

Linn County

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, 2024-2029



Adopted by the Linn County Board of Commissioners on XX



Cover image sources: Sweet Home Fire District (top left); Albany Fire Department and Emily Ruckert (top right); Susan Millhauser, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (bottom left); Kayla Bordelon, Oregon State University Extension (bottom center); Sweet Home Fire District (bottom right)

The *Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan* is a living document that will be reviewed and updated periodically. It will be integrated with existing plans, policies, and programs.

Comments, suggestions, corrections, and additions are encouraged to be submitted from all interested parties. For further information and to provide comments, contact:

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Signature Page

The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (2003) requires that three entities must mutually agree to the final contents of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. For the *Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP), that includes the Linn County Board of Commissioners, the Linn County Fire Defense Board, and the Oregon Department of Forestry.

Because of the non-regulatory nature of the CWPP, the relevance and effectiveness of the Plan will rely upon the implementation efforts of each of the agencies and organizations involved. It is not legally binding and does not create or place mandates or requirements on individual jurisdictions.

The following signatures represent the three entity's mutual agreement of the final contents of the CWPP:

Oregon Department of Forestry, South Cascade District



Mar 19, 2024

Craig Pettinger, Sweet Home Unit Forester

Date

Linn County Fire Defense Board



2-26-24

Shane Wooton, Albany Fire Department, Fire Chief

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Linn County Board of County Commissioners



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

The following acronyms and abbreviations are used throughout the Linn County CWPP:

BLM - U.S. Bureau of Land Management
CPI - Consumers Power Inc
CWPP - Community Wildfire Protection Plan
DLCD - Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development
EOP - Emergency Operations Plan
FAC - Fire Adapted Communities
FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency
GIS - Geographic Information Systems
HFRA - Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003
HMGP-PF - Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Post Fire
HVRAs - Highly valued resources and assets
LCFDB - Linn County Fire Defense Board
NHMP - Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan
ODEM - Oregon Department of Emergency Management
ODF - Oregon Department of Forestry
OSFM - Oregon State Fire Marshal
OSU - Oregon State University
PNW QWRA – Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment
RFPD - Rural Fire Protection District
SB 762 - Senate Bill 762
SB 80 - Senate Bill 80
SVI - Social Vulnerability Index
USFS - U.S. Forest Service
WMP - Wildfire Mitigation Plan
WUI - Wildland Urban Interface

Executive Summary

The *Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan* (CWPP or Plan) describes Linn County's risk from wildfires as well as the specific steps that are or will be taken to reduce that risk and increase adaptation now and in the future. A CWPP is developed through a collaborative effort in which communities create strategies for wildfire adaptation and mitigation, reducing the potential for future loss of life, property, infrastructure, and natural resources that can result from wildfire. Linn County first developed a CWPP in 2007; this Plan reflects an in depth review of the 2007 Plan and significant updates to reflect changes in practices and a broader engagement of partners and community members.

Why Develop a Mitigation Plan?

Wildfire hazard mitigation is a system for reducing or alleviating the losses and other impacts resulting from wildfire through long and short-term strategies. The Plan and the strategies in it recognize that it is impossible to predict exactly when a wildfire will occur, or the extent to which it will affect Linn County's communities. However, with careful planning and collaboration among public agencies, private sector organizations, non-profit partners, and community members throughout the County, it is possible to minimize the losses that can result from Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fire events.

This CWPP is intended to serve as a planning tool and framework for local, state, and federal partners in Linn County for assessing the wildfire risks and hazards associated with WUI areas and for identifying strategies for reducing those risks by identifying resources, information, and strategies for risk reduction and community adaptation. It will also help to guide and coordinate mitigation, adaptation, and response activities.

How Is the Plan Organized?

The CWPP follows the guidelines established by the federal Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) and has the following components:

- Section 1: Introduction. Describes the background, need, and purpose of the Linn County CWPP and the planning process through which it was developed.
- Section 2: Community Profile. Identifies some of the characteristics of Linn County, describes historic wildfire activity, and summarizes the policy frameworks related to wildfire risk and mitigation.
- Section 3: Risk Assessment. Describes the risk and potential losses to life, property, infrastructure, and natural resources from wildfire based on best available science and data. Presents the findings, including a series of maps and charts, methods used to develop the assessment, limitations, ideas for long-term assessment updates and maintenance, and conclusions and recommendations.
- Section 4: Stakeholder and Community Engagement. Summarizes the Steering Committee's work. Details the process by which stakeholder and community input was gathered and incorporated into the CWPP.

- Section 5: Action Plan. Sets forth the five goals of Linn County’s CWPP and identifies 43 action items, including 11 top priority actions, that will further progress toward the agreed upon wildfire risk reduction and adaptation goals.
- Section 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance. Describes the methods for implementing the Action Plan, the process for prioritizing projects, and a schedule for updating and maintaining the Plan, ensuring a relevant and up-to-date document that can be utilized throughout the County for years to come.
- Appendices: Eight appendices include detailed information and documentation to support the above sections.

Who Participated in Developing the Plan?

Linn County’s CWPP is the result of the collaborative efforts of the following agencies and organizations:

- Linn County Emergency Management Program, Linn County Sheriff’s Office
- Linn County Fire Defense Board
- Linn County GIS
- Linn County Planning and Building Department
- Linn County Public Health
- Linn County Roads Department
- Northwest Oregon Interagency Fire Management, NW Oregon District Bureau of Land Management, Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests
- Oregon Department of Forestry, North and South Cascade Districts
- Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Oregon State University Extension Fire Program
- South and North Santiam Watershed Councils
- Sweet Home Fire District
- Utility Providers (Consumers Power, Inc., Pacific Power)

In addition, the CWPP draws upon the input and feedback provided by members of the public and other stakeholders who participated in Steering Committee and Linn County Fire Defense Board meetings, including local fire districts, internal County meetings, local government and community organizations focus groups, and the community Wildfire Ready Night open house. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development provided project management and technical assistance support to the County.

How was Wildfire Risk Assessed?

Linn County’s risk assessment describes the risk and potential losses to life, property, and natural resources from wildfire based on best available science and data. Its purpose is to identify and implement the most effective strategies for preventing losses from fire. Key findings from the risk assessment include:

- From 2007 and 2022, the overall area covered by rural fire protection districts has increased.

- New construction in Linn County since 2007 has contributed to an increase of WUI area. At least 4,604 new structures for habitation have been built since 2007 in the County with 3,896 of those now being identified within the WUI.
- The vast majority of Linn County’s WUI, approximately 152 square miles, is defined as intermix. Generally, intermix areas are characterized by lower density developments that are scattered in a wildland area, where fuels are dispersed throughout. The high prevalence of intermix communities in Linn County means more residents are exposed to potential fire events in areas where there are not clear lines of demarcation between human development and wildlands.
- The distribution of WUI areas across local fire protection districts shows that Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Scio Fire Districts have the largest amount of WUI by area.
- Linn County is primarily characterized by low and moderate wildfire risk countywide. Most area within the Willamette Valley is predicted to have neutral to low negative consequences from wildfire. The risk rating tends to be more negative within the boundaries of WUI communities, where direct exposure of people, property, and infrastructure to wildland fuel sources is higher. In the forested foothills of the Cascades, particularly surrounding communities of Brownsville, Lebanon, Lacombe, Lyons, and Sweet Home, there are mixed benefits and higher negative consequences from fire, compared to the populated areas of the Willamette Valley. The area predicted to experience the worst outcomes from wildfire overall are the forested areas of the Cascades. These areas are mainly private industrial and federal forestland with highly valuable timber resources, recreation sites, drinking watersheds, and wildlife habitats.
- Places where social vulnerability and higher relative risk for wildfire overlap are block groups in or near Cascadia, Mill City, Sweet Home, and Sodaville. Socially vulnerable communities should be prioritized for wildfire mitigation resources, particularly homeowner assistance programs and other grants or cost-share opportunities when possible.

What Are the Plan’s Goals?

The Steering Committee reviewed the five County-wide CWPP goals that were identified in 2007 through a collaborative process and agreed upon updates to ensure the goals were broad enough to reflect best practices in wildfire risk mitigation and current concerns, including issues raised during the community engagement process.

CWPP Goals:

- **GOAL 1:** Enhance wildfire and emergency response and recovery capabilities to protect life, the built environment, and natural systems.
- **GOAL 2:** Empower residents and other stakeholders with knowledge, decision-making tools, and resources to understand and reduce wildfire risks and increase preparedness.
- **GOAL 3:** Reduce structural ignitability through the use of non-regulatory incentives.
- **GOAL 4:** Prioritize and implement fuels treatment projects on private and public land to reduce risk, increase resiliency, and create defensible landscapes.
- **GOAL 5:** Increase opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and building capacity to implement wildfire projects.

How Were the Action Items Updated and Prioritized?

Input from the Committee, stakeholders, community feedback, and findings from the wildfire risk assessment informed the update of the CWPP's action items. 43 action items for carrying out wildfire risk reduction and adaptation strategies in Linn County have been identified, organized according to the primary goal they support. Each action item includes a lead or co-lead organization to ensure continuing oversight and "ownership", potential partners, implementation timeline, estimated cost, potential funding source, and location. The action items are organized in a matrix to allow for a quick overview of each goal and its corresponding action items, included in Section 5: Action Plan; detailed worksheets for each action item are included in Appendix A.

