

# Wildfire Policy Work Session #1

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities

**Goal:** ID a range of issues to leverage change.

### **WUI Development**

**WUI Mitigation:** Regulatory and incentive programs to reduce structural ignitability through building materials, siting standards, and hazardous fuels are not keeping up with the pace of WUI development.

#### **Strengths:**

- The Oregon Forestland Urban Interface Act provides guidance for development, siting and fuels reduction standards for homes in the WUI.
- Land use planners can invite ODF to advise on siting standards for new WUI development.
- Every county in Oregon has a Community Wildfire Protection Plan, include a wildfire vulnerability assessment, and priorities for fuels reduction.
- ODF has a strong Firewise program, which encourages and recognizes communities for reducing wildfire hazards.
- ODF successfully competes for about \$1.5-2 million federal grant dollars to assist NIPF and WUI residents in reducing hazardous fuels around homes and on small woodlands.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- SB 360 is not fiscally supported and is in need of a significant review and update.
- There is an apparent disconnect between hazard mitigation professionals and land use planners at the state and local levels.
- Lack of sustained funding to implement the Firewise program and address hazardous fuels in the WUI.

#### **Opportunities/Policy Starter List:**

- Work with DLCDD to build better relationships with land use planners to help them apply siting standards in the WUI.
- Review SB 360 policies and determine pathway forward; consider funding for implementation.
- Coordinate and optimize tools and integrate incentives for high-risk communities.
- Focus and prioritize mitigation needs statewide (funding, staff).
- Develop sustained funding programs to support fuels reduction and Firewise activities in the WUI.

### **Existing WUI Programs and Tools**

<b>Voluntary</b>	<b>Regulatory</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Community Wildfire Protection Plans</li> <li>▪ Firewise</li> <li>▪ Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Pilot Projects</li> <li>▪ Fire Adapted Communities Learning Networks</li> <li>▪ Fire Prevention Cooperatives</li> <li>▪ Forest, Farms, and People Report's WUI growth scenarios</li> <li>▪ National Fire Plan Grants (fuels reduction and prevention and on private lands)</li> <li>▪ Secure Rural Schools and Self Determination Act (Title II &amp; III)</li> <li>▪ NRCS Farm Bill Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oregon Dept. of Forestry Forest Urban Interface Act of 1997 (semi-regulatory)</li> <li>▪ Dept. of Land Conservation and Development: Goal 4 Protection of Forestlands</li> </ul>

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### **Smoke Management & Planned Fire**

**Issue:** Smoke management & planned fire (prescribed burning and firefighting) are not being utilized to the extent necessary to be effective on the landscape.

#### **Strengths:**

- WFLC has prioritized smoke management for next year.
- SB 752 has declared biomass (CO<sub>2</sub> from combustion) carbon neutral, exempting it from regulation under some air pollution laws.
- Agencies have qualified staff to help evaluate smoke mgmt. risks.
- Agencies have qualified staff to effectively fight fire with fire.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Fuels build up is a major issue across the state.
- Landowner liability impedes proactive use of fire on private lands.
- Unprotected lands serve to increase risk associated with burning.
- There are too few burn days available to effectively reduce fuels.
- DEQ capacity and policies
- Social acceptance/health concerns

#### **Opportunities/Policy Starter List:**

- Develop agreed upon solutions to maximize burn days and build social license for actively using fire.
- Work with professional outreach organizations/PR firms to develop a public outreach campaign regarding the use of prescribed fire.
- Identify policy framework for reducing landowner liability associated with prescribed burning.

### **Unprotected Lands/ Rangeland Considerations**

**Issue:** Unprotected areas in rangelands pose a significant risk. Rangeland Protection Associations (RFPA) have a significant interface with BLM lands.

#### **Opportunities/Policy Starter List:**

- Identify and develop avenues to enhance coordination between Rangeland Fire Protection Associations and the BLM to reduce unprotected lands.
- Develop incentive programs to encourage landowners, the BLM and RFPA's to work together in reducing unprotected lands.

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### Landscape Resiliency

**Issue:** Transfer of risk in the public/private (and NIPF/IPF) is not being addressed, statewide.

#### **Strengths:**

- Public/Private Collaboratives, Oregonians value working lands
- Cohesive Strategy and Joint Chiefs pilot projects in NEO and SWO have the funding, landowner and agency buy-in, and funding to successfully assess, prioritize and reduce risk on all ownership types. BLM has a dedicated landscape resiliency person in SWO.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Absence of a strategic approach to evaluate and address transfer of risk in private/public interface, statewide.
- Barriers for taking accountability on shared risk: public - federal policy/private - funding

#### **Opportunities:**

- Use and grow the collaborative network to evaluate vectors of risk, and address risk strategically by developing a statewide list of prioritized, landscape-scale treatments.
- Raise voice on need for solutions to increase pace and scale of restoration and emphasize the importance of active management along the boundary of public/private lands.
- Use and grow the collaborative network to evaluate risk, and address risk strategically by developing a statewide list of prioritized, landscape-scale treatments.
- Maintain Board of Forestry's Federal Forest Subcommittee
- Fund FFH and place into ODF base budget, including increased spending limitation for Good Neighbor Authority projects.
- Empower and encourage BLM to use local collaboratives to build social license and investment in sound land management (stewardship contracting, CFLRP and FFH)
- More effectively pursue emerging landscape-scale funding opportunities: Federal Forest Health Program, OWEBB Focused Investment Partnership, NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Community Assistance Grants, Joint Chiefs Designations, and Cohesive Strategy Pilot Program.
- Encourage Congress to fix fire borrowing, and continue funding landscape-level initiatives.
- Use state & federal funds to apply fire-ice model with Dept. of Corrections & contractors.
- More effectively pursue emerging landscape-scale funding opportunities.
- Participate in the USF and BLMS forest planning process to capitalize on the opportunity to affect change and address transfer of risk.
- Support OSU Ext. in building capacity for supporting innovations and research in landscape management (e.g. precision restoration project being implemented in sage grouse country)