

# Community Fire Plan Update—New Priorities

BY SANDY SHAFFER

Earlier in 2010 we set about updating the priority fuels reduction projects across the Applegate Watershed. The original list came out of the 2002 *Applegate Fire Plan*, and quite a bit had been accomplished across all lands in our great Applegate Valley (almost 40,000 acres treated). So, a group of 15-20 stakeholders from various neighborhoods, agencies, NGOs and such met to work through what we saw had been completed and what was still a priority. These folks were from our local Fire District, the Applegate Partnership Watershed Council, the BLM and USFS, the Oregon Department of Forestry, and also from neighborhoods across the valley. All work, or have worked within our watershed, so they know the lands, the roads, the people.

As in the original Fire Plan, we used the 19 Strategic Planning Areas or SPAs (see map below) that we'd designated to break our nearly 500,000 acre watershed into manageable sub-basin-sized areas for planning (e.g. Thompson Creek or Slate Creek). We've always tried to find priority tasks in *all* 19 SPAs so that we don't identify one neighborhood as a higher priority over others.

As a result of these meetings, we now have a list of 38 proposed priority fuels "projects". They are listed below for your review and comment, and you'll find that some are natural resource concerns, some are desired future conditions, some are fire safety concerns to implement, and some are actual neighborhoods where we felt fuel reduction work is needed. As you read through the list you'll notice one theme coming out across the watershed, and that is to *maintain* all of the hazardous fuels work that has already been done on both private and public lands. A lot of good, effective work has happened since 2001 when we started writing our Community Fire Plan, and the efforts and investments need to be preserved.

None of these proposed priorities are actually "mapped" yet; most need more development and detail, even though they might seem fairly explicit. Right now we are looking for comments, additions or concerns from you, our community. Then we'll polish up the list and present it to our local and state governments for their "blessing." (That's protocol for community fire plans, so that federal funds are accessible for implementation.)

So, please read through the list here, and let me know if you have comments, ideas or concerns. (*Clarification in the list: in order to save space, I abbreviated the wildland urban interface as WUI and SDM is small diameter materials.*) Please do so by January 31, 2011, and reference the SPA item number (e.g. 3C) in your comments, so that we can continue to move forward expediently with our process. Thank you!

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## Proposed 2011 Applegate SPA Projects

### #1: Middle/Butte

1A: Find a way to reduce risks to wilderness and late seral reserves on Forest Service lands, within the limited USFS planning allowed.

### #2: Carberry (Steve's/Sturgis/O'Brien)

2A: Make Road 777 a safe and viable escape route for both Carberry and Thompson Creek residents.

2B: Make residences/residents more fire safe; reduce risks of fire spreading from private lands to federal wilderness/late seral reserves.

2C: Increase chances for large legacy trees in Steve's Fork area to withstand a wildfire, insects, disease, etc. by reducing the understory.

### #3: Squaw/Elliott/Applegate Lake

3A: Reduce hazardous fuels on Forest Service lands around Applegate and Squaw Lakes.

3B: Reduce hazardous fuels along ridges and other areas to protect species diversity. Possibly preserve area as a baseline for Research Natural Areas?

3C: Yellow Jacket Ridge to Dutchman: Increase health and reproduction rates of pines in the area.

### #4: Beaver/Palmer

4A: Build on previous fuel reduction work so hazard doesn't increase, especially in Beaver Creek to Texture Gulch areas.

4B: USFS and private lands: China Gulch area off Flumet Road: Build upon work already completed by thinning some strategically located parcels, to protect the WUI in the area.

### #5: Star

5A: Off Star Gulch Rd., Dead Stew(ardship) project area: Reduce risks to WUI by continuing to do thinning/treatments in the watershed, utilizing small diameter materials.

5B: Protect WUI and resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands.

### #6: Upper Little Applegate

6A: Dog Fork/Crepsey Gulch area: Decrease the risk to private homes and lives in the area by reducing fuel loads and utilizing SDM.

6B: Old Bald Lick area eastward, near Wagner Butte: Help prevent a fire start in the Applegate from spreading into the Ashland

watershed by strategic placing of fuel reduction projects.

6C: Sterling Mine Ditch area: Protect the area and resources by doing fuel reduction treatments to complement previous trail thinning work.

### #7: Lower Little Applegate

7A: Old Bobar area: Reduce density of stands and increase stand health by removing and utilizing SDM.

7B: Protect WUI and resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands.

### #8: Spencer/Forest

8A: Poorman Creek Ridge area to west Medford, Knowles Road: Protect/enhance oak savannahs and large pine in the area by promoting fuel reduction on private lands to reduce hazards.

8B: Protect WUI and resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands.

### #9: Humbug Creek

9A: Upper and West Fork of Humbug Creek, over to Slagle area: Do strategic thinning on all lands to help better protect homes and lives.

9B: Area from China Gulch over to Humbug Creek: Protect/maintain work completed on private and BLM lands in China Gulch and Humbug Creek areas.

### #10: Thompson Creek

10A: West of 6000 block – "Hoot Owl" area: Expand defensible space work to provide safer access/egress and to better protect private and federal lands.

10B: BLM lands in upper drainage: Treat O and C lands while managing for species in this heavy fuel load area.

10C: All lands in drainage: Protect WUI and resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands and utilizing SDM.

### #11: East Williams

11A: All lands in "Pipe Fork Area" in SE corner of watershed: Protect Port-Orford cedar (POC) in area from root disease spread and also protect, enhance and utilize existing USFS POC data here.

11B: Use past history of collaborative work with locals to design a small diameter utilization project on BLM lands.

11C: "Clapboard Gulch" area: Increase private landowner and firefighter access/egress in area by thinning along roads and around homes.

### #12: West Williams

12A: Cedar Flat Rd and Hartley Lane areas: Create defensible space for homes in area; do roadside thinning for safer egress by residents and firefighters.

12B: "Deer Willy" area; Cedar Flat and Mungers: Do private roadside thinning and defensible space to reduce risk to homes and firefighters and to protect BLM's Deer Willy project work.

### #13: Lower Williams

13A: Raise resident awareness of late seral reserves, forest health and Deer Willy work, with goal of reducing fuels/increasing stand health on private properties to help protect these values.

### #14: Slagle Creek

14A: Raise awareness of the value of legacy oaks and pines; work to thin all lands for stand health and protection from stand-replacing fire.

14B: Protect WUI and resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands.

### #15: Murphy

15A: Milepost 10 from Hyde Park Road to Grays Creek Road: Increase homeowner safety by promoting more defensible space and roadside thinning on private lands, with SDM utilization.

15B: Board Shanty area: Scott Road east and west: Increase homeowner safety by promoting more defensible space and roadside thinning on private lands.

### #16: Murphy Creek

16A: Protect WUI and natural resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands.

### #17: Cheney Creek

17A: Initiate a public education campaign to thin to protect late seral reserves, oaks and general forest health, while making homes more fire safe.

### #18: Lower Applegate

18A: Protect WUI and resources by maintaining previous treatments on all lands.

### #19: Slate Creek

19A: BLM's Cheney-Slate project area: Protect private WUI residents by treating high fuels on BLM lands.

19B: Reduce risk to residents and firefighters by promoting the creation of defensible space and safe access routes in watershed.