Based on the risk assessment and other factors, the Committee identified 11 top priority actions out of the 43 actions to ensure that funding and other resources are used efficiently and effectively to move toward the Plan's goals.

2024 Priority Action Items

The Committee's top priority action items for completing in the next one to five years, given sufficient funding and resources, organized by goal, include:

- 1.1 Assess and address deficiencies in equipment and resources available for wildland firefighting for rural fire departments.
- 1.5 Increase evacuation preparedness in high-risk WUI areas.
- 1.11 Review emergency communication systems and procedures to improve accessibility by residents and consistent messaging across jurisdictions.
- 2.7 Identify opportunities and barriers to support fire-vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income, elderly, disabled, non-English speaking) with wildfire disaster preparedness. Work to embed wildfire disaster preparedness within ongoing community health education efforts in fire-vulnerable populations.
- 3.2 Complete the fire structural risk assessments in Albany, Brownsville, Lebanon, and Sweet Home fire districts, and utilize this as a model program for other Linn County fire districts for conducting voluntary defensible space assessments for homes within the WUI; document results using Survey 123, a centralized online platform.
- 4.2 Engage in pre-suppression fire planning with partners and collaborators to create fuel breaks and enhance access across landownerships.
- 4.4 Seek additional resources and manage and administer grants to provide cost-share to private forest landowners to manage fuels, buffer high value resources, and reduce landscape-level wildfire risk.
- 4.6 Implement landowner assistance programs to support creating defensible space around communities particularly with vulnerable populations (i.e., elderly, disabled, isolated or fire-affected areas, etc.) and incentivize fuels reduction activities. Create local workforce development opportunities through employment of fuels reduction crews.
- 4.11 Seek funding to implement fuels reduction efforts surrounding critical infrastructure sites, including removal and possible replacement with nonflammable landscaping material.

- 5.1 Create and formalize a CWPP Advisory Committee to oversee implementation, identify and coordinate funding opportunities, and sustain the Linn County Wildfire Protection Plan.
- 5.3 Resource a Fire Adapted Communities (or general Hazards Mitigation) Coordinator position to coordinate implementation of the CWPP, secure external funding, manage community-focused education and support programs, and seek additional opportunities for partnerships that advance wildfire resilience in Linn County.

How Will the Plan be Implemented and Maintained?

The Linn County CWPP is a shared plan and was developed using a collaborative process. The Plan was reviewed and approved by the Linn County Fire Defense Board and Oregon Department of Forestry and adopted by resolution by the Linn County Board of Commissioners **on XX**, meeting HFRA requirements. Continued collaboration and coordination are key to ensuring the effective implementation of the CWPP, which is a non-regulatory document that provides a framework for building and sustaining partnerships to support wildfire risk reduction and adaptation projects across Linn County.

The CWPP Committee will oversee implementation, identify and coordinate funding opportunities, and sustain the CWPP, with the Linn County Emergency Management Program in the Sheriff's Office serving as the convener. A diverse Committee that meets regularly, including semi-annual and annual meetings, will ensure coordinated implementation, resulting in a CWPP that remains current and relevant to Linn County and all the CWPP partners.

The Committee will act as the coordinating body and serve as a centralized resource for wildfire risk reduction, adaptation, and WUI issues and opportunities in Linn County. Additional roles and responsibilities of the Committee include:

- Identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing funding opportunities for wildfire risk reduction projects and coordinating with stakeholders and other partners to develop competitive, fundable grant proposals.
- Developing and coordinating ad hoc and/or standing subcommittees as needed.
- Documenting successes and lessons learned, including engaging constituents, stakeholders, and the broader Linn County community.
- Evaluating and updating the CWPP in accordance with the prescribed maintenance schedule.

The CWPP will be integrated into the wildfire chapter of the *Linn County Multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan* (NHMP), being updated in 2024-2025, providing an opportunity to use up-to-date wildfire risk assessment data, address overlapping or cascading hazards and potential mitigation and adaptation actions, and identify additional funding opportunities through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is anticipated that subsequent review and update of the CWPP will occur on a timeline that will inform future updates of the County's NHMP, required by FEMA to be completed every five years.

Section 1: Introduction

The federal Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA)¹ encourages improved intergovernmental collaboration and increased partnerships between public and private entities with the goal of protecting communities from catastrophic wildfire, through guidance and funding for managing forests. Implementation strategies include hazardous fuel reduction projects on federal and non-federal lands, investments and activities aimed at reducing structural ignitability in at-risk communities, and partnerships to protect and restore watersheds.

The HFRA also encourages local communities to create their own strategies for wildfire adaptation and mitigation through the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Creating a CWPP is voluntary for local governments. However, the HFRA requires that federal land management agencies, e.g., the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS), use them to prioritize funding approval for fuel-reduction projects on both federal and nonfederal lands. At least 50 percent of all funds appropriated for projects under the HFRA must be used within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) as defined by the local CWPP document. As a result, preparing a CWPP provides communities with significant opportunities for input into the implementation of hazardous fuel management on surrounding federal lands.

The *Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP or Plan)* identifies strategies and priorities for the protection of people, property, and infrastructure in Linn County. In addition to mitigating and preventing wildfire through collaboration, fuels reduction, and reducing structural ignitability actions, the CWPP has a strong emphasis on helping communities adapt to wildfire through actions focused on wildfire preparedness and response; public engagement and education; public health; and supporting fire-vulnerable populations, informed by the fire adapted communities² framework.

Fire adapted communities are an element of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy)³ framework. The Cohesive Strategy vision is:

To safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and collectively, learn to live with wildland fire.

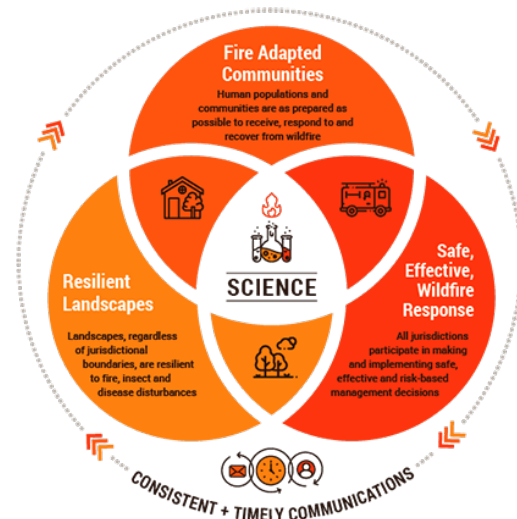


Figure 1. National Cohesive Strategy Goals
Source: U.S. Fire Administration,
<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/blog/cb-042120.html>

¹ <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title16/chapter84&edition=prelim>

² Fire Adapted Communities, <https://fireadapted.org/>

³ <https://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/strategy/thestrategy.shtml>

The Cohesive Strategy is focused on collaboration among all stakeholders and across all landscapes, using best science, to make meaningful progress towards three goals:

1. **Resilient Landscapes** – Landscapes, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries are resilient to fire, insect, disease, invasive species and climate change disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.
2. **Fire Adapted Communities** – Human populations and infrastructure are as prepared as possible to receive, respond to, and recover from wildland fire.
3. **Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response** – All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

In 2007, Linn County developed its first CWPP through a collaborative process with fire protection districts and federal and state agencies. This Plan reflects an in depth review of and builds on the 2007 Plan with significant updates to reflect changes in policies and practices and a broadened range of local and state partners. Additionally, the planning process was designed to result in a CWPP that meets the funding eligibility requirements for a variety of federal and state programs.

This CWPP focuses on achieving and exceeding the three minimum requirements for CWPPs described by the HFRA:

1. Collaboration: A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties.
2. Prioritized fuel reduction: A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure.
3. Treatment of structural ignitability: A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan.

The CWPP is a shared plan administered jointly by Linn County as directed by the Board of Commissioners, the Linn County Fire Defense Board (LCFDB), and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF); the contents of this Plan were mutually agreed upon by all three entities as required by the HFRA. The Plan was reviewed and approved by the LCFDB and the ODF and adopted by resolution by the Linn County Board of Commissioners **on XX**, meeting the HFRA requirements.

The CWPP was developed through the collaborative efforts of the following agencies and organizations:

- Linn County Department of Emergency Management
- Linn County Fire Defense Board
- Linn County GIS
- Linn County Planning and Building Department
- Linn County Public Health
- Linn County Roads Department
- Northwest Oregon Interagency Fire Management, NW Oregon District Bureau of Land Management, Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests
- Oregon Department of Forestry, North and South Cascade Districts
- Oregon State Fire Marshal

- Oregon State University Extension Fire Program
- South and North Santiam Watershed Councils
- Sweet Home Fire and Rescue
- Utility Providers (Consumers Power, Inc., Pacific Power)

In addition, the CWPP draws upon the input and feedback provided by members of the public and other stakeholders who participated in Steering Committee and LCFDB meetings, internal County meetings, local government and community organizations focus groups, and the community Wildfire Ready Night open house. The Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) provided project management and technical assistance support to the County.

