LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
Let it be known that all Extension programming throughout the state of Oregon happens on traditional homelands. We acknowledge that Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, is located within the traditional homelands of the Mary’s River or Ampinefu Band of Kalapuya. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855, Kalapuya people were forcibly removed to reservations in Western Oregon. Today, living descendants of these people are a part of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. To learn more, https://diversity.oregonstate.edu/feature-story/land-acknowledgement
FIRE PROGRAM MISSION
The Extension Fire Program empowers people to live well with fire.

ABOUT THE OSU EXTENSION FIRE PROGRAM
The Extension Fire Program is part of the broader Forestry and Natural Resources (FNR) Extension Program at Oregon State University (OSU). The Program uses education, outreach, and boundary spanning partnerships to foster resiliency of communities and landscapes to wildfire at scale. The approach centers on a team of six wildland fire specialists who help to seek regionally relevant solutions in the diverse ecological and social contexts of their service areas. This report summarizes the activities and outcomes of the Extension Fire Program in 2022.

In this last year, we continued to learn and grow our program, and focused on:
• Collaborating on fire preparedness efforts at the community level.
• Supporting planning, implementation, and adaptation of landscape resiliency projects.
• Offering science-based outreach and education, and increasing our partnership with the Northwest Fire Science Consortium.
• Engaging in and learning from the implementation of new state fire policies for landscape resiliency, prescribed fire, and community fire preparedness.
• Developing a strategic framework for our program’s purpose and goals.

We use education, outreach, and boundary spanning partnerships to foster the resiliency of communities and landscapes to wildfire at scale.
The second year of the Extension Fire Program focused on state-level preparedness efforts and investments in state policy efforts. Key examples of our collective work as a team included:

**Fire Aware Fire Prepared (FAFP) webinar series**
This series of webinars was developed based on a broad and growing educational need to better prepare for wildfires in Oregon. Eleven webinars were offered to proactively address wildfire preparedness at three levels: individual, community, and the landscape. These webinars reached people in all 36 counties in Oregon, 30 states and six countries. There were over 10,000 views of the live and recorded webinars. Follow-up surveys showed that over 90% of participants felt more prepared for wildfire after watching the webinars. Many participants also responded to the “call to action” given at the end of each webinar and did one task to adapt better to wildfire (e.g., prepared a go bag, talked to their neighbor, etc.). The webinar series can be accessed here, [https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/online-webinar-guide](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/online-webinar-guide)

**Prescribed fire basics collection of modules**
This six module Prescribed Fire Basics collection was developed in 2021 and published in spring 2022. The goal of this series was to provide introductory-level information to increase understanding of the importance and mechanics of prescribed burns. These modules will also help guide and inform future education and training events. Hundreds of people have viewed online and hard copy versions of these publications. The modules can be accessed here, [https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/what-prescribed-fire](https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/what-prescribed-fire)

**Prescribed fire training**
A prescribed fire education and awareness training was provided to the NRCS District Conservationists. The goal of this training was to help NRCS planners determine when to recommend prescribed fire as a conservation practice and to provide them with the tools to do so. In a few short months following the training, the number of new NRCS prescribed burn plans increased, and the number of acres slated for prescribed fire has also increased from a few hundred to nearly 10,000 acres. A short video describing the event can be accessed here, [https://beav.es/SXc](https://beav.es/SXc)

As a result of these prescribed fire educational materials and training, landowners and managers now have additional tools to implement diverse conservation practices that will help native systems be more resilient to wildfire and future changes in climate.

**Smoke ready communities**
The Smoke Ready Communities working group was convened by OSU Extension Forestry and Natural Resources faculty members in January 2021 and brought together multiple institutions, organizations, and agencies. The goal of this group was to identify how people living in Oregon access information about smoke, what educational information and resources exist and how well they meet needs, and what mechanisms/media work best for people impacted by smoke (including when they are displaced by fire evacuations). The result of this working group was the development of a community of practice that offered space for collaboration, partnership, and relationship building.

**Policy efforts**
Significant investment was made to support policy efforts in 2022. Regional fire specialists served as partners in risk reduction projects in their areas, helped track lessons learned, sought equitable access to resources, and supported landscape resiliency and small private forestland program projects. We also provide key advisory and support roles for a rulemaking advisory committee for new prescribed burning efforts, a new study of prescribed fire liability and insurance (HB 2571), the Governor’s Wildfire Programs Advisory Council, and the development of ODF’s new 20-year strategic plan for wildfire risk reduction.

