

Rogue Forest Partners active in the community and in the forest

BY TERRY FAIRBANKS

Members of the Rogue Forest Partners (RFP) attended a community wildfire education fair hosted by A Greater Applegate and the Applegate Valley Fire District on June 26. Representatives from the Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon State University, Bureau of Land Management, Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association, Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center (KS Wild), and Prescription for Safety also joined the event.

What was initially planned as an outdoor event was driven indoors by record-setting high temperatures, but, thankfully, the heat did not deter Applegate residents, and RFP had an opportunity to discuss ecological forest restoration and wildfire risk reduction efforts with local landowners. Topics included planned fuels reduction treatments across public and private lands, defensible space around homes, the need for ecological forest

restoration, and the availability of local resources. It was a pleasure to meet community members, and we look forward to doing so again!

Engaging our local workforce

This spring, our lead implementation partner, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, completed cutting and piling on 100 acres for ecological fuels reduction in our Upper Applegate Watershed (UAW) project area. At times, LRP crews received piling assistance from a local forestry contractor and from students at various high schools as part of Lomakatsi's ninth annual Ashland Watershed Youth Training and Employment Program.

This work followed months of planning, prescription writing, pre-work assessments, and treatment marking by LRP's restoration forestry team. With fire season restricting chainsaw operation in the woods and LRP's crew assisting on the Bootleg Fire, work will resume on the remaining 175 acres in the Applegate this fall.

Later this year, LRP and partners will request proposals for commercial thinning work at UAW. The small-diameter timber removed as the by-product of restoration will be sold to local mills. The revenue generated will then be reinvested back into our project areas for more restoration. The additional funds are particularly

critical in high-priority areas, such as the wildland-urban interface, that do not have commercially viable timber and traditionally lack adequate funding. We strive to source all contractors locally and encourage those in the Applegate and Rogue valleys to stay tuned and consider submitting proposals.

Implementation Review Team visits Williams Project

Our Williams project area spans 6,625 acres managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and several private landowners in the Williams community. On June 24, the RFP implementation review team (IRT) toured two units in the project to assess management plans, accomplishments, challenges, and next steps. Implementation members included recreation, tribal, industry, and conservation representatives.

The units' treatments primarily focus on (1) reducing wildfire hazards to help limit the spread of fire towards adjacent homes and (2) providing safe and effective fire suppression opportunities.

Landowner objectives vary based on opportunity and landscape position, but generally, they include:

- Promotion of a healthy forest that is resilient to fire by enhancing the growing space of retained trees and proportion of hardwoods while encouraging tree and shrub diversity
- Reduction of hazardous surface and ladder fuels
- Clearing along roads and driveways to aid egress in the event of a potential wildfire
- Enhanced quality of wildlife and aquatic habitat
- Understory thinning using similar ecological practices for hazardous fuels reduction

Within the units reviewed, non-commercial tree removal was limited



Earlier this year, Lomakatsi Restoration Project crews worked on 100 acres of ecological fuels reduction in the Applegate Watershed project area. Photo: Lomakatsi Restoration Project.

to trees less than eight-inch diameter. The review team concluded these stands would have benefited from the removal of strategically selected trees of commercial value, those greater than eight-inch diameter. Broadcast underburning, used in conjunction with selective thinning and pile burning, was also strongly recommended for the project.

Ecological thinning and underburning improve the health of retained trees and restore more open forest conditions for understory vegetation, which, in turn, restores ecological function to these forests. With continued implementation, these treatments are expected to significantly reduce wildfire hazards and increase fire management options and safety.

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Rogue Forest Partners (RFP) is a group of four nonprofits and six public agencies working as one for the communities and forests of the Rogue Basin to reduce wildfire risks, enhance wildlife habitat, and create equitable, sustainable jobs. For more information, visit rogueforestpartners.org.

The Applegate Valley Wildfire Education Fair in June provided an opportunity for community members to ask questions and get involved in wildfire fuels reduction and risk mitigation. Photo: Rogue Forest Partners.



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