Many of the action items identified in the CWPP address the need for continuing and coordinated support for wildfire mitigation and adaptation projects. Because of the non-regulatory nature of the CWPP, the relevance and effectiveness of the Plan will rely upon each of the agencies and organizations involved. The Plan’s Steering Committee (Committee) will oversee these implementation efforts and serve as a centralized resource for wildfire risk reduction efforts for all of Linn County. As such, the Committee will meet on a regular basis to discuss funding and opportunities for collaboration and implementation, suggest additional action items, document the successes and lessons learned from projects, share updated information to inform future assessment of risk, and to evaluate the CWPP. By actively coordinating with one another, the Committee will ensure the CWPP serves as a “living” document with the partner organizations committed to continued involvement. Section 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance provides more information.

The CWPP will be integrated into the wildfire chapter of the *Linn County Multi-jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan* (NHMP), being updated in 2024, providing an opportunity to use up-to-date wildfire risk assessment data, address overlapping or cascading hazards and potential mitigation and adaptation actions, and identify additional funding opportunities through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). It is anticipated that subsequent review and update of the CWPP will occur on a timeline that will inform future updates of the County’s NHMP, required by FEMA to be completed every five years.

This section of the CWPP introduces the important elements of the plan, including:

- Plan purpose, which describes why Linn County needs a CWPP and how the document will help to reduce wildfire risk in the County now and into the future.
- Planning process and methods, which describes how the Plan was created.
- Plan organization, which describes each of the sections in the remainder of the Plan.

Plan Purpose

This Plan reflects an in depth review of and builds on the 2007 Plan. In addition to carrying forward strategies and priorities identified in the 2007, Plan updates reflect the need for communities to adapt to wildfire, engagement of additional local and state partners, and up-to-date wildfire data from the 2023 Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (PNW QWRA) as well as local sources.

As human development continues to spread into agricultural and forestlands, the risk of WUI fire events escalates. Linn County’s diverse geography, population, and land ownership patterns create challenges to reducing the County’s risk of wildfire. At the same time, these are important County assets that should be protected from wildfire. Wildfire hazard mitigation is a system for reducing or alleviating the losses of life, property, and injuries resulting from wildfire through long and short-term strategies. These include fire adaptation strategies to help communities live safely with fire as part of the surrounding landscape through identifying risks and acting before, during, and after a fire to increase community resilience.⁴

The Plan recognizes that it is impossible to predict exactly when a wildfire will occur, or the extent to which it will affect Linn County’s communities. However, with careful planning and collaboration among public agencies, private sector organizations, non-profit partners, and community members throughout the County, it is possible to minimize the losses that can result from wildfire and increase the ability of people and communities to adapt and become more resilient to wildland fires.

The CWPP is an action plan for reducing risk and increasing preparedness and response capabilities that depends upon people and collaborative partnerships to carry it forward. It builds upon the 2007 CWPP and provides a detailed assessment of wildfire risk relative to Linn County and outlines agreed-upon risk reduction, preparedness, and response activities. The purpose of the CWPP is to provide the following:

- A framework for ongoing communication, coordination, and collaboration among agencies, organizations, and the public in Linn County to reduce the risk to communities from wildfire.
- An assessment of wildfire risk using the 2023 PNW QWRA and local sources of data.
- Mapping of the WUI and Communities at Risk in Linn County.
- Identification and prioritization of areas for hazardous fuels reduction projects.
- A set of recommended actions residents, the County, local communities, and other organizations can take to reduce the ignitability of buildings and structures.
- Documentation to support federal and state planning requirements in order to qualify for funding opportunities for identified projects.

Why Develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan?

The WUI, where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with flammable wildland vegetation, is growing in many Oregon communities and Linn County is no exception. ODF adopted WUI identification criteria rules in 2022,⁵ as required by Senate Bill 762⁶, that include the following definition:

Wildland-Urban Interface means a geographical area where structures and other human development meets or intermingles with wildland or vegetative fuels.

The WUI can be thought of as a transition zone between wildlands and human communities, which makes the area a focal area for human-environment conflicts such as wildland fires. The word “urban”

⁴ NWCG Standards for Mitigation in the Wildland Urban Interface. PMS 052, National Wildfire Coordinating Group. May 2023. <https://www.nwcg.gov/publications/052>

⁵ Oregon Department of Forestry Rules effective June 14, 2022, Division 44, 629-044-1000. <https://secure.sos.state.or.us/oard/displayDivisionRules.action?selectedDivision=2845>

⁶ <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Downloads/MeasureDocument/SB762/Enrolled>

within the name can often be misleading, as the boundaries are generally inclusive of development in rural communities where fuels may be intermixed. Increased development in the WUI can lead to increased risk from wildfire, with forest fires that can endanger and burn homes, while fires that start as structural fires can spread to the forest. One of the core elements of the CWPP is the risk assessment, which describes the risk and potential losses to life, property, infrastructure, and natural resources from wildfire based on best available science and data. Further information regarding how the WUI is determined and risk assessment methods is included in Section 3: Risk Assessment.

In 2020, more than 2,000 wildfires burned more than 1.2 million acres in Oregon, causing unprecedented deaths and damage to homes, livelihoods, and the natural environment. Emergency declarations were made for the counties of Clackamas, Douglas, Jackson, Klamath, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, and Marion due to extreme fire danger and damage. Governor Brown declared a state of emergency on August 20, 2020.

Across Oregon, the 2020 Labor Day fires had the following impacts:^{7 8 9 10}

- Nine lives lost;
- More than 5,000 homes and commercial structures burned, including at least 1,500 manufactured homes;
- Thousands of Oregonians displaced;
- 420,800 Oregonians were in Level 1 Evacuation status on September 14, 2020;
- Interstate I-5, Highway 22, and Highway 101 were among many transportation routes closed for multiple miles due to fire hazards in the area;
- Hazardous air quality throughout most of Oregon, with Portland metro area air quality worse than any major city in the world at the time;
- 2020 fire suppression costs exceeded 1 billion dollars;
- Cost of physical damages related to 2020 fires—more than 1 billion dollars based on initial assessments from local and state agencies conducted in October 2020, considering response and emergency protective measures and costs to repair and or replace damaged public infrastructure to pre-disaster condition; and
- As of August 2022, FEMA had obligated \$332,841,123 to the State from the Public Assistance Program to reimburse local, Tribal, and state government agencies and non-profits for disaster response and recovery, including debris removal, emergency protective measures, and permanent restoration of facilities.
- In Linn County, FEMA dollars approved or awarded totaled \$8.2M, including:¹¹
 - Individual Assistance Program: \$2.8M
 - Small Business Administration Program: \$3M

⁷ *Advancing Wildfire Protection*, March 2022, Report 2; https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Wildfire_Programs_Council_Documents/Wildfire-Prog-Dir-Rpt_March-2022.pdf

⁸ <https://www.corvallisadvocate.com/2022/wildfire-recovery-programs-focus-on-manufactured-homes-lost-in-2020-wildfires/>

⁹ Oregon Department of Emergency Management, <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6e1e42989d1b4beb809223d5430a3750>

¹⁰ Oregon Department of Emergency Management, <https://wildfire-auth.oregon.gov/Updates/Wildfire-Recovery-Update-2-15-22-EN.pdf>

¹¹ Oregon Wildfire Response & Recovery, <https://wildfire.oregon.gov/recovery>

- Public Assistance Program: \$3M

In Linn and Marion County, the Beachie Creek Fire was started by lightning on August 16, 2020, in Willamette National Forest. Lightning also sparked the Lionshead Fire, which began on August 16, 2020, in Lionshead Canyon on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation approximately 14 miles west of the Warm Springs community. Firefighters were unable to safely go after the fires due to steep, hazardous terrain. Starting on Labor Day, wind gusts of up to 75 mph caused rapid growth of both fires. The Lionshead Fire merged with the Beachie Creek Fire on September 8, 2020 and spread through the Santiam Canyon, causing significant damage to the communities of Detroit, Elkhorn, Gates, Mill City, Lyons/Mehama, and Jawbone Flats, as well as the Breitenbush area, including to homes, public infrastructure, and water systems. Highly valued natural and cultural resources were also threatened. There were five fatalities. 720 structures were destroyed throughout Marion County, and the fire spread into Linn County destroying 193 structures.¹² See Section 2: Community Profile for additional information regarding fire history in Linn County.

