

# BRIDGING THE FEDERAL-LOCAL DIVIDE: GOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS

By

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*“The epoch of big-government fire protection has ended, and we need to let local communities have more say in how lands are protected and to hand over to them more obligations to do it” (Pyne 2004:128).*

# What Role for Government?

**“The Democrats are the party that says government will make you smarter, taller, richer, and remove the crabgrass on your lawn. The Republicans are the party that says government doesn't work and then they get elected and prove it.”**

**P.J. O'Rourke**

# Community Wildfire Protection Plans

## Minimum Requirements

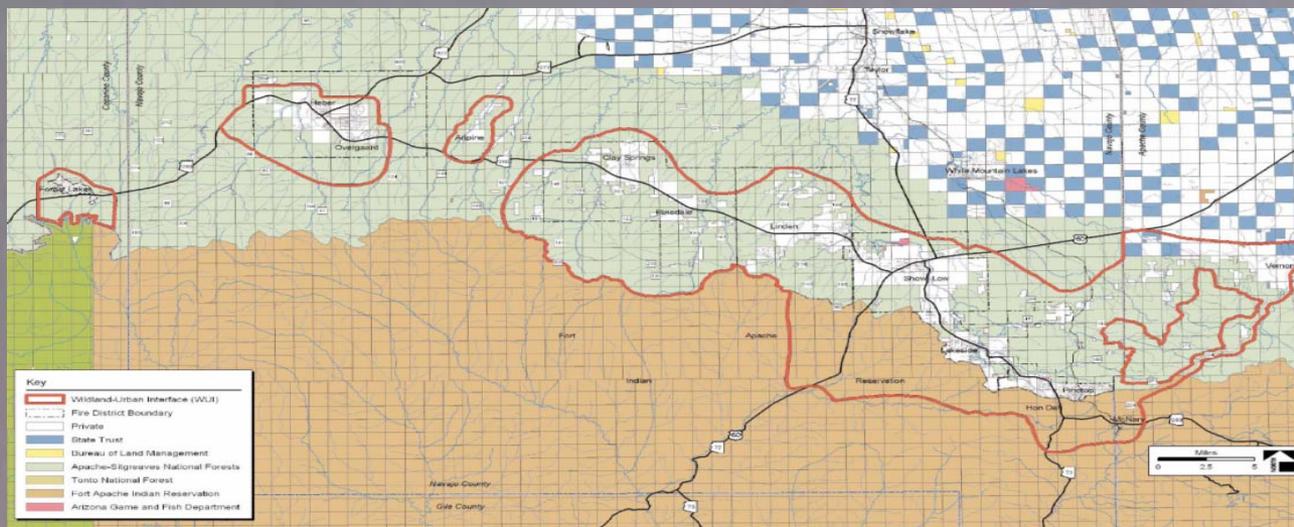
- ***Collaboration:***  
State and local government in consultation federal agencies, tribes and other interested parties
- ***Prioritized Fuel Reduction:***  
Include types and methods of treatment
- ***Structural Ignitability:***  
Recommend measures to reduce loss of structures



