

CHAPTER 3.

Identification of a landscape

Klamath County has a total land area of approximately 4 million acres, and Lake County has approximately 5 million acres. These two combined areas are about 15 percent of the total land area of the state of Oregon. In its 2010 publication *Federal Forestland in Oregon*, the Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI) reported that:

- Within both counties, public land management (i.e., USFS, BLM, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife) covers about 75 percent of the total land area, and private land ownership is about 25 percent.
- Many small and large private land parcels in Lake and Klamath counties are adjacent to public land.
- The state of Oregon is 47 percent forested. Of that, 60 percent is managed by federal agencies.
- Klamath County is 81 percent forested, and Lake County is 26 percent forested.

Due to the intermingled ownership of public and private land, it is recommended to design cross-boundary projects in coordination with National Environmental Policy (NEPA)-ready projects (ones for which NEPA documents are completed and signed). This helps ensure that projects on public and private land are implemented in the same timeframe. Private landowners are often pleased to know that treatments are occurring “across the fence” on federal land and that there are opportunities for cooperative implementation. Cooperation across public and private land adds efficiency and effectiveness to projects such as timber harvest, service contracts, or prescribed burning.

When a NEPA-ready project is identified, select a broader landscape for the cross-boundary project area. Base the selection on the geographic area, watershed boundaries, or other features. If the landscape includes a large amount of private land, consider completing a risk assessment of the broader area to determine the most appropriate project area boundary.

Risk assessment criteria could include: land ownership, USFS priority landscapes, broad vegetation classes, fire history, communities at risk identified

Tools for success: Design your landscape around NEPA-ready federal land projects

It is recommended that cross-boundary, landscape-scale projects be developed around NEPA-ready, federal land projects (where relationships are favorable) to create long-lasting partnerships across boundaries. These partnerships begin with a shared vision of what the landscape could look like, while balancing all the other values that are inherent in land management (e.g., social, economic, biological interests). Planning needs to extend over several generations. A diverse landscape plan incorporates multiple values for future generations while enhancing natural resources. The partnerships must share a general vision for treatments to restore and maintain landscapes appropriately (so that they are scientifically and operationally sound) and have the expertise to implement site-specific projects. The site-specific projects should accommodate specific economic, social, biotic and abiotic systems, and other complexities to meet the goals of the larger vision.

Select a landscape at a scale commensurate with the challenge of reducing the risk of wildfire (Fry and Bender, 2015).

within Community Wildfire Protection Plans and the Oregon State Communities at Risk Project, and personal knowledge of the landowners and communities. Another resource to help local land managers prioritize regional-scale, multiownership considerations in a risk management assessment is the publication *A new approach to evaluate forest structure restoration needs across Oregon and Washington, USA* in Resources (page 111).

As recommended in the *Western Water Threatened by Wildfire: It's not Just a Public Land Issue* report, select a landscape at a scale commensurate with the challenge of reducing the risk of wildfire. In general, the cross-boundary landscape should be 100,000 to 300,000 acres in size. Refer to the maps in Chapter 11 (page 39) for case-study examples of landscape-scale, cross-boundary project areas.