Over the past several decades, wildfires and the acreage burned in Oregon has increased dramatically. The numbers reveal how much the damage caused by the state's wildfires has grown in just 30 years:¹³

- 1992-2001: 199,000 acres burned annually
- 2002-2011: 314,000 acres burned annually
- 2012-2021: 720,000 acres burned annually

Wildfire risk is projected to increase across the state, as we face a future with hotter, drier, and longer summers. Increasingly negative and persistent impacts of wildfire are expected to affect personal safety, mental and physical health, Oregon's communities, economy, built environment, recreation, working lands, and natural environment.¹⁴ Changing climate conditions, snowpack melt rate, and rainfall trends causing loss of moisture from soils and vegetation, coupled with shifts in the range and types of fuels have contributed to more severe fire seasons that start earlier or last longer.¹⁵

This holds true for Linn County, where there is increased fire susceptibility in late summer and early autumn as thunderstorms with lightning strikes increase and vegetation dries out, increasing vegetative fuels. Additionally, factors such as humidity, wind speed and direction, fuel load and fuel type, and topography can contribute to the intensity and spread of wildfires.¹⁶ Wildfires caused by humans, which made up the majority of wildfire causes in Oregon between 2013-2022, include equipment use (22%), debris burning (20%), and recreation (12%), among other causes, shown below.

¹² Oregon Department of Emergency Management, 2020 Oregon Wildfire Spotlight.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/6e1e42989d1b4beb809223d5430a3750>

¹³ Doug Grafe, Wildfires Program Director, Office of Governor Brown, presentation to the Senate Interim Committee on Natural Resources and Wildfire Recovery, June 2, 2022.

¹⁴ *Oregon Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan*. 2020. p. 13, p. 22.

https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/NH/Documents/Approved_2020ORNHMP_00_Complete.pdf

¹⁵ Oregon Department of Forestry, Fire Protection Division Narrative 2021-23 Legislatively Adopted Budget,

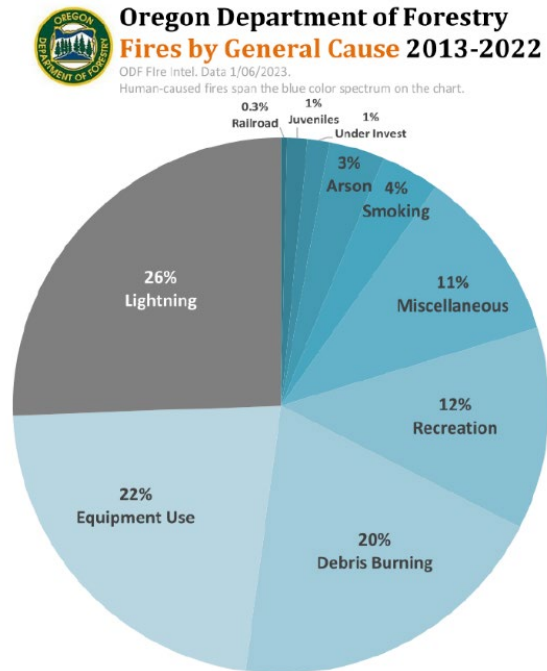
<https://www.oregon.gov/odf/aboutodf/Documents/budget/2021-23-odf-f-fire-protection.pdf>

¹⁶ *Linn County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan*, Volume 1, 2018,

https://www.linncountyor.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_amp_building/page/2619/nhmp_2018.pdf

The increased size of and destruction caused by fire in recent seasons illustrates that fire response and emergency management efforts alone are not enough to prevent losses. Reducing a community’s risk to wildfire is a shared responsibility that requires the participation of federal, state, and local government agencies, the private sector, and community members. Ultimately, however, risk reduction strategies are most effective when organized at the local level. Through community-based wildfire mitigation planning, it is possible to address the specific values and needs of a local community and to build people’s awareness of the dangers and responsibilities of living in a fire prone area.

Figure 2. Fires by General Cause in Oregon, 2013-2022



Linn County recognizes that reducing the potential impacts of WUI fire requires a proactive approach that reaches across jurisdictional boundaries, public and private lands, and the diverse geographic regions of the County. The development of a CWPP creates an opportunity to encourage communication between agencies and stakeholders, identify and prioritize community values, assess wildfire risk areas, and increase education and awareness of residents and visitors.

What Area Will the CWPP Affect?

The County’s NHMP defines wildfire as an uncontrolled burning of wildlands (forest, brush, or grassland). Although fire is a natural part of forest and grassland ecosystems in Linn County, wildfire can pose a significant risk to life and property in WUI areas, where homes and other structures mix or intermingle with forestland. If left unchecked, fires in these areas can threaten lives and property. It is also critical for landowners and communities adjacent to forested areas to take steps to reduce the risk of fire spread from developed to undeveloped areas.

Over 900,000 acres, or nearly 65% of Linn County, is forested.¹⁷ These forested lands play a critical role in the economic, environmental, and social vitality of the County. Wildfire poses a serious threat to economic activity, recreation, life, and property in forested areas. Twenty-nine percent of Linn County’s population resides outside of cities.¹⁸ Wildfire poses a threat to rural communities, rural residential areas, and other rural home sites located throughout the County.

¹⁷ Linn County Comprehensive Plan, LCC 905.200(C), pp. 905-6, 2016

¹⁸ Portland State University Population Research Center, 2022 Annual Population Report Tables.

<https://www.pdx.edu/population-research/sites/g/files/znlchr3261/files/2023-04/2022%20Annual%20Population%20Report%20Tables%20.pdf>

Linn County’s climate is characterized by warm dry summers and early autumns. During the fire season, the danger of fire in the County’s forests and grasslands increases as vegetation dries and increases the potential for fire ignition and spread. The forest lands in eastern Linn County historically have been subject to small to moderate fires annually, but the increase in ladder fuels—in other words, places where grasses and shrubs act as the first rung of the ‘ladder,’ smaller trees and outbuildings create the next rung, and the tree canopy creates the top rung—coupled with the increase in potential ignition sources from WUI development results in the potential for larger, more devastating wildfires as occurred in 2020.

The CWPP identifies risk reduction activities and takes into consideration the County’s diverse geography, population, and land management authorities. It identifies general areas with high wildfire risk and provides a framework of technical support and guidance that can assist local communities in developing and refining local wildfire risk reduction and adaptation activities. The CWPP does not have authority over incorporated communities within the County but seeks to develop strategies for sharing information and resources between the County and local communities.

Planning Process and Methods

Linn County developed the update of this CWPP in partnership with DLCD which provided project management and plan development support, funded through FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant program. In 2022, DLCD received Hazard Mitigation Grant Program – Post Fire (HMGP-PF) funds for FM-5327-OR from FEMA through the Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) to assist Linn County with the CWPP and the subsequent update of the County’s NHMP. The CWPP update and planning process was based on the requirements of the HFRA; the guidelines in *A Framework for Community Fire Plans*¹⁹; *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan*²⁰; *Community Wildfire Protection Plan Evaluation Guide*²¹; and FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant program, as elements of the CWPP will be integrated into the County’s NHMP.

The planning process for the CWPP reflects the collaborative emphasis required by HFRA: in developing this Plan, the County’s stakeholders came together to address a problem by identifying common goals and gaining consensus on potential solutions. A collaborative plan recognizes that the implementation process is more successful when it draws on a broad base of resources and is informed by diverse stakeholders and robust community engagement. This process ensures that the final document reflects the community’s highest priorities and that the Plan can be implemented to effectively reduce risk.

There were seven steps in the County’s planning process, described below.

¹⁹ Resource Innovations, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon. 2004. *A Framework for Community Fire Plans*. <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/fire/CFPFramework.pdf>

²⁰ National Association of Foresters, Western Governors Association, National Association of Counties, and Society of American Foresters. 2004. *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan*. <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/fire/cwpphandbook.pdf>

²¹ Resource Innovations, Institute for a Sustainable Environment, University of Oregon. 2008. *Community Wildfire Protection Plan Evaluation Guide*. <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/fire/CWPPEvalGuide.pdf>

Step I. Research Existing Wildfire Resources, Plans, and Policies

Background research was conducted in advance of the planning process for the CWPP update. DLCD and Linn County Planning & Building reviewed the 2007 Linn County CWPP; federal, state, and local policies and plans related to wildfire planning, protection, mitigation, and adaptation; and recent CWPPs from across the Oregon. Other background information reviewed included recent research and other literature on wildfire behavior and mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Step II. Convene Steering Committee and Engage Federal Partners

The Linn County Planning & Building Department convened a steering committee to oversee and guide the development of the CWPP. The Committee is a collaborative group responsible for making decisions and agreeing upon the final contents of the Plan. The members of the Steering Committee included representatives of the following agencies and organizations:

- Linn County Emergency Management Program, Linn County Sheriff's Office
- Linn County Fire Defense Board
- Linn County GIS
- Linn County Planning and Building Department
- Linn County Public Health
- Linn County Roads Department
- Northwest Oregon Interagency Fire Management, NW Oregon District Bureau of Land Management, Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests
- Oregon Department of Forestry, North and South Cascade Districts
- Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Oregon State University Extension Fire Program
- South and North Santiam Watershed Councils
- Sweet Home Fire and Rescue
- Utility Providers (Consumers Power, Inc., Pacific Power)

Once the initial Committee was established, members were asked to identify additional agency and organization representatives that would be important to include in the planning process. As the planning process continued, additional stakeholders became engaged and helped to inform the Plan's development. DLCD provided project management and technical assistance support to the County.

Step III. Engage Interested Stakeholders and Community Members

The Committee used the following strategies to engage stakeholders and the broader Linn County community in the update of the CWPP. Additional information is included in Section 4: Stakeholder and Community Engagement.

