



Fire Learning Network Notes from the Field

Ashland Forest Resiliency Project Showcases Progress

Ashland, OR

June 2014

In June, Ashland Mayor John Stromberg and partners in the Ashland Forest Resiliency Project Master Stewardship Agreement hosted a field visit from Jim Hubbard (Deputy Chief, State and Private Forestry) and Elizabeth Reinhardt (Assistant Director, Fire and Aviation Management) of the Forest Service and Chris Topik (Director, North America Forest Priority) of The Nature Conservancy. They toured the 22,000-acre mixed conifer project area encompassing the watershed that is home to Ashland's municipal water supply, talking with local Conservancy staff and other partners, including the Ashland Fire Department, Lomakatsi Restoration Project and the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest.

Partners in this landscape recently completed 4,000 acres of fuel reduction and restoration treatments, including nearly 1,000 acres of work with ground-based machinery and helicopters; prescribed fire treatments are now planned and ramping up. The restoration thinning under this project has so far delivered 3.5 million board-feet to a local mill and

generated \$1.5 million in receipts, which will be redirected to project work. Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER) funding is supporting some of the treatments on strategic private and city units in the lower reaches of the watershed.

Partners on this project have engaged key stakeholders from the start, and surveys show increasing social—and financial—support for this place-based work. Forest supervisor Rob MacWhorter, and city leaders from the world-renowned Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Chamber of Commerce, and the Public Works Department shared their perspectives with the visitors. Citing the recreation / tourism, economic and aesthetic values in the watershed, they emphasized the importance of restoration and fuels treatments in reducing the risk of wildfire to local homes and community, protecting clean drinking water and conserving these diverse frequent-fire forests that are home to the northern spotted owl, Pacific fisher and other wildlife. Local community support is strong enough that Mayor Stromberg recently committed \$350,000 on

behalf of the city to support restoration actions on national forest lands in the city's watershed.

Future work will complete treatment on another 3,600 acres on the national forest. Partnering with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, AFR partners will broaden the work to adjacent private lands, further securing the watershed and other landscape values around the community. Partners appreciated the opportunity to showcase the work they have completed so far, thanking Jim and Elizabeth, and encouraged their continued support in advancing critical cross-boundary, all lands forest conservation work.

Ashland Forest Resiliency Partners & Contractors

- City of Ashland
- Columbia Helicopters
- Forest Energy Group
- Grayback Forestry
- KSWild (Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center)
- Lomakatsi Restoration Project
- Murphy Lumber
- Oregon State University Extension.
- Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative
- The Nature Conservancy
- USDA Forest Service—Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest



Jim Hubbard, Elizabeth Reinhardt (both Forest Service) and Chris Topik (TNC) joined community leaders and restoration partners to get the big picture of the forest/city interface, and visit the city's municipal water supply on Ashland Creek to appreciate the historical foundation for effective partnership between the Forest Service and community.
photos: TNC/Kerry Metlen



The Fire Learning Network and Scaling-up to Promote Ecosystem Resiliency (SPER) are supported by *Promoting Ecosystem Resiliency through Collaboration: Landscapes, Learning and Restoration*, a cooperative agreement between The Nature Conservancy, USDA Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior. For more information, contact Lynn Decker at ldecker@tnc.org or (801) 320-0524



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