ASHLAND FOREST
ALL LANDS RESTORATION

Wildfire Knows No Boundaries

For thousands of years, frequent low intensity fires maintained open, healthy forests and reduced the risk of severe wildfire, as well as insects and disease infestation. Today, over a century of fire suppression has left forests and oak woodlands dense, unhealthy, and at risk of severe wildfire.

The Solution: A Model of Collaboration

Private landowners, agencies, non-profits and other partners joined forces to tackle wildfire threats on public and private lands. It began in 2010 on U.S. Forest Service land with the Ashland Forest Resiliency (AFR) Stewardship Project, and today it has evolved to include all lands in a cohesive strategy called the Ashland Forest All Lands Restoration (AFAR).

By working together across public and private land boundaries, the project reduces the critical risk of severe wildfire in a changing climate, while securing clean drinking water, protecting forests and wildlife, habitat, people, property, the local economy, and quality of life.

PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest
- Lomakatsi Restoration Project
- The Nature Conservancy
- City of Ashland
- Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Private Forestland Owners

Above photo by Sean Bagshaw,
Outdoor Exposure Photography

Project Goals

- Reduce and mitigate wildfire threats to communities and landowners
- Protect water quality and supply in the Ashland Municipal Watershed
- Improve and protect quality wildlife habitat for threatened, endangered, and at-risk species

Watershed Scale Results

12,000 ACRES
of landscape-scale fuels reduction completed to date

14 MILLION
board feet of restoration by-product logs (average diameter 13 in.), over 3,000 log truck loads delivered to local mills, sustaining jobs

$6 MILLION
in sale of by-product logs recovered for the project

17 DIRECT
full-time jobs, multiplying to 107 jobs with indirect and induced work in the local economy

CRITICAL HABITAT
Critical habitat sustained for fish and wildlife, including threatened and endangered species

54 NRCS CONTRACTS
with private landowners to complete over 3,100 acres of fuels reduction treatments

Leveraging Funding

Project partners leveraged multiple sources of local, state and federal funding to increase field capacity and implementation of forest health conservation practices on-the-ground. The funding started in 2010 with $6.5 million in Federal Economic Recovery (stimulus) dollars. Recent funding sources now include:

USDA Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership
A partnership between two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agencies, the Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, to improve the health and resilience of forest ecosystems in communities with high fire risk. Funding for 2015-2017:

Forest Service: **$5.8 million**

NRCS: **$4 million**

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board – Focused Investment Partnership. An agency initiative to support landscape-scale habitat improvements for native fish and wildlife. Funding for 2015-2017 and 2017-2019:

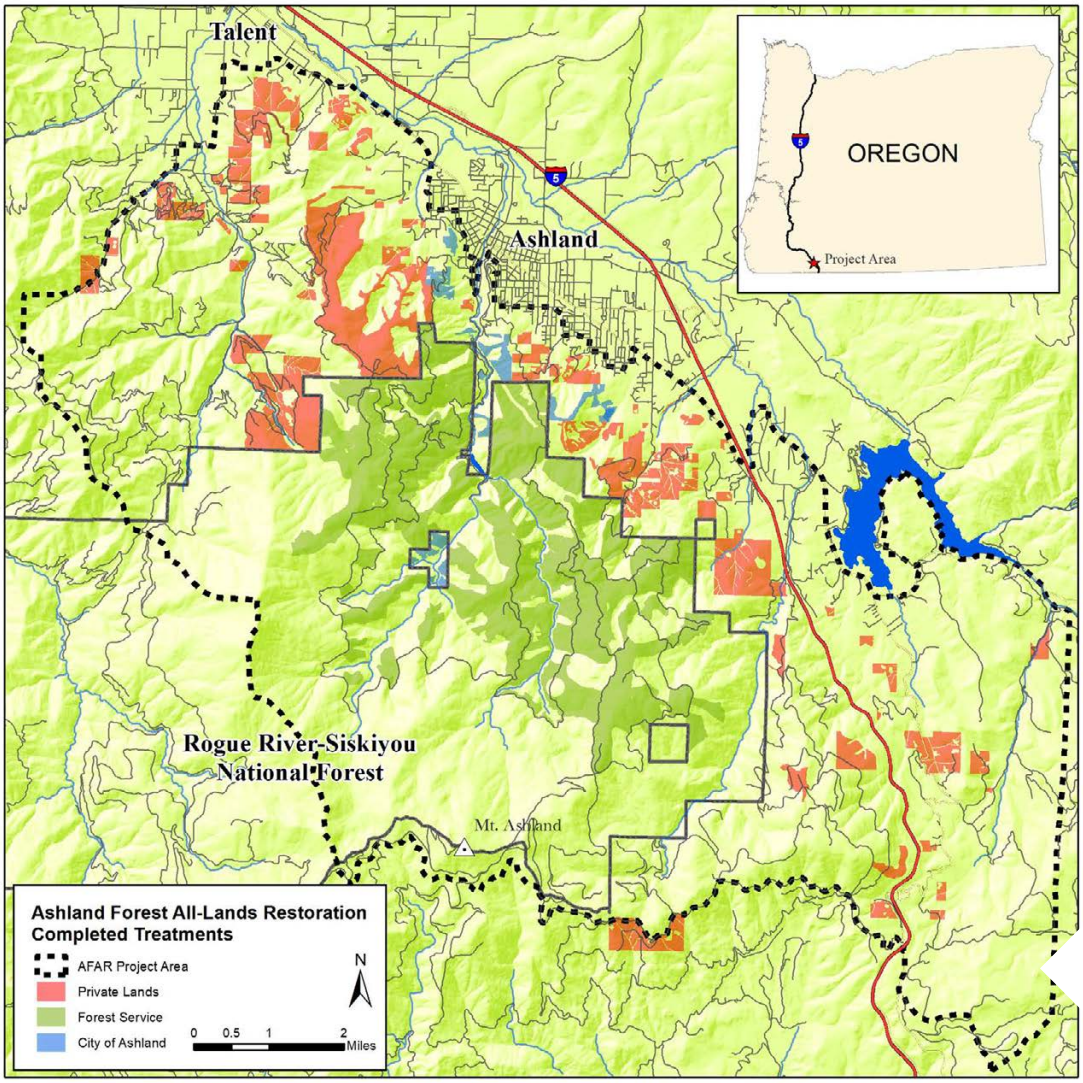
$6 million

City of Ashland Ashland Forest Resiliency Assessment on Utility Bill

$1.4 million

Jackson County consistently has one of the highest occurrences of wildfire in Oregon.

Jackson County ranked second in a survey of **417** counties in **11** western states for risk to homes and businesses in fire prone areas adjacent to public lands.



“All Hands, All Lands”

PROJECT MAP:
58,000 forested acres in the Ashland Forest All Lands Restoration Project Area; 14,500 acres will be treated, or 28% of the area.

Nearly **44%** of Oregon’s lands are private and they make up a critical part of the ecological system that supports threatened, endangered and at-risk species such as the Pacific Fisher, Northern Spotted Owl and Coho Salmon.

Climate change is expected to increase wildfire occurrence by 3 to 4 times in the next 50 years. Reducing forest density improves drought tolerance and reduces wildfire severity and community impact.

TESTIMONIALS

Pancho Parker

Landowner and Forestry Contractor

Above: Forest restoration is a family affair for the Parkers. Pancho's daughters Isa (left) and Haley (right) helped build wildlife habitat piles using slash material from the thinned trees. These structures provide habitat for birds, small mammals, insects and other critters that live in the forest.