- Project website – A project website was developed to provide information about the update process and Committee meeting agendas and notes. Committee meetings were held online by Zoom and interested parties were welcome to attend. Project website: <https://www.linncountyor.gov/planningbuilding/page/community-wildfire-protection-plan>
- Focus Groups – Two in-person community engagement sessions, or focus groups, were held with key community constituents in August 2023. The sessions included an overview of the CWPP planning process and discussions with participants to identify concerns, obstacles, and opportunities for reducing wildfire risk in Linn County. Their feedback was incorporated into the action items. The first focus group, held on August 2, 2023 in Albany, included city managers and other representatives from cities within Linn County. The second focus group, held on August 24, 2023 in Scio, included representatives from various local and regional community groups, agencies, associations, and other organizations. Participant areas of interest and expertise ranged from public health, wildfire recovery, and fire-vulnerable communities to youth workforce development, small woodlands management, recreation, watershed health, and the Rodger’s Mountain Firewise community.
- Linn County Fire Defense Board – Committee members attended a regular meeting of the LCFDB on August 24, 2023, in Scio and provided an update on the planning process. At the meeting and in a follow up survey, fire agency members provided input on local areas of concern related to fire response, such as vegetations, access, water supply, and other issues, as well as information about individual fire agency needs, such as equipment and resources, communications, and staffing. The feedback informed the risk assessment and action items.
- Linn County Wildfire Ready Night – A community open house was held on December 7, 2023 in Sweet Home. Community members learned about the CWPP process, including the goals, action items, and risk assessment; received tips for protecting their homes; and shared their priorities and concerns about wildfire preparedness and response. It was hosted at Sweet Home Fire District with local, regional, and state partners in wildfire protection.
- The draft CWPP was made available for public comment on the County’s CWPP webpage in January 2024 prior to the final meeting of the Steering Committee. The opportunity to review and provide feedback on the draft Plan was promoted using the County newsletter, social media, via email to participants of the focus groups and community open, and through Committee members.

Step IV. Develop Wildfire Risk Assessment and Community Maps

Linn County’s risk assessment describes the risk and potential losses to life, property, and natural resources from wildfire based on best available science and data. Its purpose is to identify and implement the most effective strategies for preventing losses from fire. The findings, including a series of maps and charts, methods used to develop the assessment, limitations, ideas for long-term assessment

updates and maintenance, and conclusions and recommendations can be found in Section 3: Risk Assessment.

Step V. Develop an Action Plan and Prioritize Projects

Input from the Committee, stakeholders, community feedback, and the findings from the wildfire risk assessment informed the CWPP action plan. The action plan identifies five goals and 43 action items for carrying out wildfire risk reduction and adaptation strategies in the County. The action plan also establishes roles and responsibilities, timelines for implementing action items, potential cost and funding sources, and locations. Based on the risk assessment and other factors, the Committee identified 11 top priority action items to ensure that funding and other resources are used efficiently and effectively to move toward the Plan's goals. See Section 5: Action Plan and Appendix A: Action Item Worksheets for details.

Step VI. Establish a Plan Implementation and Maintenance Strategy

The Committee evaluated the 2007 Plan implementation and maintenance strategy to inform the update of Plan implementation, maintenance, and review strategy needed to ensure the CWPP remains a "living" document that benefits the community. Attention was paid to establishing responsibility and regular intervals for convening the Committee to share successes and challenges with implementation and engage in maintenance and regular reviews and updates of the CWPP. See Section 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance for more information.

Step VII. Finalize the Community Wildfire Protection Plan

The project management team presented the draft CWPP to the Committee on January 30, 2024 for comment and approval. Feedback received during the public comment period was shared by the County for the Committee's consideration. Recommended updates were incorporated into the final draft Plan followed by LCFDB and ODF review and approval. Subsequently, the Committee-approved document was presented to the Linn County Board of Commissioners on XXX and was adopted by resolution. The following entities mutually agreed to the final document, pursuant to the HFRA:

- Linn County Board of Commissioners
- Linn County Fire Defense Board
- Oregon Department of Forestry

The remainder of the Linn County CWPP is organized into the following sections and appendices:

- Section 2: Community Profile identifies some of the characteristics of Linn County, describes historic wildfire activity, and summarizes the policy frameworks related to wildfire risk and mitigation.
- Section 3: Risk Assessment presents the findings, including maps, methods used to develop the assessment, limitations, ideas for long-term assessment updates and maintenance, and conclusions and recommendations.

- Section 4: Stakeholder and Community Engagement summarizes the Steering Committee’s work and details the process by which stakeholder and community input was gathered and incorporated into the CWPP.
- Section 5: Action Plan describes the framework and methods used to develop the goals and action items and lays out the five goals and 43 action items, including 11 top priority actions, that will further progress toward the agreed upon wildfire risk reduction and adaptation goals.
- Section 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance describes the methods for implementing the Action Plan, the process for prioritizing projects, and a schedule for updating and maintaining the Plan, ensuring a relevant and up-to-date document that can be utilized throughout the County for years to come.
- Appendix A: Action Item Worksheets includes detailed worksheets for each project, key issues addressed, ideas for implementation, coordination and partner organizations, timeline, estimated cost and potential funding source, location, and priority, as well as a summary of successes for actions that were included in the 2007 Plan. The appendix also includes a crosswalk of 2007 and 2024 action items.
- Appendix B: Risk Assessment Methods documents the process used to develop the Risk Assessment maps and conclusions.
- Appendix C: Fire Agency Priority Areas for Mitigation includes a summary of fire agency engagement regarding areas of most concern.
- Appendix D: Steering Committee Documentation includes the roster, agendas, and meeting notes (with links to presentations and meeting recordings).
- Appendix E: Community Engagement Documentation includes summaries from the focus group meetings, Fire Defense Board meeting, and the Wildfire Ready Night community open house, and the Community Input Integration table.
- Appendix F: Fire Agency Profiles includes information on the fire agencies in Linn County and their capacities.
- Appendix G: Fuel Treatment Types describes and analyzes potential fuel treatment types available for use in Linn County.
- Appendix H: Wildfire Resources documents a variety of resources that support wildfire mitigation, preparedness, and recovery in Linn County, including community wildfire mitigation resources, regional and state contacts, and potential funding sources.

Section 2: Linn County Community Profile

Linn County is in the mid-Willamette Valley, in western Oregon, and covers an area of 2,297 square miles. It is bounded to the north by Marion County, to the west by Benton County, to the south by Lane County, to the east by Deschutes and Jefferson Counties, and to the northwest by Polk County. The elevation ranges from 125 feet along the Willamette River in western Linn County to 10,497 feet at the peak of Mt. Jefferson in eastern Linn County. Nearly all of Linn County's population lives in the Willamette Valley between the Willamette River and the Cascade foothills. The eastern half of the county is undeveloped forest land of the Cascade Range. Although mostly uninhabited, the Cascades draw large numbers of recreational visitors throughout the year. The rugged, steep mountains are subject to a variety of natural events, including lightning storms and wildfire during the hot summer months, severe storms during winter, and landslides in winter and spring.²²

Linn County's diverse geography, population, and land ownership patterns create challenges to reducing the County's risk of wildfire, but also represent key County assets, resources, and socially and economically vulnerable communities that should be protected from wildfire. This section describes some of the characteristics of Linn County and policy frameworks related to wildfire risk and mitigation, including the following:

- Ecoregions and Forest Characteristics briefly describes Linn County's physical landscape and forests.
- Wildfire History describes the previous occurrences of wildfire in Linn County.
- Current Wildfire Protection Framework describes the wildfire protection roles and responsibilities of the various agencies in Linn County.
- Existing Plans and Policies describe the plans and policies that Linn County already has in place that will assist in addressing wildfire risk.

Additional information regarding Linn County's major regions and land cover, land ownership, critical facilities, construction and population growth trends, and communities at risk are included in Section 3: Risk Assessment. Additionally, the County's NHMP contains a detailed community profile that informs the NHMP's vulnerability assessment, both of which will be updated during the forthcoming NHMP update.

Ecoregions and Forest Characteristics

Historic wildfire regimes helped to shape the forest landscape of Linn County. Natural cycles of fire disturbance influence all facets of ecosystem dynamics, from structure and composition to wildlife habitat and nutrient cycling. Fire suppression, timber harvesting, the introduction of exotic species, and other human factors have disturbed natural fire cycles. West of the Cascade Mountains, fire frequency

²² *Linn County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan*, Volume 1. 2018. https://www.linncountyor.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_amp_building/page/2619/nhmp_2018.pdf

and severity depend upon environmental variables, such as temperature, moisture, ignitions, and broad, fire-driving winds.²³

Throughout Linn County, Douglas Fir and Western Hemlock are the predominant forest types.²⁴ The County is composed of two distinct ecoregions with differing vegetative, geographic, and fire regime characteristics.²⁵ These ecoregions include the:

- Willamette Valley: The Valley landforms include floodplains and terraces that are interlaced with surrounding rolling hills. The natural vegetation includes Cottonwood, Alder, Oregon Ash, and Big Leaf Maple. Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar occur in moister areas. The Valley has lower precipitation, warmer temperatures, and fire regimes of higher frequency and lower severity than the adjacent Cascade Range.
- Western Cascades: This ecoregion is characterized by ridge crests at similar elevations, separated by steep valleys. The natural vegetation consists of forests of Douglas Fir and Western Hemlock at lower elevations and Silver Fir and Mountain Hemlock at higher elevations.

