustible attachments.

Fire-Prone Trees

- Prune trees with a minimum of six feet from ground, and
- Maintain clearance of three times the height of single-story vegetation.
- All branches should be no closer than ten feet from structures, including the soffits and decks.

Fire-Prone Shrubs

- The space between two shrubs should be a minimum of two times the height of the tallest shrub.
- Individual shrubs or groups of shrubs clumped together should be modified so that their canopy does not exceed 15 feet.

Minimize fire risk from ALL plants:

- Remove dead branches and twigs.
- Regularly prune to reduce plant density.
- Keep watered.



A Neighborhood Responsibility - The house ignition zone is up to 300 feet from your home. Talk to your neighbor about creating a neighborhood responsibility.

Privacy Screens

- Urban environments breed vegetative privacy
- Fire-prone species are commonly used



Solution: Encouraging Fire-Resistant Privacy Screening

- Produced new brochure with fire prevention partners



Landscaping Outreach and Education

- **Multi-faceted approach to education**
 - **Classes for contractors, local and conference based**
 - **Offers CEUs and website reference list**
- **Work with local university extension offices**
 - **Workshops, training, publications**
- **Outreach to Master Gardeners & TV news**
- **Local nurseries**

Nursery Outreach

FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS



Columbine

Columbine flowers are a terrific perennial for the garden. They are easy to grow and require little maintenance. Once established, they are drought tolerant, which is why some landscape designers and gardeners suggest using them for rock gardens. These hardy plants bloom from springtime through summer.

Other Fire-Resistant Species:
Sedges Delphinium Sun Rose Evening Primrose



ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FIRE RESISTANT LANDSCAPING

Ashland's Firewise Communities

Successful, but limited...one piece of the puzzle



City of Ashland



Community engagement: Firewise Commission



- An official City Commission, tasked with advising City Council regarding wildfire issues, revising CWPP, and implementing FAC
- Community involvement/Outreach
- Evolving to meet needs of community and prevention

Outreach and Education

- Firewise in the 4th Grade Poster Contest
- Library Events & Displays



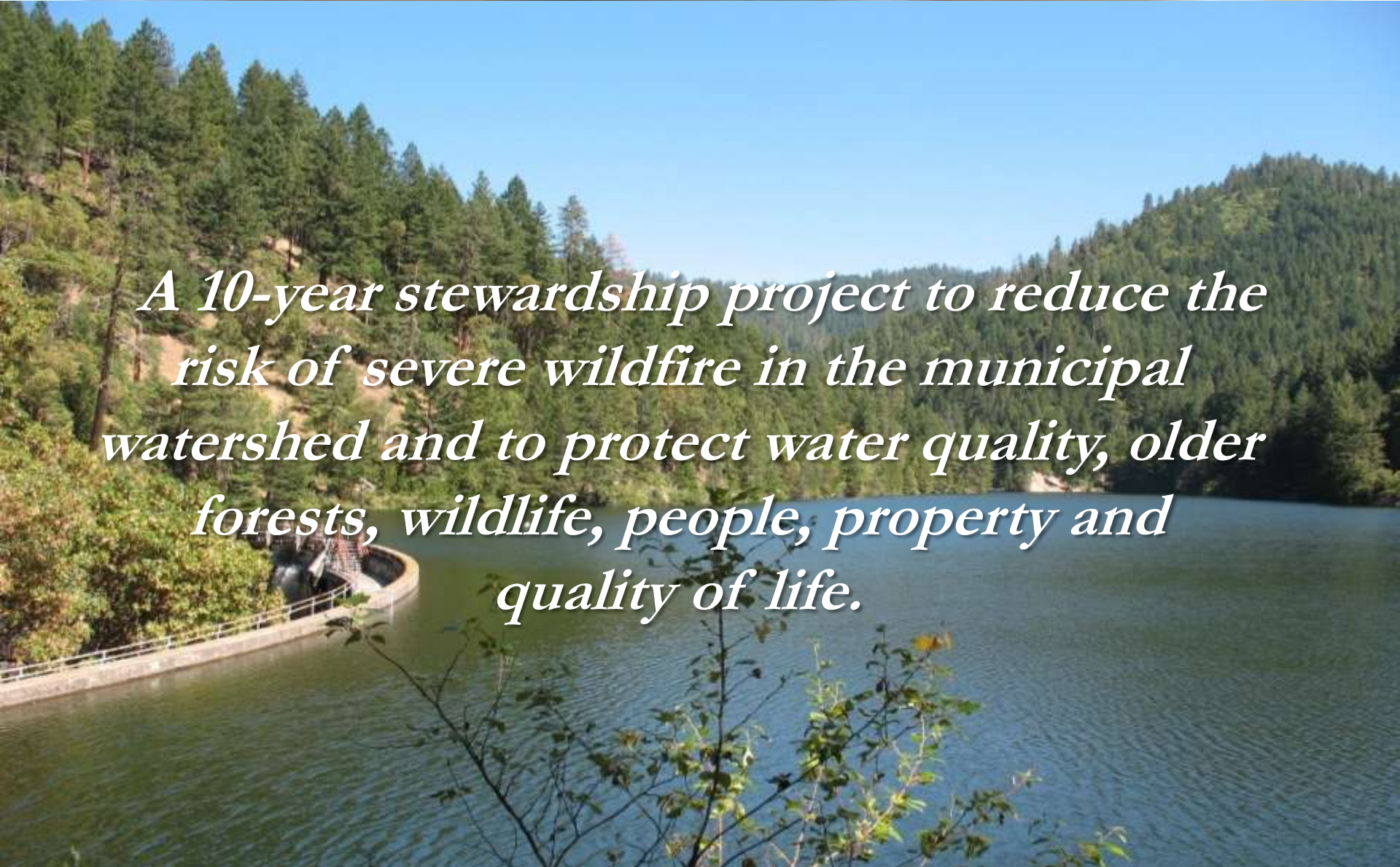
ASHLAND FOREST RESILIENCY STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

