

HOT TOPIC

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR RURAL DISTRICT RESIDENTS

Spring 2017

A Look Toward Expansion of Firewise Communities in NW Corvallis



A Wildland–Urban Interface (WUI) refers to the zone of transition between land that is unoccupied and human development. More people are finding the benefits of living in the forest such as larger properties with more privacy, less traffic, less noise, more wildlife and being closer to nature. However, with more people moving into the forest there are greater risks of a wildfire negatively effecting homes and properties. Wildfires can start far away from roads, where they cannot quickly be extinguished. Homes located in the WUI are at an increased risk should a wildfire occur due to an overabundance of natural fuels, limited fire access and water supplies, and limited firefighting resources.



Map of Corvallis Firewise Communities (green) and good candidates for Firewise Communities (red)

A Firewise Community is a group of informed and prepared citizens collaboratively planning and taking action to safely co-exist with the potential of a wildland fire. There are currently four recognized Firewise Communities in Corvallis: Vinyard Mountain (2011), The Ridgewood Estates (2012), Chinook (2014), and the community of Skyline West (2016). The Oak Creek and Grandview communities located in NW Corvallis are contiguous to three of those recognized Firewise communities.

Some key issues facing the Oak Creek and Grandview communities are dense natural fuel loads, steep slopes, undersized bridges, limited evacuation routes, and longer emergency responses. The fuel load that contributes to the rapid growth of a wildland fire is not limited to native grass, brush, and trees. Wildland fire fuel can also include landscaping, accumulated household waste, automobiles, and manmade structures.

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A safe zone around structures, commonly referred to as defensible space, is necessary to alleviate some of the risk of a wildland fire spreading to your home. Reducing potential fuels adjacent to a home such bushes, trees, landscape mulch, and firewood can help to create that defensible space.

- Carmen Westfall & Matt Ashland

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Special points of interest:

- How to Create a Defensible Space Around your Home
- How to Create a Firewise Community
- How to Apply for a WUI Permit

How to Create a Defensible Space

- Remove flammable vegetation within 30-50ft of a structure. If you live on a steep slope a 100ft defensible space is recommended. Healthy green landscaping does not need to be removed but it should not be touching the house.
- Keeping trees trimmed and thinned out within 100 feet of your home will help prevent fire from moving tree to tree and from the ground up. A 10ft space between trees is recommended.
- Keep underbrush cut back and away from trees, and keep grass trimmed to 4 inches.
- Remove low hanging tree branches or “Ladder Fuels” up to 6-10 ft from the ground. This will stop a ground fire from becoming a canopy fire.
- Move firewood piles at least 30ft away from a house.
- Break-up continuous fuels by separating vegetation, so a fire burning in one bush cannot easily spread to another bush.
- Underground sprinklers are also recommended to keep landscaping near the house green.



- Carmen Westfall & Matt Ashland

How to Obtain a Firewise Certification

Obtaining the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) Firewise certification is a community driven accomplishment. Using a five-step process, communities can develop an action plan that guides their residential risk reduction activities while engaging and encouraging their neighbors to become active participants in building a safer place to live.

Five Steps of NFPA Firewise Recognition:

- Obtain a wildfire risk assessment as a written document from your state forestry agency or fire department.
- Form a board or committee and [create an action plan](#) based on the assessment.
- Conduct a [“Firewise Day” event](#).
- [Invest a minimum of \\$2 per capita in local Firewise actions](#) for the year.
- Submit an application to your state Firewise liaison.

More information about becoming a recognized NFPA Fire Wise community can be found at: <http://www.firewise.org/usa-recognition-program.aspx>

- Carmen Westfall & Matt Ashland

Water Sources in the CRFPD

- Limited supply hydrants
- Cisterns
- Above ground tanks
- Rivers & Creeks
- Swimming pools
- Ponds

Water Sources for Fighting Fires in the CRFPD

One of the primary reasons people choose to live in the rural areas surrounding Corvallis is for the unspoiled beauty and rustic environment. While that brings a lack of commercial development and hustle and bustle, it also means a lack of some fire protection services that are available inside the city limits such as fire hydrants at nearly every other street corner. What does this mean to residents of the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District? In the rare and unfortunate event a large fire breaks out, whether it be a wildland fire or structure fire, accessing enough water to combat and quickly extinguish the fire can be a challenge.

Water Sources for Fighting Fires in the CRFPD cont.

The good news is that not only do fire crews automatically bring a substantial amount of water with them, via four water tenders carrying up to 12,000 gallons of water between them, they also have access to several alternate sources of water scattered around the CRFPD. These include:

- Several limited supply hydrants in select areas
- Cisterns
- Above ground tanks
- Rivers and creeks
- A few swimming pools
- Ponds

A single water tender can hold up to 3,000 gallons of water.