Significant annual precipitation and low occurrence of lightning throughout much of Linn County contribute to a low probability of natural fire ignitions in many areas. However, once ignited, the high vegetative fuel loads are vulnerable to catastrophic fires as experienced during the 2020 Labor Day fires. Catastrophic fires are those that “burn more intensely than the natural or historical range of variability, thereby fundamentally changing the ecosystem, destroying communities and/or rare or threatened species/habitat, or causing unacceptable erosion.”²⁶

Recent research on the 2020 Labor Day fires, which included an assessment of precedence in the historical record and the implications in terms of forest management and wildfire risk reduction, reported the following findings: “Adaptation strategies for similar fires in the future could benefit by focusing on ignition prevention, fire suppression, and community preparedness, as opposed to fuel treatments that are unlikely to mitigate fire severity during extreme weather. While scientific uncertainties remain regarding the nature of infrequent, high-severity fires in westside forests, particularly under climate change, adapting to their future occurrence will require different strategies than those in interior, dry forests.”²⁷

²³ Duncan, Sally; Swanson, Fred. 2002. When the forest burns: making sense of fire history west of the Cascades. Science Findings. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station. September (46): 1-5. <https://www.fs.usda.gov/research/pnw/products/science-findings/when-forest-burns-making-sense-fire-history-west-cascades>

²⁴ Loy, William et al. 2001. *Atlas of Oregon*.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ National Fire Plan. 2001. *A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment: A 10-Year Strategy*.

²⁷ Reilly, Matthew et al. 2022. Cascadia Burning: The historic, but not historically unprecedented, 2020 wildfires in the Pacific Northwest, USA. <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ecs2.4070>

Wildfire History

Wildfire plays a critical ecological role in many ecosystems across the country, including those in Linn County. Native Americans annually burned large areas of the Willamette Valley and coastal valleys to help maintain grasslands and savannahs.²⁸ Forest fires were relatively infrequent, although their size and severity were often great.

The disruption of natural fire cycles over the last century has created dangerous vegetative fuel loads and forests vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires. Logging came to the region in the early twentieth century, and, combined with fire, changed the landscape of the western Cascades.²⁹ During and after World War II, an emphasis on better wildland fire suppression and fire prevention dramatically reduced damage caused by wildfires. More people moved into suburban and exurban areas during this same period, increasing the size of the WUI and the number of homes and businesses within it.³⁰

While Linn County regularly experiences wildfires, these have not had significant effects on communities until recently. The catastrophic 2020 Labor Day fires greatly impacted the north part of Linn County. The 2023 Priceboro and Wiley Fires in the south part of the county resulted in resident evacuations and area closures but no loss of life or structures.^{31 32} Much of Linn County has also been impacted by smoke and road and area closures from these fires and fires in adjacent counties, impacting public health, recreation, and local economies.

Between January 2014 and November 2023, ODF reports that the North Cascade District (Santiam Unit) experienced a total of 236 fires burning a total of 399,027 acres, including the 2020 Lionshead and Beachie Creek Fires, which burned 204,474 acres and 193,566 acres respectively. For the South Cascade District (Sweet Home Unit), ODF reports a total of 215 fires burning a total of 635 acres, including the 2023 Priceboro and Wiley Fires, which burned 309.5 acres and 244 acres respectively.³³

Historical wildfires in Linn County include:^{34 35}

- **1960 – 1970:** ODF reports a total of 327 fires in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit), burning a total of 2,213.9 acres. While most of these fires were tiny, the largest burned 598 acres in 1966.

²⁸ Oregon Department of Forestry. 2001. *Northwest Oregon State Forests Management Plan: Final Plan*.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ <https://kpic.com/news/local/firefighters-push-back-against-priceboro-fire-evacuation-remains-in-effect>

³² <https://www.msn.com/en-us/weather/other/successful-suppression-efforts-end-wiley-creek-fire-closure-in-willamette-national-forest/ar-AA1kfXBD>

³³ Oregon Department of Forestry, FIRES Reporting, North Cascade, District 58, 11/22/23, and South Cascade, District 77, 11/27/23

³⁴ *Linn County Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan*, Volume 1, 2018, https://www.linncountyor.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning_amp_building/page/2619/nhmp_2018.pdf

³⁵ Oregon Department of Forestry, FIRES Reporting, North Cascade, District 58, 11/22/23, and South Cascade, District 77, 11/27/23

- **1971 – 1980:** ODF reports a total of 241 fires in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit), burning a total of 2,856.45 acres. While most of these fires were tiny, the largest burned 837 acres in 1980.
- **1981 – 1990:** ODF reports a total of 191 fires in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit), burning a total of 2,934.9 acres. While most of these fires were tiny, the largest burned 2,023 acres in 1987.
- **1991 – 2000:** ODF reports a total of two fires in North Cascade District 58 (Santiam Unit), burning a total of 0.13 acres. ODF reports a total of 251 fires in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit), burning a total of 260.2 acres. While most of these fires were tiny, the largest, the Thomas Creek Fire, burned 70.1 acres in 1998.
- **2001 – 2010:** ODF reports a total of 41 fires in North Cascade District 58 (Santiam Unit), burning a total of 65.2 acres. ODF reports a total of 257 fires in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit), burning a total of 1,426.68 acres. While most of these fires were tiny, the largest, the Middle Fork Fire, burned 1,070 acres in 2006.
- **2010 – 2016:** ODF reports a total of 34 fires in North Cascade District (Santiam Unit), burning a total of 131.5 acres. ODF reports a total of 99 fires in the South Cascade District (Sweet Home Unit), burning a total of 46.4 acres.
- **2012:** Hilltop Fire burned 16.5 acres in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit).
- **2014:** Gates Complex (GM) Fire burned 35 acres in North Cascade District 58 (Santiam Unit).
- **2014:** 7 Mile Fire burned 45 acres in North Cascade District 58 (Santiam Unit)
- **2020:** Beachie Creek Fire burned 193,566 acres in North Cascade District 58 (Santiam Unit)
- **2020:** Lionshead Fire burned 204,474 acres in North Cascade District 58 (Santiam Unit)
- **2020:** Green Peter Peninsula Fire burned 18 acres in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit)
- **2020:** W. Brush Creek Fire burned 13.6 acres in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit)
- **2023:** Priceboro Fire burned 309.5 acres in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit)
- **2023:** Wiley Fire burned 244 acres in South Cascade District 77 (Sweet Home Unit)

Current Wildfire Protection Framework

Several agencies share responsibility for fire protection in Linn County; these roles are described in the Linn County Emergency Operations Plan.³⁶ In addition to response capabilities, many fire agencies in Linn County play a role in prevention education and outreach and fuels mitigation. Additionally, the Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) provides technical assistance to fire agencies and unprotected areas in the WUI. ODF has received grant funding for fuel reduction projects and associated community education. Table 1, below, summarizes the current wildfire protection framework for Linn County, including the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local fire protection agencies

³⁶ <https://www.linnsheriff.org/wp-content/uploads/Linn-County-EOP-2022-Final.pdf>

Table 1. Current Wildfire Protection Framework

Federal	State	Local
<p>US Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM)</p> <p>Manages the majority of Linn County’s 552,000 acres of Forest and Conservation Management (FCM) zoned forestlands.</p> <p>USFS participates in first response mutual aid agreements with Oregon Department of Forestry.</p> <p>The Oregon Department of Forestry provides wildfire protection on BLM administered lands through the Western Oregon Operating Plan.</p> <p>Promotes wildfire education and prevention activities.</p>	<p>Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)</p> <p>Provides wildland protection on 578,000 acres in Linn County on state owned and state protected lands within district boundaries (includes BLM lands).</p> <p>Participates in response agreements with all adjoining counties and in mutual aid agreements with USFS.</p> <p>Provides wildfire protection on BLM administered lands through the Western Oregon Operating Plan.</p> <p>Promotes wildfire education, outreach, and prevention activities.</p> <p>Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM)</p> <p>The OSFM coordinates mobilization throughout Oregon. The OSFM’s Oregon Fire Service Mobilization Plan is an all-hazard-based plan used to mobilize fire resources to any incident beyond local fire service capabilities necessary to protect life, property, and the environment.</p> <p>The OSFM’s Response Ready Oregon initiative bolsters capacity and modernizes wildfire response within the Oregon Fire Mutual Aid System. The goal of Response Ready Oregon is to attack fires while they are small and keep them away from communities.</p> <p>The OSFM’s Fire Adapted Oregon initiative aims to improve community resiliency to wildfire in Oregon. The Community Wildfire Risk Reduction team provides local coordination, funding, education, and training to support the initiative.</p>	<p>Fire Departments</p> <p>Provide structural and wildland protection within each department’s areas of jurisdiction. In addition, each department provides varying levels of risk reduction activities.</p> <p>There are sixteen local fire departments serving the areas of Linn County:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albany Fire Department • Brownsville Fire RFD • Corvallis Fire Department • Gates RFPD • Halsey-Shedd RFPD • Harrisburg F&R • Idanha-Detroit RFPD • Jefferson RFPD • Lebanon Fire District • Lyons RFD • Mill City RFPD • Mohawk RFPD • Scio RFPD • Sweet Home Fire District • Stayton Fire District • Tangent RFPD <p>Linn County Fire Defense Board</p> <p>Manages mutual aid agreements between ten fire departments within Linn County including the Oregon Department of Forestry.</p> <p>Under the Oregon Mutual Aid System, the defense board is also tasked with being the liaison between local fire departments and the Oregon State Fire Marshal when a large scale event occurs, or additional resources are needed around the state.</p> <p>Focuses on the operational side of fire response.</p>

