

# Ashland Watershed Update

clean water, vibrant forests and fire safety for our watershed

## Upcoming Events:

### FIELD TRIPS

Join a field trip to learn about AFR, forests, and monitoring in the watershed. Led by Marty Main, forester, City of Ashland. Trips start at 9am and return by 1pm. Bring a sack lunch, water and hiking shoes. *To register, contact Chris Chambers at 552-2066 or chambersc@ashland.or.us*

Thursday, August 20th  
Saturday, August 22nd  
Saturday, September 12th

### BROWN BAG LUNCH

The Southern Oregon Land Conservancy will host a lunch time talk on AFR by Darren Borgias, program manager and ecologist for The Nature Conservancy. *Contact Diane Garcia at 482-3069 for more information*

Thursday, September 17th  
Noon, Ashland Community Center

### STAKEHOLDER MEETING

Multi-Party Monitoring Plan, Version 1: Join technical stakeholders to review this public monitoring plan and brainstorm next steps.

Friday, September 18th

## What is Ashland Forest Resiliency?

Since 2004, the people who live and work in Ashland and depend on a healthy forest for clean water have been working together to design a future for the Ashland watershed. The result is the Ashland Forest Resiliency plan.

Citizens, community leaders and the U.S. Forest Service all agree on the key objectives: reduce the risk of large-scale wildfire; help large, old trees survive fire, insects and disease; restore a healthy forest ecosystem; and uphold the critical values of our watershed -clean drinking water, recreation and wildlife habitat.

The mark of a healthy forest is its ability to recover from disturbance. Such forests are resilient to drought, disease or fires. Our local forests are adapted to frequent fire among other disturbances. The pines with their thick bark are scarred, but survive repeated fires. A single sugar pine in our watershed -- dated at nearly seven centuries -- was already an old tree when Columbus discovered the "new world."

More recently, these dry, open forests of large trees have grown dense with young Douglas-fir, Pacific madrone and white fir as a result of fire suppression. Now, if a fire burns, the large, older "legacy trees" are prone to succumb as unnaturally severe wildfires boil up through the dense undergrowth into the canopy. They also must compete for water and nutrients with the dense young growth, weakening the older trees and increasing their vulnerability to insects and disease.

The City of Ashland, local citizens and forest conservation groups collaborated to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan in 2004 that included a forest restoration plan. In 2008, the Forest Service used the community plan to develop a preferred alternative for managing national forest lands comprising our watershed. This is the forest resiliency plan, and it guides where and how to thin trees and brush on 7,600 acres in order to restore a resilient and sustainable forest. Skilled workers will thin smaller trees, reduce flammable fuels and conduct controlled burns to replicate the natural process.

The plan will save the largest trees and preserve habitat for wildlife dependent on older forests. It will also ensure water quality by preserving stream-side habitat, and protecting unstable slopes and erodible soils. And the plan will keep our communities safer from the threat of wildfire.



Ashland Creek © Ken Morrish

a publication of the Ashland Forest Resiliency Multiparty Monitoring Partnership





Ashland's forested landscape  
© Sean Bagshaw

## More info on the Web:

[www.ashland.or.us/afr](http://www.ashland.or.us/afr)

[www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/projects/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/projects/)

[nature.org/oregon](http://nature.org/oregon)

[www.nationalforests.org](http://www.nationalforests.org)

## You're also welcome to contact:

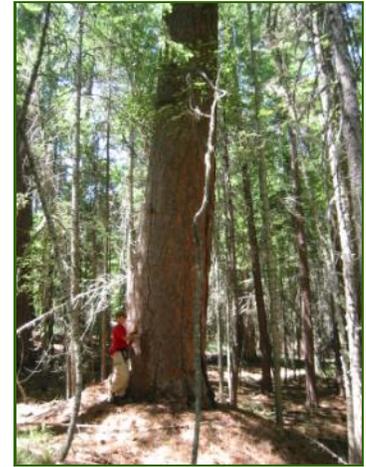
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[lduffy@fs.fed.us](mailto:lduffy@fs.fed.us)

## What is Multi-Party Monitoring?

The people of Ashland are very interested in how their plan for forest resiliency and safety is implemented on the ground. To meet that need, local stakeholders are working closely with the Forest Service to monitor each step of the way. A multi-party monitoring project will help ensure that plans are followed and that measurable results are used to adjust management actions along the way. A generous grant from the National Forest Foundation is supporting the monitoring project.



A volunteer measures a large pine.  
© Darren Borgias/TNC

At an initial workshop, a diverse group of 20 technical stakeholders called for development of a comprehensive, long-term and fundable monitoring plan. To ensure transparency and accessibility, the group called for a "science delivery" system placing data, photos and interpretation on a user-friendly website. The group recommended starting with demonstration projects in the field to inform discussion and gathering more information about the fire history of these forests.

To answer the question: what should be monitored?, the group recommended as top indicators: water quality, large tree preservation and survival, and retention of old-growth forest. They also suggested using recovery of understory grasses and wildflowers and bird surveys as indicators of forest health. A plan to do this is in the works.

## What's New?

- Vicky Sturtevant from Southern Oregon University and the Forest Service convened 20 community leaders to consider the social, health and economic benefits to the community (also known as "social capital") from the multi-party monitoring project.
- Community experts in public outreach and participation gathered in early August to advise on strategies to expand community engagement in the project.
- The partners to the AFR multiparty monitoring project are integrating stakeholder input in the multiparty monitoring plan to be offered for review by stakeholders and finalized.
- Stakeholders have begun field work to gather new data from the forest in the watershed. The Forest Service has identified 700 new forest inventory plots for use in monitoring, and engaged a contractor to gather data at each.
- A database, summaries of forest data, and Web site are in development and will provide easy access for interested parties.

**Ashland Forest Resiliency multiparty monitoring** is led by a collaborative partnership established between the US Forest Service, the City of Ashland, and The Nature Conservancy, with support from the National Forest Foundation. The partners are collaborating with faculty and students at Southern Oregon University, interested citizens, and other organizations, and encourage you to participate.

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