



# FACT SHEET



United States Department of Agriculture  
Web: <http://www.usda.gov>

United States Department of Interior  
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## Making a Difference Ochoco National Forest, Crooked River National Grassland - Oregon

The Round Butte Fuelbreak Project is located on the Crooked River National Grassland, Ochoco National Forest. This 1,000-acre wildland urban interface project will create a fuelbreak around the Round Butte subdivision, 6 miles southwest of Madras, Oregon. The Round Butte subdivision encompasses 148 acres with 74 lots; 62 of the lots have homes built upon them.

There is a recent history of urban interface wildfires that have threatened or destroyed homes adjacent to the Crooked River National Grassland. In 1996, the Little Cabin fire burned 2,437 acres and came within 100 feet of homes. In 1998, the Belmont Lane fire burned 633 acres and came within 1 mile of the Round Butte subdivision. In 1999, the Elk Drive fire burned 538 acres and came within 1-1/2 miles of the Round Butte subdivision. The Round Butte subdivision is at risk because of the type of vegetation surrounding it – a dense stand of juniper trees whose limbs go to the ground -- and because the subdivision sits upslope and downwind from the Deschutes River canyon, a busy recreation area which is historically a source of ignition for accidental fires.

The first phase of the project will create a 200-foot fuelbreak along 4 miles of the National Grassland boundary with the Round Butte subdivision (a 100-acre treatment area). The fuelbreak will be made by cutting juniper trees and mowing brush. The second phase of the project will create a mosaic of juniper cuts around the boundary fuelbreak.

The fuelbreak along the Grassland/Round Butte boundary will reduce the flame lengths from an approaching wildfire and reduce the potential for long-distance spotting, where embers from torching trees are lofted ahead of a wildfire and land on roofs, decks, or woodpiles. Breaking up the continuity of the junipers with a mosaic of juniper cuts around the boundary fuelbreak will create more opportunities for firefighters to stop a wildfire as it approaches the subdivision. This project will use a categorical exclusion under the Healthy Forests Initiative.

The Round Butte Fuelbreak is the result of collaboration with Jefferson County Fire District #1. The District recently began a “Create a Fire Safe Community” campaign to encourage landowners in the wildland-urban interface to reduce fuel loadings around their structures. The Round Butte subdivision is the first area where this program has been implemented. Representatives from the District visited each resident to provide information, identify hazards and encourage them to create a defensible space around the home. The Grassland is working one-on-one with landowners in the subdivision, responding to their specific requests and concerns as it implements the project. The first phase of the project has been completed by the Prineville Interagency Hotshot Crew and a crew from the Central Oregon Conservation Youth Corps. The second phase will be completed by a minority contractor through the Small Business Administration’s 8A program. Additional work will be done this fall by a crew from the Madras Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council.

The fuels modification project on the Crooked River National Grassland will create a buffer around this subdivision and enhance the efforts of the Jefferson County Fire District #1 and landowners to create a ‘Fire Safe Community.’

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For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/projects/hfi/> or <http://www.doi.gov/hfi/newhfi/>



← Looking west toward the Deschutes River Canyon and Lake Billy Chinook. The Round Butte subdivision is on the east side of the road, outside of the picture. Western juniper trees on the Crooked River National Grassland have been pruned and the branches piled. The piles will be burned in the fall.



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Prineville Interagency Hotshot Crew members cutting juniper

Looking west toward the Deschutes River Canyon and Lake Billy Chinook, before treatment. Notice the continuous fuels downslope of the subdivision, which is on the other side of the road. Also notice the ladder arrangement of the fuels (i.e., the juniper trees have limbs touching the ground).