Photo credit: Wildlandfire.com

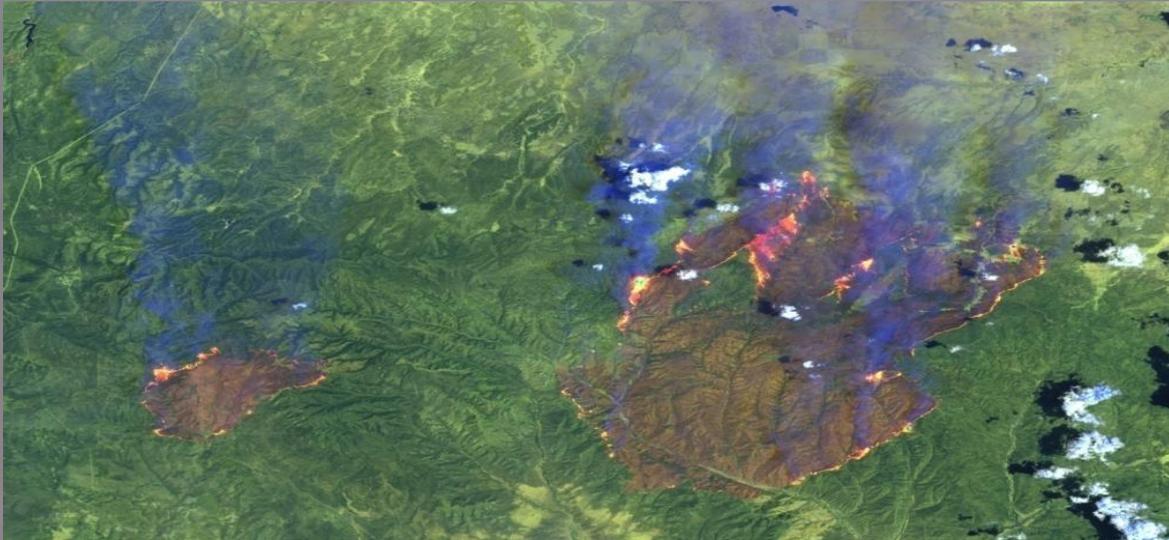
# Community Wildfire Protection Plans

## Governmental Responsibilities



- ***Planning, zoning and code enforcement (state, local)***
- ***Structure protection and initial attack (local, state, federal)***
- ***Landowner education and outreach (local, state)***
- ***Economic development and utilization (local, state, federal)***
- ***Forest restoration/ mitigation (federal, state, local).***
- ***Wildland fire suppression (federal and state)***

# Guiding Questions

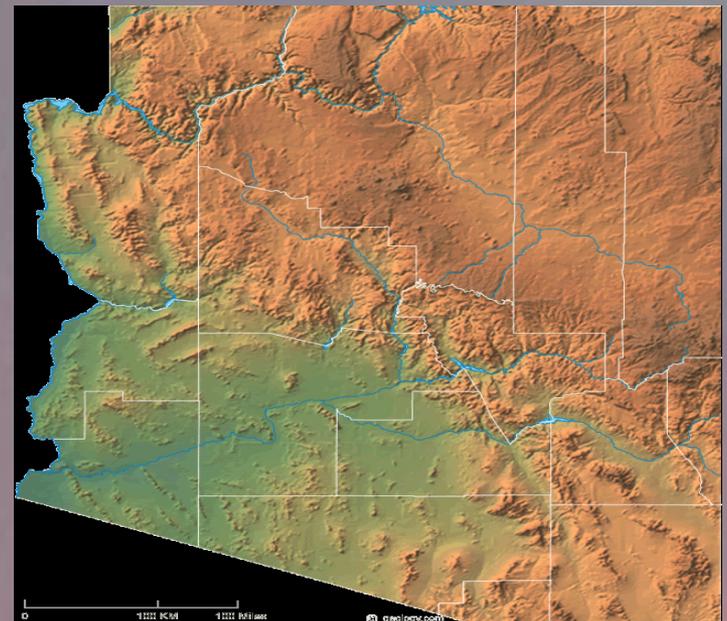
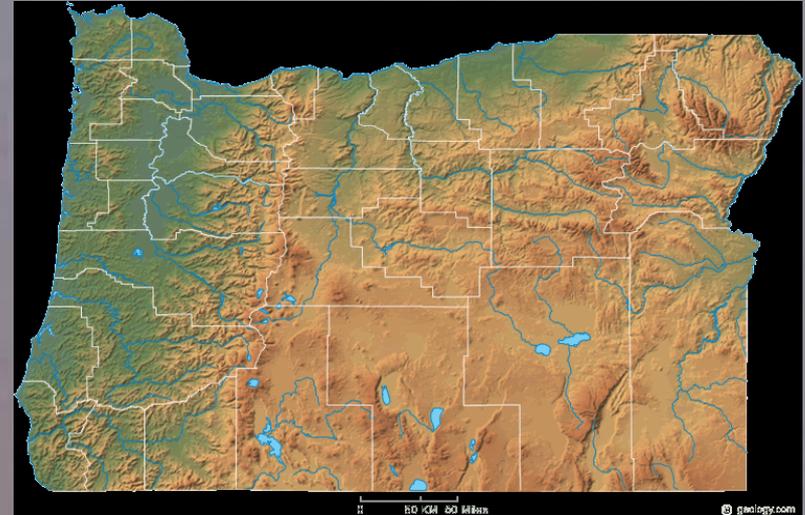


