

CHAPTER 4.

Landowner outreach and education

According to the *Family Forestland Resource Guide* published by the Oregon Forest Resources Institute:

1. There are 60,000 private landowners in the state of Oregon, who own about 4.3 million acres of forestland.
2. These family forestlands cover roughly 40 percent of the total private forestland in Oregon.
3. These owners are as diverse as their forestland. In the National Woodland Owner Survey completed in 2013, owners listed over 100 occupations and professions—ranging from doctors, educators, librarians, lawyers and engineers to accountants, florists, clergymen, journalists, and firefighters, as well as professional foresters.
4. Each private landowner in the state likely has a different set of goals, objectives, and management styles.

Conducting an effective outreach and education effort can be challenging, especially in largely populated areas. The greater the number of landowners and/or subdivisions within a given landscape, the more important it is to preplan, evaluate, and decide on a set of strategies specifically designed to reach as many landowners as possible in the project area. Refer to Appendix B (page 65) for an example of an outreach and education plan and organization format.

Specialists have a lot to offer when it comes to professional instruction and education. Agency foresters, wildlife biologists, hydrologists, and fire managers are available to instruct in workshop settings. Agency partners also can use these educational opportunities to connect with private landowners and establish relationships. It is important to remember that some agencies have more trust with the public than others. It may be better for a neutral party, such as Oregon State University Extension Service (a nonregulatory entity) or Watershed Council (a nongovernmental organization), to lead outreach efforts instead of federal or state agencies.

Lesson learned: Bring the information to the outdoors

Public education and engagement are vital to effective landowner education and outreach. When forest landowners understand the realities, issues, and project possibilities for addressing forest health and wildfire topics, they can move toward a solution.

Outdoor workshops are especially useful outreach tools. Being outside is key to learning, whether it's through a one-to-one site visit with a landowner or a field trip with a group of people. An hour or two of field instruction and discussion is worth many hours of indoor presentations.

Producing analyses and documents like Community Wildfire Protection Plans is just one step in the process, not the end result. Bringing information to field practitioners and landowners in the form of forest health improvement projects is the goal. Successful project completion on some initial parcels will often result in interest by neighbors to treat their adjacent property. As more parcels are completed, neighbors see success and want to replicate it. The project forester spreads the word among landowners, and the entire community benefits from the collective defensible space.



Assessing the North Warner Project in the field

Photo: Amy Markus

It is important to remember that some agencies have more trust with the public than others. It may be better for a neutral party, such as Oregon State University Extension Service (a nonregulatory entity) or Watershed Council (a nongovernmental organization), to lead outreach efforts instead of federal or state agencies.

Oregon State University Extension Service (the College of Forestry Extension, in particular) can be a valuable partner in landscape management because it serves as a liaison to OSU College of Forestry resources. The OSU Extension Service Catalog is also a useful resource. The Catalog offers core curricula such as:

- *Basic Forest Inventory Techniques for Family Forest Owners* (PNW 630)
- *Fire-Adapted Communities: The Next Step in Wildfire Preparedness* (EM 9116)
- *Management Planning for Woodland Owners: Why and How* (EC 1125)
- *Fire Science Core Curriculum* (EM 9172)

See Resources (page 111) for more information. These courses are time-tested and offered or facilitated by local Extension agents and statewide Extension specialists. These courses connect education and outreach by bringing landowners into a cooperative workshop environment with agency personnel. This is another way to demonstrate how all the partners work together, building relationships with each other and in communities.

“When you are talking about the safety of someone’s home and property, stakeholder engagement is more than meetings and mailings; it is a personal relationship that shows you have their interests and wellbeing at heart.”

Leigh Ann Vradenburg, Klamath Watershed Partnership Project Manager

OSU Extension Service foresters and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) foresters make house calls when requested by individuals or neighborhoods. These outreach and educational opportunities build rapport, establish relationships, and help create a word-of-mouth reputation of trust. The Oregon Forest Resources Institute and the American Forest Foundation are excellent organizations to reach out to for assistance in developing printed and electronic resources such as newsletters, door-hangers, brochures, posters, mailings, and solicitations for outreach and educational activities.

