

# Top 10 current activities

## Northern Blue Mountains Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Project

February 2015

Project representatives in NE Oregon and SE Washington have crafted a comprehensive and detailed action plan based on the three goals of the Cohesive Strategy: Improve wildfire response, create fire-adapted communities and restore fire resiliency to landscapes. Representatives of local governments, state and federal agencies, and private landowners are collectively implementing the Action Plan and Cohesive Strategy goals.

### 1. Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) template

A new comprehensive CWPP template will help implement the goals of the national Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The first prototype plan is near completion.

### 2. East Face Restoration Project

A project is underway to restore forest health to the East Face of the Elkhorn Mountains, an area that encompasses federal, state and private forestlands. Activities to date include:

- Partnership formed with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to complete thinning and fuels reduction on more than 6,000 acres of private land.
- U.S. Forest Service has publicly announced its proposed action for restoration work on National Forest lands.
- ODF is administering a 200-acre timber harvest on Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) lands. The project will serve as a springboard to management of ODFW's other lands in NE Oregon.

### 3. Wildfire simulation template

An integrated wildfire simulation template designed to educate and exercise traditional and non-traditional emergency management partners in the challenges of a rapidly escalating fire situation is being developed. A timeline has been established to conduct county-by-county exercises in the geo-region.



The Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Project encompasses wildfire-prone lands in both Washington and Oregon.

4. Oregon assists USFS with restoration work  
State of Oregon funding and personnel are assisting Forest Service partners to improve the health of National Forest lands.

5. All-lands, large-scale forest restoration opportunities  
Partners are seeking opportunities for “all-lands” projects tailored after the “Good Neighbor Authority” that reach across ownership boundaries to restore forest health and create fire resiliency. The project partners are active participants in the Umatilla and Wallowa-Whitman National Forest collaboratives.

6. All-agency initial attack  
Fire agencies have refined a plan for initial-attack wildfire response in the wildland-urban interface (WUI) that consolidates multi-agency fire response into a single dispatch office. Some counties are considering a “reverse 911” capability to speed up emergency notification of citizens when a fire threatens. A project is underway to initiate pre-fire planning and structure assessment in WUI areas. Fire agencies across the geo-region are working to improve sharing of firefighting resources.

7. Improve economics of forest restoration  
A local forest biomass working group seeks to offset the high cost of forest restoration work through innovative uses of forest biomass. The project has awarded grants to spur local biomass development. Local and regional entrepreneurs are proposing new value-added uses for the restoration by-products, which could benefit local job creation and business opportunities.

8. Closing the fire protection gap  
Partners in the geo-region have reduced the amount of unprotected lands with the formation of a Rangeland Fire Protection District. The Washington Department of Natural Resources has expanded its fire protection boundary to help close the gap.

9. Partnering for firefighting efficiency  
Partners have increased coordination to make better use of available resources. Examples include:

- County rural fire districts assisting in initial attack on wildfires on ODF and USFS jurisdictions during periods of high to extreme fire severity.
- Use of one agency’s fire crews to staff fire engines of another.
- Sharing housing for initial-attack crews.

10. Forest landowner outreach project  
“My Blue Mountain Woodlands,” a campaign directed at landowners and the public, has been initiated in a joint effort with the American Forest Foundation. The goal is to increase awareness and offer assistance to landowners on forest management and restoration activities.



(Above) A slashbuster works on an East Face project to reduce fire risk and promote forest health. (Below) Local rural fire districts cooperate with state and federal fire agencies in the geo-region on suppressing new wildfires.



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