- 1. Are CWPPs effective in facilitating multi-jurisdictional cooperation to address the wildfire threat?**
- 2. What elements contributed to success and what have been the barriers and challenges?**
- 3. What measures would improve the effectiveness of community-based wildfire planning and mitigation?**

# Case Studies:

## Context, Process, and Outcomes

- City of Ashland, OR
- Josephine County, OR
- Wallowa County, OR
- Communitites of the Sitgreaves NF, AZ



# City of Ashland



- **High capacity community**
- **History of environmental conflict**
- **Municipal watershed/LSR**
- **City forest lands commission**
- **Community alternative to USFS proposal - NEPA**
- **Environmental group participation and emphasis on scientific & technical expertise**
- **Lack of USFS / other governmental participation**

# Josephine County



- **2002 Biscuit Fire (500,000 ac.)**
- **Low capacity county**
- **Resource-based economy**
- **Environmental conflict and distrust of agencies**
- **Representatives of all levels of government**
- **Strong facilitation by intermediary**
- **Comprehensive risk assessment**
- **Coordinated emergency response**



# Wallowa County

- Resource-based economy
- Historic community distrust of USFS but recent collaboration
- Representatives of all levels of government/stakeholders
- ODF CWPP facilitator
- County NRAC subcommittee
- Community meetings
- Protection of resource base and private lands
- Integrated county, state and USFS data



# Sitgreaves



- 2002 Rodeo-Chediski Fire (467,000 ac.)
- Resource-based economy
- Recent collaboration and demonstration
- 3 counties, 2 incorporated communities and 5 rural fire districts



- Facilitated planning process
- Community action groups
- Federal land prescriptions
- Cooperative mitigation strategies
- Implementation and monitoring plan/budget

**Ashland:** *... they kept wanting me to come into their process...But [we]... really created a definite line, this is the city alternative and you say what you want. (USFS employee)*

**Josephine:** *We can't do new stuff alone, we can just do that same tired stuff that got us into this predicament. So only by working with the community...and hashing it out and doing little stuff at a time can that be done. (BLM employee)*

**Wallowa:** *In the seven years I've been here, there have been three different permanent district rangers and five temporary district rangers... you can't get to know a community... at the speed at which people are turning over around here. (NGO employee)*

**Sitgreaves:** *So we are working really closely with the fire departments, the mayors, everybody in town because everything we do is a big part of their lives. . . .(USFS employee)*

# Outcomes

**Ashland:** USFS analysis delayed, conflicting city/county WUI boundaries, little community outreach, decreased trust

**Josephine:** Private land fuel reduction, collaborative risk assessment, coordinated emergency management, pilot for Oregon SB 360, NFP funding and award

**Wallowa:** Private land fuel reduction, collaborative risk assessment, emergency management planning, disconnect between CWPP WUI priorities and USFS implementation

**Sitgreaves:** Public land fuel reduction, cooperative mitigation measures, increased utilization, habitat concerns, 10-yr. stewardship contract, monitoring, NFP \$ and award

# Are CWPPs facilitating multi-jurisdictional cooperation?

<b>CWPP</b>	<b>All levels of government</b>	<b>Coordinated priorities/ actions</b>	<b>Comprehensive mitigation</b>	<b>Comprehensive mitigation</b>
City of Ashland				
Josephine County	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
Wallowa County	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
Sitgreaves NF	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>

# What contributed to success and what have been the barriers and challenges?

- History of conflict and collaboration
- Shared sense of urgency and need for coordination
- Secure Rural Schools Act funding
- Federal agency participation and commitment
- Facilitated planning processes
- NFP funding incentives
- Primary focus on federal lands and fuel reduction
- Stewardship contracting



# What measures would improve the effectiveness of community-based wildfire planning?

- Incentives for collaboration and federal participation
- Expectations for comprehensive and multi-faceted CWPPs
  - ◆ Utilization
  - ◆ Planning and code enforcement
  - ◆ Forest restoration across boundaries
- Clarify legal authorities
- Intergovernmental agreements
- CWPP coordinator