The Oregon Forest Resources Institute and the American Forest Foundation are excellent organizations to reach out to for assistance, and to produce professional-quality printed and electronic resources for education and outreach.

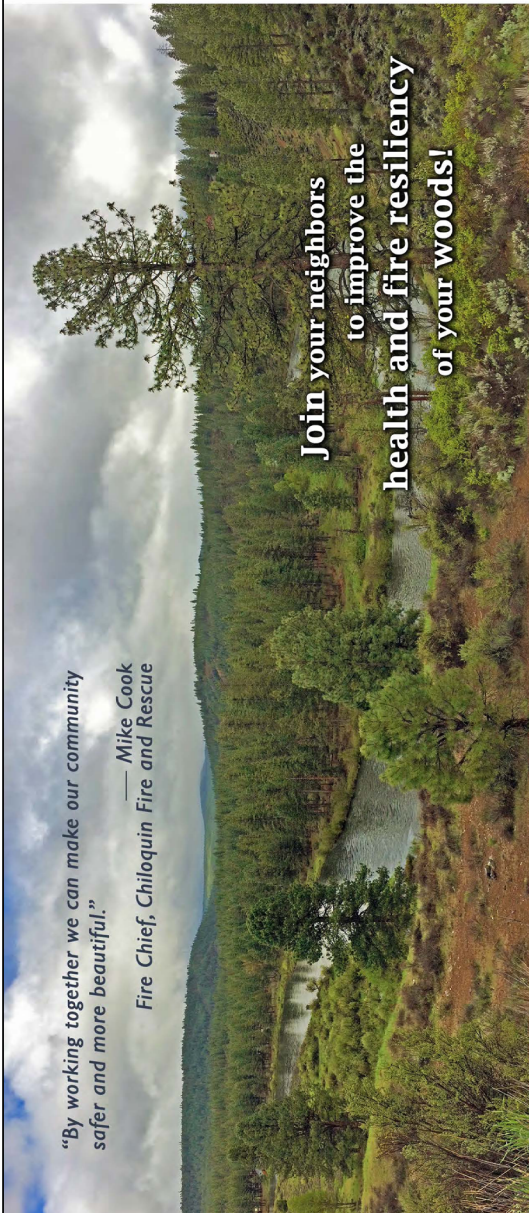


Forest health workshop in Lake County

Photo: Lake County Examiner

"By working together we can make our community safer and more beautiful."

Fire Chief, Chiloquin Fire and Rescue
— Mike Cook



Join your neighbors to improve the health and fire resiliency of your woods!

Your woods may provide your family with many benefits:

- ◆ Recreation
- ◆ Livestock grazing
- ◆ Wildlife
- ◆ Protection for future generations
- ◆ Beauty
- ◆ Income

No matter why you own your land, the Chiloquin Community Forest and Fire Project has valuable tools and resources for landowners like you.

WHERE DO WE START?

You are being invited to the first of several community meetings and educational opportunities. We will also be calling and knocking on doors to inform everyone about this effort. You may even be encouraged by your neighbors to get involved -- remember, wildfire knows no property boundaries!

NEXT STEPS

This summer we will be working with private landowners throughout the Chiloquin area to map their forests and fire risks at no cost or obligation to them. This will provide landowners information on forest health, treatments to reduce risk, and a foundation for a land management plan.

Our ultimate goal is to secure grant funding to allow landowners to complete forest treatments on their property, creating tracts of resilient forests across public and private land.

By providing technical and financial resources throughout the process, we hope to reduce the risk of wildfire for the larger Chiloquin community.

Visit www.KLFHP.org/chiloquin
or email foresthealth@KLFHP.org to learn more.

The Chiloquin Community Forest and Fire Project is sponsored by the Klamath-Lake Forest Health Partnership -- a group of federal and state agencies, non-profits, private entities, and landowners committed to forestland restoration.