Tender using a hydrant to fill its tank

Firefighters are able to access these alternate sources and draw large amounts of water from them to resupply the water tenders. This system establishes an organized method of shuttling water to the fire scene. Our firefighters practice this process regularly within the department as well as with neighboring fire departments in the event mutual aid is used during a fire.

Firefighters inspect and test these alternate water resources on an annual basis to ensure they are fully functional and ready to go. However, if you ever notice any irregularities with any of these systems please give the fire department a call immediately at 541-766-6961.

If you have an alternate and accessible water supply on your property please maintain adequate access and clearance to it at all times. In order for fire crews to quickly and safely access a viable water supply it is important an

appropriate route be provide, to include:

- An all-weather access road from 12-20 feet in width and capable of supporting a 50,000 pound vehicle.
- An overall grade of 10 percent or less, not to exceed a maximum grade of 15 percent for a length of up to 100 feet.
- If the access drive is over 150 feet and not looped, an approved turnout(s) shall be provided at an area near the mid-length of the driveway.
- If you have an alternate water supply on your property these access standards shall apply to a location within 15 feet of the water supply.
- If access gates are present to your property a means for emergency access shall be provided either by padlock that can be cut, a Knox padlock, Knox Box, or Knox electronic key switch. For more details on Knox products go to: www.knoxbox.com

In order to utilize a private water source, the property owner must provide written permission to the Corvallis Fire Department, and sign a waiver of liability. If you believe you have an adequate water resource on your property in the Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District or if you have any further questions about emergency water supply please feel free to Contact Lt. Will Kalenius at 541-766-6476 or william.kalenius@corvallisoregon.gov.



Limited supply hydrant

- Jim Patton

City of Corvallis Wildland Urban Interface Mitigation Permit

Wildland fires are inevitable and cannot be completely prevented. The best that we can hope to do is to lessen the consequences of the fire by limiting its potential for growth, and thereby reducing the property loss, and potential injuries or death. The general term that we use to describe this risk assessment process is hazard mitigation. Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) hazard mitigation often crosses geopolitical boundaries due to contiguous open space. In our region of Benton and Linn Counties, we have city, county, and state parcels protected by a variety of municipal fire departments and fire districts. It is important to recognize that effective WUI mitigation must bridge those manmade borders to protect the surrounding communities and the environment.

In the spring of 2017 the City of Corvallis will allow WUI mitigation in protected areas after a permit has been obtained.

The WUI setting is comprised of environmentally sensitive or “protected” areas and “non-protected areas”. Federal or state legislatively protected areas can be described as wetlands, significant vegetation, riparian areas, wildlife and fishery resources. Some natural hazards may also be protected such as hillsides prone to landslides or floodplains that require more robust forms of vegetation to prevent land movement or erosion.

In the prior article we’ve identified several typical small scale WUI mitigation methods that are recommended for creating defensible space in “non-protected areas”. There are times, however, when supervised WUI mitigation within a legislatively protected area is warranted to ensure that the entirety of the wildland area will survive in the event of a fire. For this reason, Federal legislation in 2013 authorized fire prevention activities in at-risk environments, and in threatened and endangered species habitat on Federal lands, in order to protect these species from wildfires.

In the spring of 2017, the City of Corvallis will adopt a similar policy to allow supervised WUI mitigation on parcels within the City limits that are contiguous to CRFPD private or public lands. This voluntary WUI permit was developed as a result of the Chip Ross post-fire analysis. Recognizing that many CRFPD residents also own contiguous City parcels, we wanted to announce this new opportunity for fire prevention.

Starting in the spring of 2017, residents of the City of Corvallis may voluntarily apply for the WUI Mitigation permit.

- Application is made through Corvallis Development Services
- The applicant will be required to submit a Significant Vegetation Management Plan that includes a WUI mitigation plan. The WUI mitigation plan **must** be prepared by an Accredited Assessor certified by the ODF District Forester in Philomath.
- The plan will be reviewed and approved by the Corvallis Fire Department
- After the WUI mitigation work is completed, the work will be inspected by the Corvallis Fire Department to ensure the work was completed according to the submitted plan.
- Once approved, the submitted WUI mitigation plan will be renewable for up to 5-years.

These WUI mitigation efforts within the City of Corvallis will benefit the CRFPD community by reducing the opportunity for unwanted wildland fire to spread from the neighboring parcels. Please do your part to protect our forests and our community by reducing the ladder fuels on your rural property, and by creating defensible space around your homes and outbuildings.

WUI mitigation will help reduce the opportunity for fires to spread from neighboring parcels.

