

Southwest Integrated Forest and Fire Treatment (SWIFFT) Initiative

Oregon has experienced year after year of record-breaking wildfires, threatening human health in at-risk communities and harming forest ecosystems. The wildfire season is 78 days longer than it was just three decades ago, and climate change, drought, and heavy fuel loads are exacerbating threats to wildlife habitat and old growth forest. More than 107,000 homes in Oregon are at risk from wildfire, a housing stock worth \$12.7 billion. Moreover, smoke and air pollutants resulting from larger and more frequent wildfire pose serious threats to human health and damages to regional tourism and economic development. Nowhere is this risk more pronounced than the communities of southwest Oregon.

In response, Sustainable Northwest is launching the *Southwest Integrated Forest and Fire Treatment (SWIFFT)* initiative. This ambitious 2-year public-private partnership will invest more than \$2 million in targeted efforts to accelerate forest health and wildfire reduction treatments adjacent to communities and critical assets west of Medford into the Applegate Valley. A collaboration between public agencies, local leaders, communities, and philanthropy, we seek to complement and leverage long-standing efforts for immediate impact, while advocating for increased investments across the broader region.

This project will consist of management actions on public and private lands west of Medford and extending into the Applegate Valley adjacent to the Highway 238 corridor. Targeted communities and private lands where treatments will occur are in and surrounding Medford, Jacksonville, Ruch, and Applegate. These communities are identified in the top 30 most at-risk communities for wildfire in Oregon and represent approximately 33,000 housing units exposed to wildfire. The checkerboard pattern of ownership and integration with federal lands, susceptibility to wildfire, and regional economic significance make these ideal and urgent locations for comprehensive projects to reduce wildfire risk.

Our work will be informed by and implemented in close partnership with diverse local organizations, state and federal agencies, scientific experts, and community leaders that have collectively identified a comprehensive strategy for wildfire risk reduction in the region. By providing additional investment, community outreach, and communications and advocacy support, we will identify and accelerate priority management needs to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Implement shovel ready and environmentally sound wildfire risk reduction projects on federal forests and public lands in the Applegate Valley.
2. Complement public forest restoration with wildfire mitigation on private lands to protect homes, critical infrastructure, and reduce the impacts of smoke to vulnerable populations.
3. Enhance public safety and forest resiliency, and demonstrate a model to accelerate collaboration around forest and wildfire management.
4. Coordinate broad stakeholder engagement, secure public support, and advocate for increased public and private investments in forest health and resiliency, wildfire risk reduction, and community protection and preparedness in southwest Oregon.

If you share our goal of supporting a holistic approach to reducing wildfire risk, improving forest health and resilience, and safeguarding communities, please contact Sustainable Northwest to learn more.



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