Existing Plans and Policies

The CWPP is non-regulatory in nature, meaning that it does not set forth any new policy. The Plan does provide (1) a foundation for increased communication, coordination, and collaboration among agencies and the public in Linn County; (2) identification and prioritization of areas for hazardous fuel reduction projects, reducing structural ignitability, and other mitigation and adaptation activities; and (3) assistance meeting federal and state planning requirements and qualifying for assistance programs.

The CWPP works in conjunction with other County plans and programs including, but not limited, to the NHMP, the Comprehensive Plan, and the Emergency Operations Plan. These plans are briefly described below:

- The Linn County Multi-Jurisdictional NHMP was adopted in 2018 and established a comprehensive community-level mitigation strategy intended to assist Linn County in reducing its risk from natural hazards by identifying resources, information, partnerships, and strategies for addressing risk. The NHMP is designed to meet the requirements for mitigation planning as set forth in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and the regulations contained in 44 CFR 201 which require that jurisdictions maintain an approved NHMP to receive federal funds for mitigation projects. Local and federal approval of the NHMP ensures that the county and listed jurisdictions remain eligible for pre- and post-disaster mitigation project grants. Elements of the CWPP will be integrated into the wildfire chapter of the County's NHMP.
- The Linn County Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) serves to address a wide range of concerns such as the best use of land, air, and water resources, as well as the delivery of public services. The Comp Plan changes when the needs and desires of the public change, when development occurs at a different rate than predicted, and when corrections or revisions are needed. It contains an element that specifically addresses natural hazards, as required by Oregon's Statewide Land Use Planning Goal 7: Areas Subject to Natural Hazards. The County's Comp Plan was last updated in 2015.
- The Linn County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is maintained by the Linn County Sheriff's Department. The EOP was last updated in June 2022. The EOP is an all-hazard plan that describes how Linn County will organize and respond to emergencies and disasters in the community. It is based on, and is compatible with, federal, State of Oregon, and other applicable laws, regulations, plans, and policies, including Presidential Policy Directive 8, the National Response Framework, and ODEM plans. The EOP provides a framework for coordinated response and recovery activities during a large-scale emergency. It describes how various agencies and organizations in the County will coordinate resources and activities with other federal, State, local, tribal, community- and faith-based organizations, and private-sector partners.

Policy Framework

The Linn County CWPP addresses the requirements provided in Title III of the HFRA and meets the guidelines and requirements of other state and federal programs. Table 2, below, briefly describes policies relevant to the creation and implementation of Linn County's CWPP.

Table 2. Policy Framework for Wildland Urban Interface Fire in Oregon

Policy	Requirements	How the CWPP Addresses Policy
<p>Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA)</p> <p>Congress adopted HFRA in 2003 to assist community, state, and federal land managers in the prevention of catastrophic wildfire on public lands through fuels reduction activities. The Act requires that 50% of appropriated fuel treatment funding through HFRA be used in the Wildland Urban Interface protection zone and give priority funding to communities with a Community Wildfire Protection Plan in place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration: A CWPP must be collaboratively developed by local and state government representatives, in consultation with federal agencies and other interested parties. • Prioritized Fuel Reduction: A CWPP must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment that will protect one or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure. • Treatment of Structural Ignitability: A CWPP must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the plan. • Three entities must mutually agree to the final contents of a CWPP: the applicable local government; the local fire departments; and the state entity responsible for forest management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CWPP was collaboratively developed by a Steering Committee representing local, regional, state, and federal agencies and organizations. The plan process included engagement activities to gain input from the public and other stakeholders. • The CWPP includes an assessment of wildfire risk in Linn County and information to support prioritization of hazardous fuel treatment projects. The plan also includes a table identifying appropriate fuel treatment methods for Linn County. • The CWPP recommends actions for promoting risk reduction activities on private and public lands in Linn County. • The Linn County Board of Commissioners, the Linn County Fire Defense Board, and the Oregon Department of Forestry approved the Linn County CWPP.
<p>National Fire Plan 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy</p> <p>The National Fire Plan was developed in 2000, following a landmark wildfire season, to actively respond to severe wildfires and their impacts on communities, while ensuring sufficient firefighting capacity for the future.</p>	<p>The National Fire Plan addresses five key points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Firefighting 2. Rehabilitation 3. Hazardous Fuels Reduction 4. Community Assistance 5. Accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CWPP will aid in effectively implementing National Fire Plan goals by providing a collaborative framework for reducing wildfire risk to communities in Linn County.
<p>National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy</p> <p>The National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy (Cohesive Strategy) was established under the Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement</p>	<p>The Cohesive Strategy is focused on collaboration among all stakeholders and across all landscapes, using best science, to make meaningful progress towards three goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient Landscapes – Landscapes, regardless of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CWPP supports collaborative decision-making to support progress toward the three goals of the Cohesive Strategy in Linn County, with a focus on increasing landscape resilience across jurisdictional boundaries, supporting more

Policy	Requirements	How the CWPP Addresses Policy
<p>Act of 2009, followed by the 2014 Cohesive Strategy framework.</p> <p>In 2023 an Addendum Update was presented by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council to spotlight wildland fire critical emphasis areas that were not identified or addressed in depth in the 2014 Cohesive Strategy framework. The Addendum Update includes enhanced strategic direction and approved modifications to address the identified areas and challenges to Cohesive Strategy implementation over the decades to come, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Workforce capacity, health, and well-being • Community resilience (preparation, response, and recovery) • Diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice <p>Five key implementation challenges were also identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing wildland fire management system has not kept pace with demands. • There is still a need for significant increase in the use of proactive fire (prescribed and managed wildfire for resource objectives) across the country. • Science, data, and technology have not kept pace with the extent of wildland fire and postfire impacts, or been fully integrated into decision-making for fire, land, and community managers. • Markets, infrastructure, and skilled human resource capacity are inadequate to utilize biomass and other wood products from ecosystem management or hazardous fuel treatments. 	<p>jurisdictional boundaries are resilient to fire, insect, disease, invasive species and climate change disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Adapted Communities – Human populations and infrastructure are as prepared as possible to receive, respond to, and recover from wildland fire. • Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response – All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions. 	<p>resilient and fire adapted communities; including preparedness, and recovery; and bolstering wildfire response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CWPP updates reflect an effort to address the enhanced strategic objectives and some of the areas identified in the Cohesive Strategy 2023 update, including changing climate, workforce development, public health, community resilience, and underserved populations. Action item updates also reflect some of the identified implementation challenges.

Policy	Requirements	How the CWPP Addresses Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education, communications, and marketing are insufficient to inform stakeholders and decision-makers about Cohesive Strategy implementation. 		
<p>Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000</p> <p>The Act emphasizes mitigation planning and establishes a pre-disaster hazard mitigation program.</p>	<p>Requires state and local governments to have an approved natural hazard mitigation plan in place to qualify for post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds.</p>	<p>The CWPP will be integrated into the wildfire chapter of the Linn County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan being updated in 2024-2025.</p>
<p>Senate Bill 762 (2021), updated by Senate Bill 80 (2023)</p> <p>The 2021 Oregon legislature passed the state's first comprehensive wildfire preparedness and resiliency bill, Senate Bill 762 (SB 762). Updated by Senate Bill 80 (SB 80) in 2023, the legislation invokes action from multiple agencies, with the aim of providing long-term security for our state by minimizing loss of life and property, protecting the lives of wildland firefighters, protecting, and managing Oregon's forest assets, and creating a more predictable and protected future for communities and development at risk to the impacts of wildfire.</p> <p>Since 2021, the legislature has invested more than \$270,000,000 in SB 762 programs and projects across Oregon in support of the three goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Strategy to increase readiness and response, resilient landscapes and fire adapted communities.</p> <p>The Wildfire Programs Advisory Council was established following the passage of SB 762. The Council works to recommend and implement policies to help prevent and better respond to wildfire and create more fire resilient communities and landscapes in</p>	<p>There are currently no requirements for local governments related to SB 762.</p> <p>Upon the approval of the statewide wildfire hazard map, required under SB 762/SB 80 to be developed by Oregon Department of Forestry and Oregon State University, local jurisdictions must address new building code and defensible space standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Oregon Building Codes Division is required to adopt fire hardening building code standards, based on existing wildfire mitigation provisions, that could be applied to new dwellings and the accessory structures of dwellings in areas of the state mapped as high hazard zones and that are in the wildland urban interface. The Oregon State Fire Marshal is required to adopt the Oregon Defensible Space Code, modeled after the 2021 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code. When adopted, the code will apply in areas of the state mapped as high hazard zones and that are in the wildland urban interface. 	<p>The CWPP identifies projects and programs that may be eligible to receive grant funding or technical assistance in support of the goals of SB 762.</p>