- Jeff Prechel

About your Locke Fire Station Interns

Your Locke Fire Station is staffed around the clock by highly motivated and well trained Intern Firefighters. A 40 hour/week Corvallis Fire Department Lieutenant provides training, mentoring, and oversight of the Intern Firefighter Program.

Coming from across the state and from a variety of backgrounds, the Interns share one thing in common: they have a strong desire to provide a high level of customer service to this community. This service includes Fire Prevention and Education, Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical Services, Wildland firefighting, and other Hazards response. Many of the Interns have the goal of one day being hired as paid Firefighter-EMTs. Most of them are currently students at Oregon State University, Linn Benton Community College, or Chemeketa Community College.

Currently, 11 Interns make the Locke Station their primary residence and work a schedule of 24 hours on shift, followed by 72 hours off, which helps them attain the minimum expectation of 168 hours "on duty" per month. The Interns work together to provide adequate station staffing, given their busy school, work, and personal lives. After their initiation into the program and entry level Firefighter Training, the Interns are expected to complete a rigorous Apparatus Operator (AO) Training Program within their first few months at the Locke Station. Upon completion of the AO Training Program, Interns are qualified to drive, pump, and operate the Locke Station's Fire Engine safely and effectively. Interns are also trained in safe driving practices, rural district familiarization, and route selection.

After attaining their AO qualifications, Interns are trained to operate the Brush Truck and the Water Tender, two critical pieces of Rural District equipment. Since there are very few high flow hydrants in the Rural District, Tender Operations and Rural Water Supply Operations are a high priority. Motivated Interns who remain at the Locke Station longer are trained as Crew Leaders. Crew Leaders are mentored closely by the Station Lieutenant in Department Operating Guidelines, Strategies and Tactics, and Crew Resource Leadership.

The Corvallis Rural Fire Protection District provides academic scholarships to qualifying Interns. This affords many of the Interns the opportunity to work towards Associate's or Bachelor's degrees without taking on an unreasonable amount of school debt. Many of the Interns also utilize the Scholarship Program to fund EMT or Paramedic education programs, which are an essential element in their journey to a career in the Fire Service.

"Currently, 11 Interns make the Locke Station their primary residence and work a schedule of 24 hours on shift, followed by 72 hours off..."



Three interns from Locke Station, left to right: Andrew Ketelson, Michael Kienzle, Keagan Sankovitz

When they are not responding to a wide variety of calls or training in Fire, EMS, or Rescue, there is plenty more for your Interns to do. Interns perform the vast majority of Locke Station maintenance and facility upkeep projects throughout the seasons. They fulfill public education requests, perform fire and life safety inspections, provide wildfire consults to property owners, and give station tours. Your Interns are honored with the opportunity to continue to serve this community. Thank you for your support and encouragement. Please call 541-766-6476 to set up an appointment for a station tour and meet your Locke Fire Station Firefighter Interns!

- Will Kalenius

BBQ at Locke Station

June 3rd 12pm-3pm

Come meet some of your interns at Locke Station while enjoying

- Hamburgers & Hot Dogs
- A Wildland Firefighting Tactics Demonstration
- Tours of Locke Station's Water Tender and Brush Rig

There will also be the opportunity to get more information on how to protect your house from wildland fires and set up appointments to have your property inspected.

Please RSVP by calling 541-766-6973 or emailing Matt.Ashland@corvallisoregon.gov

Sign it so They See You!



Order an address marker to help visitors and emergency personnel locate your home.

Signs will be placed as soon as ground conditions allow.

FireMed

FireMed is a way to defray or lessen costs of medically necessary ambulance transports. Learn more about the [FireMed](#) program and complete an application to become a member.

WHO ARE YOUR BOARD MEMBERS, AND WHEN DO THEY MEET?

The Board generally meets on the 4th Tuesday of each month at Locke Station. The meetings are open to the public, and we encourage you to come and learn more about your fire district.

The Board members are:

Bob Conder, Chairman

Bob.Conder@corvallisrfd.com

George Mears, Vice Chairman

George.Mears@corvallisrfd.com

Steve Oda, Treasurer

Steve.Oda@corvallisrfd.com

Alex Polikoff, Secretary

Alex.Polikoff@corvallisrfd.com

Frank Perdicaro, Member at Large

Frank.Perdicaro@corvallisrfd.com

CORVALLIS RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

544 NW Lewisburg Ave, Corvallis, OR 97330

541-766-6476

CRFPD Burn Advisory 541-757-6971

<http://www.corvallisrfd.com/>

CORVALLIS FIRE DEPARTMENT

400 NW Harrison Blvd, Corvallis, OR 97330

541-766-6961

<http://www.corvallisoregon.gov/index.aspx?page=55>