

# State launching projects to reduce wildfire risk in Northeast Oregon

**Total funding for three regional projects is \$427,000**

*East Oregonian*

LA GRANDE — The Oregon Department of Forestry is putting to work in Northeast Oregon some of the \$5 million it was granted in January by the Oregon Legislative Emergency Board for reducing wildfire risk.

Of 37 total projects statewide, the agency has one in Wallowa County, one

in Wheeler County, and one in multiple counties, including the previous two and Umatilla, Union and Grant counties. Total funding for the three projects is \$427,000. The projects rely on partnerships to improve community resilience to wildfire and restore and maintain healthy, resilient forests.

“The funds from the Emergency Board provide the state with an incredible opportunity to bring together public and private groups to complete some critical fuels mitigation work in advance of the 2021 fire season,” said Oregon

State Forester Peter Daugherty. “This is shared stewardship in action. When we work together, we can treat more acres across ownership boundaries and have a greater impact on fire resiliency in communities and forests throughout the state.”

The project in Wheeler County is on the Umatilla National Forest and is a continuation of a habitat improvement and wildfire reduction that involves the USDA Forest Service, Sustainable Northwest, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, with Sustainable Northwest

as the partner project lead.

Another project with the USDA Forest Service is on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. A third project is with My Blue Mountains Woodland Partnership, the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the USDA Forest Service.

After receiving the funds in January, ODF put out a call for proposals and received 93 applications totaling over \$20 million. The 37 projects were chosen from among those applications.

Some 35 projects involve direct treatments on the land. ODF and its partners

will employ various fuel treatment methods ranging from ODF fuel crews, landowner cost shares and rebates and/or contracted equipment services.

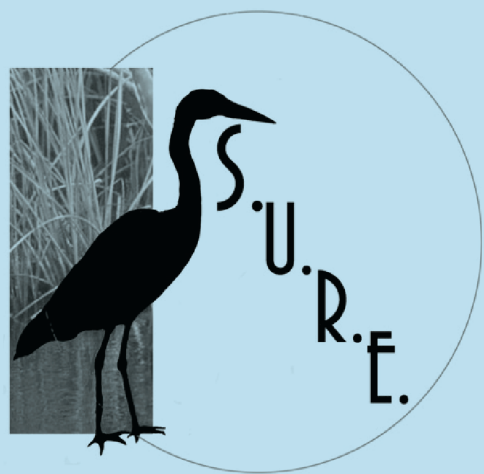
ODF Partnership and Planning Program Manager Jeff Burns said the funding will also allow ODF to increase its organizational capacity through equipment and adding a few full-time staff.

“We’re hiring six field-based positions to address local capacity needs and two Salem administrative positions, which will support field operations,” he said. “This is important given the

increasing complexity of cross-boundary programs with multiple partners and funding sources.”

Burns said the field positions allow ODF to keep seasonal firefighters engaged outside of peak fire months.

“That’s already paid off in Eastern Oregon because we had trained firefighting staff doing fuels treatment work when a large wildfire was reported in late March. They were able to join the response, adding to our initial attack capability even as they reduce potential fire intensity with their fuels treatment,” he said.



## STEWARDS OF THE UMATILLA RIVER ENVIRONMENT

Umatilla Basin Watershed Council  
East Oregonian • Pendleton Parks & Rec

# SPRING 2021 River Cleanup

**SATURDAY • APRIL 17, 2021  
9:30 TO 11:30 A.M.**

**Watershed Council office: 27 SE Third St.**

River Parkway at SE Third St. (behind the EO) in Pendleton

*Join us for a morning cleaning up the river parkway & Umatilla riverbanks!*

**Native plant and tree giveaway, too!  
9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.**

**Celebrate Arbor Day!  
Pick up your FREE  
native plant or tree,  
thanks to the Pendleton  
Tree Commission,  
Umatilla National  
Forest, and  
Pendleton Parks & Rec!**

***We will supply gloves, trash bags, etc.  
Wear sturdy shoes, long pants, long sleeves;  
bring a bottle of water.***

***FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
Facebook: @SUREPendleton  
or call 541-278-2667***

***Our mission: To enhance the environment along the Umatilla River for people, fish and wildlife.***