

Making a Difference Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Applegate Community – Oregon



Driveway prior to fuels treatment

Most residents in the Applegate, located in Jackson County, Oregon in southwest Oregon, agree that their valley is in desperate need of fuel reduction work¹. Encompassing almost half a million acres, they wondered how to begin this work. Should treatments be the same across the valley? The problems of overstocked forests were obvious, but they wondered what their objectives were in reducing fuels. They wanted to reduce fire hazards to reduce the risk of catastrophic fire. They also wanted to restore the ecological integrity and health of their forests and woodlands after many decades of fire suppression. As they grappled with these questions, others became pertinent: What is at risk in the event of a wildfire?

How do they identify what they most want to protect from destruction during a wildfire?

They found that the last question had an answer, at least from the agencies in Oregon that fight wildfires. For those agencies, protection priorities in effect prioritize values at risk that would receive protection (life, resources, and property). The community asked themselves: Are these values our top values to protect?

From this point on, the community discussions went from philosophy to data. To help them translate the “things they valued most” into strategies of where to go first and what to do in developing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan including a fuels reduction plan, they formed a committee of representatives from the fire districts, Oregon Department of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, and the community.



Driveway after fuels treatment

27 state, federal, and private partners participated in the development of the Applegate Plan, including Jackson and Josephine Counties, Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries. A National Fire Plan grant funded the development of their plan. To create a plan, they looked at maps of the watershed that contained layers of information about historical fire starts, communities where there are high densities of homes per square mile, and the ability of fire to spread based on vegetation, canopy cover, slope aspect and elevation.

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¹ Excerpted from “[Balancing Act: Living with Fire in the Applegate. Applegate Communities’ Collaborative Fire Protection Strategy](#). Coordinated by the Applegate Partnership. Sandy Shaffer and Jack Shipley, Project Coordinators. Diana Coogle, Editor., Applegate, Oregon, August 2002.”

They found that 29 percent of the watershed is rated at high hazard, 54 percent at moderate, and only 16 percent at low fire hazard. After discussions about available information, needs, and priorities they agreed to have only two priorities. These are the private and federally managed land around the communities at risk. Strategies and actions flowed from this agreement.

For more information, contact Brett Fillis, Fire Chief at 8551@applegatefd.com or Chris Chambers from Ashland at chamberc@ashland.or.us

For more information on the Healthy Forests Restoration Act and the Healthy Forests Initiative, visit www.healthyforests.gov

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