To learn more about the 2021 Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Fire Program Impact Report, [https://beav.es/S6A](https://beav.es/S6A)
Administrative Updates

In late August 2022, Dr. Kayla Bordelon joined our team as the new regional fire specialist for the Willamette Valley/North Cascades fire service area. Kayla originally hails from Oregon but has spent time working and learning in diverse places from Panama to Idaho. She brings valued expertise in dialogic engagement, community outreach, and social science. Learn more about Kayla’s work to date on p. 12.

The Extension Fire Program has continued to be advised by a State Advisory Committee with representation from key groups (below, Table). The Committee meets virtually on a quarterly basis. Their feedback and insight have been instrumental to the direction of the Program, and we value our ongoing relationships with these partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bureau of Land Management, OR/WA office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon</td>
<td>Federal agency</td>
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<td>Oregon Department of Forestry</td>
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<td>Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal</td>
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<td>Oregon Prescribed Fire Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oregon Small Woodland Owners Association/Tree Farm</td>
<td>Nonprofit organization/ member association</td>
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<td>Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board</td>
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<td>Federal agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>University of Oregon, Ecosystem Workforce Program</td>
<td>University</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Interim Fire Program Director Emily Jane Davis became OSU’s Principal Investigator for the Northwest Fire Science Consortium, and with the management team of that organization, successfully obtained further funding for its important role in fostering application of the most current fire science to management and practice. Learn more about the NWFSC on p. 8.

The Extension Fire Program developed and entered into an Interagency Agreement to facilitate assistance to the Oregon Department of Forestry during wildland fire emergencies. The Agreement allows for OSU personnel to serve as members on ODF Incident Management Teams.

Left: Newest fire team member, Kayla Bordelon, photo by Ej Davis
COMMITMENTS AND WORK IN 2022
The OSU Extension Service is committed to equal access and opportunity, and to ensuring all reasonable effort is made to deliver and to provide access to Extension programs and services for all individuals.

Example tactics the fire team utilized to ensure accessibility and inclusivity of programming include:
- Closed captioning and colorful photos and infographics in virtual presentations.
- Trauma-informed care approaches when speaking and listening to other’s stories.
- Recorded webinars so people could watch on their own timeline.
- Resource packets and distributed them through postal mailings and site visits.
- Safe relationship building opportunities with local communities and partners where possible.

A core value of OSU Extension is that we exhibit respect, value differing perceptions and world views, and encourage diversity.

Putting these principles into action as a new program to date has largely meant listening, learning, and seeking to build authentic relationships with diverse communities around the state. Fostering these relationships takes time, care, and humility. We particularly recognize that wildfire disproportionately affects the security and livelihoods of populations including non-English speakers, people of color, Tribal, and low-income communities; and that access to resources to prepare, respond, and recover is often unevenly distributed.

As we continued to grow our understanding of community needs and interests in 2022, we took the following steps:
- Worked to develop locally and culturally appropriate programming and partnerships that account for disparities in power and social status. This included new fire preparedness resources for Spanish speaking communities, informed by assessment and outreach; growth of partnerships and resources for the Latino/a/x forest workforce; and a look at how equity was addressed in state fire policy.
- Learned about tools for identifying communities with social determinants of vulnerability. The development of a new social vulnerability index for Oregon allowed us to learn about new ways of identifying communities with social factors that may increase their risks and challenges in wildfire preparedness and exposure.
- Worked on our own learning and understanding through numerous professional development and partnership experiences.
2022 Program Level Highlights

The Fire Program has recently focused more on place-based work than in 2021, when we worked collectively at the state level to respond to the complexities of the Labor Day fires and the demand for broad level fire preparedness support. Much effort and support in 2022 went towards regional specialists assessing needs and developing relationships in each of the six service areas, and our development of an overall Program strategic direction.

NEW RESOURCES
Fire preparedness in English and Spanish
A short series of English and Spanish language preparedness resources were developed in response to needs identified in assessment interviews and a review of existing resources. The goal of these cards is to provide culturally sensitive information to Spanish speaking community members that touch on key aspects of preparedness including basic wildfire preparedness for the home, simple actions to reduce wildfire impact before it strikes, how to be smoke ready and tools to support mental health before, during and after a wildfire. Additionally, information and interaction were provided in both Spanish and English at the Latino Fest in Madras, the Almeda Fire Commemoration in Phoenix, and the Resource Fair in Williams. As a result of this work, the Fire Program has become aware of community interest in having Extension take an active role in outreach and education as a partner with existing groups who are already working with Spanish speaking communities, such as the Latinx Interagency Committee. Developing relationships with existing groups will allow us to support their efforts and take a more active role in collaboratively distributing information, spreading awareness, and increasing the inclusivity of wildfire resilience efforts.