*Siskiyou Mountains Ranger District
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest*




WHAT IS AFR?

A 10-year stewardship project to reduce the risk of severe wildfire in the municipal watershed and to protect water quality, older forests, wildlife, people, property and quality of life.



ASHLAND FOREST RESILIENCY STEWARDSHIP PROJECT



Fuels mitigation completed
on over 3,200 out of 7,600 acres

ASHLAND FOREST RESILIENCY STEWARDSHIP

PROJECT



666 acres helicopter thinning



344 acres ground-based thinning



3.2 million board feet of wood trucked to local mills



AFR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- *45 events and tours*
- *AFR website, Facebook*
- *Local media*
- *Interpretive Signage*
- *1,927 students educated*



Daily Tidings.com - Valley & State - Windows Internet Explorer

<http://www.dailytidings.com/asp/tpcs/08/wrck0AIDW/2013>

ASHLAND
DAILY TIDINGS

2 of 2



Darren Borgla, Program Director for The Nature Conservancy, left, Chris Chambers, Forest Resource Specialist with Ashland Fire and Rescue and Marty Main, a City Forester give a presentation during an Ashland forest resiliency stewardship project review tour in the Ashland Watershed Sunday. Daily Tidings Photo / Jamie Lusch
Daily Tidings Photo / Jamie Lusch

Multiparty Monitoring Ashland Forest Resiliency Partnership



Stakeholder Driven Plan



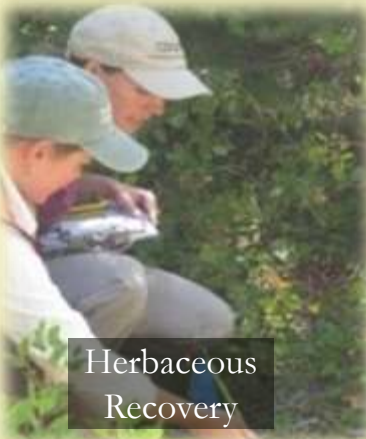
Soils



Large Tree Retention
and Survival



Water Quality and Aquatic
Habitat



Herbaceous
Recovery



Fire
Histories



Late Successional
Wildlife Habitat



Birds as Indicators

Where We're Going...

- Improve and Maintain AFR and other fuels projects
- Expanding WHZ
- Fire Adapted Community Approach



Wildfire smoke towers over deserted
Downtown Ashland, 2009

FAC in Ashland

How does a community adapt to wildfire?



Future Needs and Challenges

- We've come a long way in addressing our risk, but we still have a ways to go
- Needs: More research about urban fire situations in order to make solid recommendations to our community



Photo courtesy of Daily Tidings

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Questions?

**My home is
Firewise.
Is yours?**

ashlandfirewise.org

Call Ashland Fire & Rescue

541-482-2770

CITY OF
ASHLAND



Thank You!



ashlandfirewise.org

[@ashlandfirewise](https://www.instagram.com/ashlandfirewise)

[facebook.com/ashlandfirewise](https://www.facebook.com/ashlandfirewise)