"**We're very thankful to have these kinds of projects where we can keep the crew busy even when we aren't doing a commercial harvest… Now that we've done the thinning, this property has a much better chance of withstanding wildfire.**"

Pancho Parker, a third-generation woodland owner and small business owner of Brierville Fire and Forestry, was one of several business owners to benefit from the increased economic activity through AFAR. He hired more employees and sustained year-round employment for his crew members. They performed pre-commercial thinning and slash treatments to reduce wildfire risk on several private forests in the watershed, including his own property. Parker was one of 54 private landowners in the watershed to complete this type of thinning work with financial assistance from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Shane Mustard

Landowner

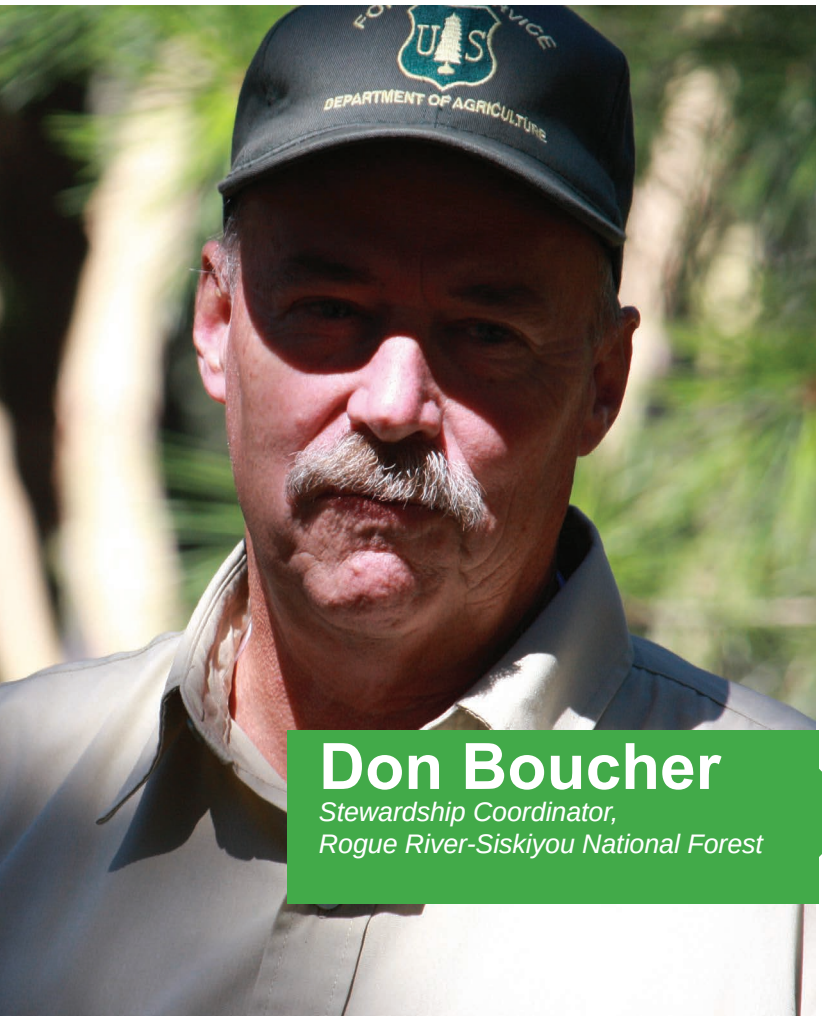
"**We are close to a major interstate (I-5), we have an access road for the mountain on our property, and we have the Pacific Crest Trail going through and occasionally get campers staying off the trail, so we are really concerned about fire up here…Working with Lomakatsi has been amazing. We felt really included in the process.**"

Through AFAR, the Mustard family completed critical forest conservation practices on their land such as thinning surface and ladder fuels, and pile burning. Lomakatsi Restoration Project leveraged additional state and private funding for their forest technicians to develop a treatment plan tailored to the Mustard family's land management objectives. The Mustards hired Lomakatsi's skilled forest restoration workforce to implement the treatments. The Natural Resources Conservation Service provided financial incentives to offset the cost of the work.