Prescribed fire
The Prescribed Fire Basics collection of six modules was published in spring 2022 along with a new website that highlights these publications and prescribed fire in general. The goal of the Prescribed Fire Basics collection is to provide introductory-level information to increase understanding of the importance and mechanics of prescribed burns. These modules are intended for anyone looking to better understand the benefits of prescribed fires and how they are conducted. Readers will learn the role prescribed fire plays across Oregon and get a basic outline of the steps that go into planning and implementing a prescribed burn. Five additional modules were developed in 2022 and published in 2023 including Fire Weather, Fuels, Ignition Techniques and Tools, Monitoring and Evaluation, and Safety. The new webpage with modules can be accessed here, https://extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program/what-prescribed-fire.

Smoke ready communities
A webinar was provided to the public on Preparing for Wildfire Smoke during the 2022 Wildfire Awareness Month (May). This webinar was a collaboration of the Smoke Ready Communities working group and focused on group alignment in messaging to better serve the health and readiness of the people living in Oregon. There were over 800 views of the live and recorded webinar. The webinar can be accessed here, https://extension.oregonstate.edu/video/smoke-ready-oregon-preparing-wildfire-smoke-recorded.

NEW STRATEGIES
All hands on deck for landscape resiliency
Over the last year, Oregon's state and federal fire and land management agencies, Tribes, and regional partners have been working together closely to develop a 20-year strategy for landscape resilience, https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/pages/strategic-plan.aspx. Building off the shared stewardship agreement between the Oregon Department of Forestry and the USDA Forest Service, this strategy will be used to prioritize restoration actions and geographies for wildfire risk reduction, and to direct federal, state, and private investments. The Extension Fire Program has represented OSU on the strategy’s interagency coordination and implementation group, and assisted with assessing the interests and capacities of regional collaboratives and partnerships. This “qualitative capacity assessment” also helps inform our own sense of needs and assets around the state. We will continue to remain core partners as this strategy moves towards implementation.
Building our own foundation
Since the inception of the Extension Fire Program just a few years ago, much has changed. In 2022, we began a process to update and adapt our vision so that it will support us today and into the future. We engaged the expertise of leaders from the Fire-Adapted Communities Learning Network, https://fireadaptednetwork.org/ to guide us on this journey given their similar commitment to fostering and scaling up place-based fire adaptation and shared learning. This process involved asset mapping of partners in each fire service area and at the state level, analyzing how our activities fit the fire-adapted communities’ wheel, https://beav.es/S6d, and building a “North Star” of intended outcomes. We are finalizing, and will soon begin to use and share, our new theory of change and team tools.

NEW SKILLS
Serving the public and fire response partners
Three members of the fire team worked towards becoming Public Information Officers in 2022 by taking the Introduction to Incident Information class offered by Central Oregon Community College. We learned extensively about the PIO’s critical role in supporting effective flows of information and relationships on fires, and even had the chance to practice with a multi-hour incident simulation. Interim Director EJ Davis also gained some experience as a PIO trainee with the Oregon Department of Forestry on the Rum Creek Fire.

Five fire team members took the National Fire Protection Association course on Assessing Structure Ignition Potential from Wildfire hosted by The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal. This course provided an in-depth understanding of wildfire behavior, how homes ignite, and mitigation concepts. This course enables the OSU team to assess structure ignition potential and to recommend appropriate mitigation measures for homes and other structures in residential areas exposed to wildfire hazards. This course also allowed opportunity for the OSU fire program team to build relationships with our OSFM partners.

