

# \$6.8 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to advance wildfire resilience in Oregon

WASHINGTON — Today the Department of the Interior announced that it has invested over \$6.8 million in fiscal year 2022 funding from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to advance wildfire resilience work and support fuels management projects in Oregon on 49,039 acres of land across the state. This is part of \$103 million allocated by the Department earlier this year to reduce wildfire risk, mitigate impacts and rehabilitate burned areas. The additional funding will help complete fuels treatments on nearly 2 million acres nationwide this fiscal year, a substantial increase over the prior year.

“As climate change drives harsher heat waves, more volatile weather, and record drought conditions, we are seeing wildfire seasons turn to wildfire years, threatening communities, businesses, wildlife and the environment,” said Deputy Secretary Tommy Beaudreau. “Through President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we are investing in Oregon communities, advancing wildfire resilience work across

the country, improving resources for the heroic firefighting workforce, and reducing the risk of wildfire.

The announcement comes as Deputy Secretary Beaudreau is in the Western U.S. this week to highlight how investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act are advancing wildfire resilience and drought resilience. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is bringing much-needed support to communities across the country to increase the resilience of lands facing the threat of wildland fires and to better support federal wildland firefighters. The law includes \$1.5 billion for the Department over the next five years to invest in preparedness, fuels management, post-fire restoration, and fire science. It also directs major reforms for federal wildland firefighters, including temporary pay increases and a new occupational series classification more specific to firefighters.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law investments in wildland fire management

in Oregon will increase fuels treatment in areas with high wildfire hazard potential, helping to protect homes and businesses in the wildland-urban interface and public drinking water. These efforts will promote climate resiliency across landscapes and communities and will employ Tribal members, youth, and veterans.

A portion of this year’s wildfire resilience funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will be used to continue development of a wildfire risk mapping and mitigation tool, which is being developed jointly with USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters. The tool will assist land managers in collectively identifying potential wildfire risks and sharing planned and accomplished mitigation activities. The law also provides increased support to the Joint Fire Science Program, an interagency partnership with the USDA Forest Service that funds

wildfire science research projects.

The Department’s recently released Five-year Monitoring, Maintenance, and Treatment Plan to address wildfire risk laid out a road map for achieving these objectives in coordination with federal, non-federal, and Tribal partners. In combination with the USDA Forest Service’s 10-Year Wildfire Crisis Strategy, these plans outline the monitoring, maintenance, and treatment strategy the agencies will use to address wildfire risk, better serve communities, and improve conditions on all types of lands where wildfires can occur.

## A girl and her bike



(Courtesy photo for IVN)

A very happy Briar Siewell was the winner of the girls bike at the Lions Club Labor Day Festival.

## Rabies discovered in two Josephine County animals

JOSEPHINE COUNTY, Ore. — Authorities are urging pet owners take additional precautions after rabies was discovered in two wild animals in Josephine County.

The two mammals, a bat and a fox, were found outside Wildlife Images Rehabilitation and Education Center in Merlin and tested positive for rabies Sept. 8, according to the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at Oregon State University.

“People can take two precautions to protect themselves and their pets from bats and rabies,” said Emilio DeBess, public health veterinarian with the Oregon Health Authority. “Never handle bats and make sure your cats and dogs are up to date on their rabies vaccines.”

Rabies is a viral disease of mammals that attacks an infected animal’s nervous system. Rabies symptoms in wildlife, particularly foxes and raccoons, include lethargy,

walking in circles, loss of muscular coordination, convulsions, irritability or aggressiveness, disorientation, excessive drooling and showing no fear of humans, according to Josephine County Public Health.

“Unfortunately, bats often carry rabies,” DeBess said. “If you find a bat during the daylight hours, it is probably not healthy and should be avoided.”

JCPH advises residents to avoid bats and to not handle them. Those who find a bat are encouraged to contact the Josephine County Sheriff’s Office Animal Control Division at (541) 474-5123. Residents whose pets may have come in contact with a bat are asked to contact their veterinarians.

While bats play a valuable role in nature, contact with humans should be avoided, according to JCPH. Sick bats may be seen flopping around on the ground or otherwise acting unusual.

Residents who find a sick bat or

other sick wildlife on their property are asked to take children and pets indoors and to not handle the animal without protection. Use a disposable container with a lid to scoop the animal into the container and dispose of it in the trash. If a bat has had contact with a human or an animal, call JCPH at (541) 474-5325.

Animals typically acquire rabies by eating or coming in contact with a rabid bat. Very few bats in Oregon have rabies and rabies in other wildlife is even rarer.

JCPH recommends residents vaccinated their dogs and cats against rabies; watch wildlife from a distance; do not feed wild animals; keep garbage in secure containers and away from wildlife; feed pets indoors; and screen chimneys and seal openings in attics, basements, porches, sheds and barns that might provide access to bats and other wildlife.

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