TESTIMONIALS

"**NRCS is all about helping people help the land through voluntary conservation.** The AFAR project allowed us to award $4 million dollars to private forestland owners in the Ashland watershed to help them offset the cost to do this important restoration work while sustaining jobs in the local economy. And even better, we were able to leverage the outstanding network of partners in the community, who provided technical assistance and boots-on-the-ground to get the work done. And with complementary restoration being done on adjacent federal and city lands, together we are creating a fire-adapted community across the watershed."

Ron Alvarado
NRCS State Conservationist



Don Boucher
Stewardship Coordinator,
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest

"The Forest Service's goal for the Ashland Watershed is to continue to provide quality drinking water to the City of Ashland, protect human life and property, and maintain large areas of late-successional habitat by restoring conditions that are more resilient to fire and other disturbances. The Forest Service has also embraced the realization that no single entity can resolve or manage all rural/wildland interface concerns—that it really does take an All Lands, All Hands approach to make progress and address those challenges in a meaningful and effective way.

This project has become a national model for the Forest Service in managing a critical watershed and all of its diverse uses, and the collaborative approach to this project provides lessons that we can carry to other projects, both on the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest and beyond."

TESTIMONIALS

Marko Bey
Executive Director
Lomakatsi Restoration Project

"As a community-based nonprofit organization, Lomakatsi Restoration Project has championed cutting edge ecological forestry and the mobilization of regional restoration workforces since 1995.

The AFAR project has enabled our organization to use our programmatic, technical and implementation capacity, to conduct strategically planned ecologically-based fuels treatments, across thousands of private and public land acres. Lomakatsi has been able to layer our nationally recognized workforce training programs into AFAR, employing hundreds of personnel, while providing a live classroom environment for regional youth, tribal staff and private sector industry contractors. These efforts for AFAR are also building capacity for future all lands efforts in other locations across the region. Through our highly functioning collaborative partnership, we have been able to establish a more resilient landscape and reduce severe wildfire risk in the Ashland Watershed and surrounding communities."

"The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board is committed to healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

Our Focused Investment Partnership grant program invests in high performing partnerships that use strategic approaches to address watershed concerns in priority areas in Oregon. In addition to funding on-the-ground projects that protect and restore habitat for important species that rely on the forests around Ashland, we are excited to support the staff capacity of the AFAR partnership so that they can continue to successfully work collaboratively with private landowners and to engage the community in the important actions that are being taken to maintain healthy Ashland watersheds."

Meta Loftsgaarden
Executive Director
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

TESTIMONIALS

"Our city is surrounded by forests; it's one reason people love living and visiting here. But these forests are also at risk of wildfire that could harm both our city and our drinking water supply. We take that risk seriously, which has led us to a long-term, nationally recognized stewardship partnership with The Nature Conservancy, U.S. Forest Service and Lomakatsi Restoration Project. By proactively managing our forests, which includes both thinning and controlled burns, we are ensuring our clean water supply and the city itself are significantly less susceptible to wildfire and more resilient when it comes. By expanding the partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and private forest owners, we've made the project more effective and benefited a larger community."

John Stromberg

Mayor, City of Ashland

Dr. Kerry Metlen

Forest Ecologist
The Nature Conservancy

"Science played a critical role in AFAR implementation and monitoring. Project partners used ecology and fire science to guide where to treat and the level of intensity. We used social science to guide outreach and monitoring. For example, with monitoring, we found that thinning treatments could remove more of the smaller trees in treated units. By carefully tracking forest conditions with treatments, we built trust among partners and worked together to improve our work. In the latest round of work, restoration treatments were even more effective at restoring open forests, while also minimizing crown fire potential."

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

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USDA United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Forest Service U.S. Department of Agriculture

Lomakatsi Restoration Project

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