Bottom left: Fire team members in PIO training. Top right: EJ Davis on a PIO assignment, photos by EJ Davis
Improving science-based media coverage

In collaboration with the University of Oregon’s School of Journalism and Communications, we launched a new effort to increase mutual learning and resource sharing between Oregon journalists and fire scientists to improve science-based coverage of wildfire events and issues. We partnered with Dr. Hollie Smith and others at UO to obtain funding from the Agora Journalism Center for an assessment of the needs and interests of media, fire scientists, and public information officers in Oregon. Results of this assessment from summer 2022 led us to begin developing a resource guide to support media's effective engagement with wildfire topics and encourage more reporting on valuable stories outside of fire season. This guide aligns with but does not duplicate new training required under Oregon's HB 4087 media access bill. In 2023, we will be publishing this guide and learning from how media and others use it during and after this fire season.

Rethinking community fire preparedness approaches

More communities are facing risks from wildfire and seeking ways to adapt and prepare that make sense in their local context. The Extension approach is to support place-based adaption that draws on community strengths, recognizing that a one-size-fits-all model doesn't fit the diversity of people and landscapes in Oregon. To that end, we have initiated new collaborations with others in the Forestry and Natural Resources Extension Program to rethink and envision the broader role of forestry and natural resources Extension in more fire-adapted futures by 1) evaluating our existing fire preparedness educational offerings, 2) assessing the outreach needs of state agencies and developing tools to help them apply relevant social science to how they connect with communities, and 3) creating new fire ecology resources that connect audiences to the diversity of fire history, ecology, and futures around our state. In 2023, we will continue to develop new projects and products based on these collaborations.

Collaborating for meaningful fire science exchange in the Northwest

Since 2012, the Northwest Fire Science Consortium has served as the venue for exchange and application of relevant wildland fire science information among scientists, managers, and practitioners. Current core partners within the consortium are OSU, the Pacific Northwest Research Station and Region 6 of the USDA Forest Service, and the University of Oregon. The Extension Fire Program and consortium have complementary roles, as we similarly support science-based decision making and practice. We collaborated with consortium staff and partners through 2022 to identify common goals and areas of opportunity that can elevate our collective impact. In 2023, the fire program director will begin leading the consortium through a new program of work that further grows its alignment with the Extension Fire Program and other partners. This will include an expanded approach to sensing fire science needs among a diversity of managers, and development of further learning opportunities that respond to those needs. Learn more about the NWFSC here, [https://www.nwfirescience.org/home](https://www.nwfirescience.org/home)
Regional Fire Specialist Highlights

The work of each team member is as diverse as the areas they serve. Examples of this work are provided for each specialist.

Annual Fire Team Planning Meeting 2022, photo by Kayla Bordelon
Nationwide, the Latino population is exposed to greater wildfire risk, relative to other demographics; moreover, they are less likely to have the ability and means to recover following wildfire. Latino communities and the forest workforce could benefit greatly from access to Forestry and Natural Resources Extension forest health and management programming and materials. However, few programs or materials have been developed to serve these communities’ needs.

Aaron Groth and his OSU collaborators worked to expand access to these communities through publications, collaborations, and partnerships. For instance, Aaron contributed to Spanish language fire preparedness resources that met identified needs of a rapid assessment. He organized bilingual outreach display tables that promoted preparedness and resilience at several coastal community events. He has spoken in Spanish to dozens of community members at different public events about wildfire to begin to establish connection and relationships. He is currently working to build “confianza” (trust) in his service area, which takes time, but lays the foundation for effective and equitable collaboration and partnerships.
Hood River and Wasco Counties are fire-prone landscapes with areas of significant wildfire risk to human populations, infrastructure, and other values. Recent historic fires, including the Eagle Creek Fire of 2017 and 2020 Labor Day fires, expanded community awareness of potential negative outcomes associated with local fires, and of smoke impacts from regional wildfire activity. Additionally, a complex web of factors including a regional fire deficit, extended drought, and increased human development in the wildland-urban interface, mean that in the future, the area is likely to see more and larger wildfires with increasing negative impacts on the communities of the Columbia Gorge.

To address the mounting challenges posed by wildfire and work towards a more fire resilient Columbia Gorge, many agencies and organizations are engaged in wildfire risk reduction activities on the landscape and within communities, from fuels reduction projects to community education campaigns. In Kayla Bordelon’s first four months as the WV/NC Regional Fire Specialist she engaged with many of these agencies and organizations to better understand their needs, priorities, and contributions towards fire resilience. By the end of 2022, a number of collective priorities and projects emerged and Kayla looks forward to playing an active role in these efforts.
Forest conditions within Northeast Oregon are overstocked, homogeneous, and dominated by shade-tolerant tree species resulting in a heightened risk of disease, insect outbreak, and catastrophic wildfire. When such a wildfire event occurs, there is potential for significant impacts on the unique resources and vital infrastructure across private lands in this area.

