

**From:** Gary Shaff [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 02, 2020 10:33 PM  
**To:** Sean Sullivan <sean.sullivan@ashland.or.us>  
**Subject:** Public Testimony for October 7, 2020 Study Session

Dear APRC,

I am a homeowner near to the Cottle property and trail. Seared within my memory from almost 20 years ago, are the images of a small wildfire that ignited close to 25 yards from our home--due to spontaneous combustion of a compost pile. It burned behind our property and was, luckily, put out quickly by the fire department without harm to people or property. Today, however, we know how our changed and chaotic climate could be responsible for an event of drastic proportions.

Large patches of blackberries burned then, and Parks and Rec comes every year to keep the blackberries mowed down. They also manage the weedy areas and keep those closely trimmed. All of these efforts help keep neighbors and our whole town a little safer.

In the aftermath of that small fire, Parks and Rec also coordinated a neighborhood effort to plant trees in the burned areas. It is this "urban forest" that concerns me. A new stand of ponderosa pines seedlings were planted, close together, on perhaps five-foot centers and most survived. Since then, Parks has been very receptive to coming out and thinning the trees, and limbed them up this spring. Their cooperation and timely work has been outstanding and I acknowledge their expertise and efforts. However, this planted forest in our open space is still a monoculture, the ponderosas have become exceedingly large, and there are way too many of them. The density of trees, to me, is thicker than what has been thinned along Red Queen and Bandersnatch trails. My suggestion is for further thinning—to eliminate at least half of this dense grove. As their canopies have enlarged, the spacing of these trees no longer conforms to safe "firewise" guidelines. I believe Parks should manage this area so that it is, at the very least, consistent with the City of Ashland's *Guidelines for Firewise Landscaping in an Urban Setting*. I also advocate for additional thinning to be scheduled for the area above TID, from Terrace Street down to the ditch.

Nothing guarantees our safety, but all efforts count. *I would also advocate closing the trail systems any time there are red flag warnings.* We've learned, painfully, that we are all in this together.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara Schack  
[REDACTED]

Ashland, OR 97520