John Rizza and his local coalition of partners seek to improve fire resilience strategically across high-risk areas in the John Day Basin. In particular, the team worked to advance a rapid inventory and ground-based assessment protocol and data collection tool that enabled them to better understand the current landscape conditions on private lands. This information has been the gateway to connect to and reach landowners to discuss inventory data and potential opportunities to reduce their risk, while at the same time aligning with the priorities on federal and state lands. The project has brought together partners from across the region in new ways to strategize future treatment opportunities across all lands. In the last year, the John Day Basin Landscape Resiliency Project has assessed over 74,000 private acres and has acquired over $10 million in grant funding to help support assessments and project implementation.

Left: Coalition of partners together in the field, photo by John Rizza. Right: John Rizza examines tree growth and age as part of the ground-based assessments, photo by Carrie Berger
To many Oregonians, fire means smoke, summer anxiety, and blackened landscapes. But rural residents in the Rogue Valley are learning to relate to fire in a different way: through the use of controlled burns.

Chris Adlam has been partnering with the Rogue Valley Prescribed Burn Association (RVPBA), a cooperative of landowners and fire professionals, to deliver experiential learning opportunities, including live-fire trainings, which help envision a better future with fire. The RVPBA was formalized in 2022 to provide training and community building around the use of this natural resource management tool. Chris has helped organize a prescribed burn planning workshop, a learn and burn event, and a prescribed fire equipment workshop. These events have helped establish a new model for prescribed burning on private lands. The success of this organization in demonstrating a new approach to prescribed burning has also attracted interest from collaboratives and community groups across the region. Chris and RVPBA leadership have given talks in the Columbia Gorge, South Coast, and Klamath Basin to share lessons learned and inspire collective action in those locations.
The area within and around Warm Springs is prone to wildfires and has experienced many high severity fires in the past few years. Along with drought conditions predicted to worsen, the exposure to extreme wildfire is expected to increase into the future. Tribal elders and their homes are particularly at risk to wildfire as many do not physically or financially have the ability to mitigate their wildfire risk alone. Warm Springs youth can benefit from opportunities to learn about their community’s wildfire risk and how to contribute to efforts to protect their elders and the rest of the community. However, there are limited opportunities for natural resource education, skill-building, and employment available to Warm Springs youth, especially in improving community resilience to wildfire.

In early summer of 2022, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs obtained funding for a youth conservation crew. The youth crew was led by Warm Springs Fire Management and OSU Extension collaborated with The Nature Conservancy on training the crew. Ariel Cowan provided lessons on what fire risk is, why it is important to reduce fuels and invasive plants around homes, concepts for prioritization of the “home ignition zones” based on scientific research, how to maintain wildlife habitat and other values while reducing fuels, and how to use tools to safely and effectively reduce fire risk.

This work forged new relationships and strengthened existing ones between the partners involved, the trainers and the crew, the crew and the elders, and within the crew itself.

Right: Conservation crews working to mitigate risk in Warm Springs, photo by Ariel Cowan
In an era of invading annual grasses and more frequent wildfires, it is difficult for individual landowners, managers, and organizations to prioritize and coordinate their activities to address threats to rangeland resilience. Management plans and funding opportunities often yield short-term or piecemeal projects that do not necessarily translate to landscape-scale outcomes. How do we work together on Oregon rangelands so our activities are coordinated, strategic, and support resilience?

Katie Wollstein, in partnership with Dustin Johnson and Vanessa Schroeder (both OSU Extension at EOARC), focused her efforts on enabling landowners, agencies, and other organizations to engage in collective actions to reduce wildfire risk and ecosystem transition to annual grass dominance. The team did this by offering workshops, publications, and collaborative learning opportunities focused on: (1) enhancing community understanding of fuels and fire risk, (2) conceptually connecting site-specific conditions to larger spatial and temporal scales, and (3) illuminating conditions for collective action to address threats to landscape resilience.
Fifty-six rangeland stakeholders attended Harney County Wildfire Collaborative’s July fieldtrip in the Stinkingwater Mountains. Katie Wollstein and colleagues organized the fieldtrip to promote understanding of the utility of collaboratively identified and proactively maintained Potential Control Locations on vast rangelands, photo by Michael Stauder, EOARC.

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