Policy	Requirements	How the CWPP Addresses Policy
Oregon. It is responsible for submitting an annual report to the legislature and Governor's office.		
<p>Oregon Statewide Land Use Goal 7 Areas Subject to Natural Hazards</p> <p>Goal 7 requires local governments to adopt measures in their comprehensive plans to reduce risk to people and property from natural hazards.</p>	<p>Goal 7 requires local comprehensive plans to address Oregon's natural hazards to reduce risk to people and property. A local government addresses natural hazards in its comprehensive land use plan. They do this by adopting a natural hazard inventory and supporting plans and policies.</p>	<p>The CWPP includes a wildfire risk assessment for Linn County, which may be used as new wildfire hazard inventory information in the Linn County Comprehensive Plan.</p>
<p>Oregon Forestland Dwelling Units Statute, ORS 215.730</p> <p>The statute provides criteria for approving dwellings located on lands zoned for forest and mixed agriculture/forest use.</p>	<p>The statute directs county governments to require, as a condition of approval, that single family dwellings on lands zoned as forestland meet requirements for construction materials, fuel breaks, water supply, and location in fire protection districts.</p>	<p>The Linn County Code and Comprehensive Plan currently meet requirements of the state statute for dwellings on lands zoned as forestlands.</p>
<p>Rural Residential Accessory Dwelling Units, ORS 215.495</p> <p>The statute provides criteria for the permitting of an accessory dwelling unit in an area zoned for rural residential use, consistent with a county's comprehensive plan.</p>	<p>The statute includes a variety of criteria, including requirements for meeting applicable minimum defensible space requirements for wildfire risk reduction and that the accessory dwelling unit complies with the construction provisions of section R327 of the Oregon Residential Specialty Code. Currently the criteria apply to all rural ADUs, upon approval of the Statewide Wildfire Hazard map, the wildfire criteria will only apply in areas of high hazard and in the WUI.</p>	<p>Linn County has not yet adopted code amendments to allow the permitting of rural ADUs.</p>

Summary

As human development continues to spread into forestlands, the risk of WUI fire escalates. Linn County's diverse geography, population, and land ownership patterns create further challenges to reducing the County's risk of wildfire. Many entities and programs aimed at wildfire response, mitigation, adaptation, and education exist. The CWPP's updated risk assessment and action plan create further opportunities to improve collaboration, enhance wildfire mitigation and adaptation efforts, increase resilience, and reduce the County's overall risk of wildfire.

Section 3: Risk Assessment

Wildfire risk to forest lands and homes is inseparable. Forest fires can endanger and burn homes, while fires that start as structural fires can spread to the forest. One of the core elements of the Linn County CWPP is the risk assessment, which describes the risk and potential losses to life, property, infrastructure, and natural resources from wildfire based on best available science and data. Its purpose is to inform the identification and implementation of the most effective strategies for preventing losses from fire.

Key findings from the risk assessment include:

- From 2007 and 2022, the overall area covered by rural fire protection districts has increased.
- New construction in Linn County since 2007 has contributed to an increase of WUI area. At least 4,604 new structures for habitation have been built since 2007 in the County with 3,896 of those now being identified within the WUI.
- The vast majority of Linn County's WUI, approximately 152 square miles, is defined as intermix. Generally, intermix areas are characterized by lower density developments that are scattered in a wildland area, where fuels are dispersed throughout. The high prevalence of intermix communities in Linn County means more residents are exposed to potential fire events in areas where there are not clear lines of demarcation between human development and wildlands.
- The distribution of WUI areas across local fire protection districts shows that Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Scio Fire Districts have the largest amount of WUI by area.
- Linn County is primarily characterized by low and moderate wildfire risk countywide. Most area within the Willamette Valley is predicted to have neutral to low negative consequences from wildfire. The risk rating tends to be more negative within the boundaries of WUI communities, where direct exposure of people, property, and infrastructure to wildland fuel sources is higher. In the forested foothills of the Cascades, particularly surrounding communities of Brownsville, Lebanon, Lacombe, Lyons, and Sweet Home, there are mixed benefits and higher negative consequences from fire, compared to the populated areas of the Willamette Valley. The area predicted to experience the worst outcomes from wildfire overall are the forested areas of the Cascades. These areas are mainly private industrial and federal forestland with highly valuable timber resources, recreation sites, drinking watersheds, and wildlife habitats.
- Places where social vulnerability and higher relative risk for wildfire overlap are block groups in or near Cascadia, Mill City, Sweet Home, and Sodaville. Socially vulnerable communities should be prioritized for wildfire mitigation resources, particularly homeowner assistance programs and other grants or cost-share opportunities when possible.

The assessment is organized into the following parts:

- Purpose and methods provide an overview of the goals and objectives of the analysis and briefly describes the methods used to evaluate wildfire risks in Linn County. More detailed information about the risk assessment data sources and methods can be found in Appendix B: Risk Assessment Methods.
- Map discussion presents the main findings of the risk assessment.

- Concluding statements shed light on the limitations of the data and future maintenance of the risk assessment.

Purpose

This assessment broadly identifies communities and areas within Linn County that are at risk. Information gathered through this assessment is intended to help emergency managers and fire-fighting professionals prioritize areas of concern for further analysis and mitigation activities.

The purpose of the assessment is to:

- Determine the potential risk of interface fires for Linn County communities through a collaborative effort that incorporates local, on-the-ground knowledge with the best available data and geographic analysis.
- Establish an updated community base map for Linn County's overall wildfire risk and WUI areas as described later in this section.
- Begin to identify communities at risk that require more refined analysis to conduct neighborhood assessments.
- Provide insight for the prioritization of hazardous fuel treatment projects.

Methods

Several communities across the nation have completed, or are currently engaged in, wildfire planning efforts. In the process, they have developed numerous models in an attempt to understand the risks posed by WUI fires. The assessment techniques used in these models differ widely in both content and detail of analysis.

The 2023 Linn County CWPP Risk Assessment has adopted many major changes in data sources and methods. The 2007 CWPP Risk Assessment included in-depth analysis done using the best adopted methods at the time, based on a model developed by ODF. For more information about those methods, refer to the 2007 CWPP. The Steering Committee elected to update the Risk Assessment using wildfire risk data from the 2023 PNW QWRA, which is created and managed by Oregon State University (OSU) in collaboration with federal and state agencies such as USFS, BLM, ODF, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources. Pyrologix LLC, a wildfire threat assessment research firm, provided foundational wildfire modeling for the assessment. The data is the most up to date quantitative fire risk data available in the northwest. OSU provided Linn County with data from the 2023 update in advance of the final publishing. Once published, the 2023 QWRA will supersede the previous QWRA released in 2018. The previous QWRA published in 2018 is available on the [Oregon Explorer Oregon CWPP Planning Tool](https://tools.oregonexplorer.info/OE_HtmlViewer/index.html?viewer=wildfireplanning).³⁷ The 2023 update contains many methodological differences from the 2018 QWRA, including differences in fire hazard modeling and new methods to capturing highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs).

In addition to the 2023 PNW QWRA data, the Risk Assessment uses other sources from OSU and Oregon Explorer including statewide mapping of the WUI and statewide mapping of social vulnerability. Local

³⁷ https://tools.oregonexplorer.info/OE_HtmlViewer/index.html?viewer=wildfireplanning

knowledge from fire professionals in Linn County is also captured in the Fire Protection Agencies Priority Areas for Mitigation map.

A more detailed breakdown of the risk assessment methodology can be found in Appendix B: Risk Assessment Methods.

Assessment Area

Findings in this section are primarily presented at the countywide scale. The CWPP Steering Committee identified new overall wildfire risk and wildland urban interface maps as being the most critical to update. This assessment also includes analysis of countywide fire district coverage, social vulnerability, and maps depicting priority areas of concern identified by local and state fire response agencies.

To provide better context to the Linn County region, a series of community base maps are shown and described below.

Linn County Major Regions and Land Cover

Linn County has a total land area of 2,309 square miles (1,477,760 acres). There are 15 incorporated communities, nine census designated places, and various dispersed unincorporated rural communities. In simple terms, the county can be thought of as two distinct regions- western and eastern. Roughly speaking, the western 1/4th of the county is within the Willamette Valley. This area is characterized by its extensive agricultural lands and populated areas. Moving easterly, the land use transitions into mixed farm/forest areas within the foothills of the Cascade Mountain Range. The eastern 3/4ths of the county is characterized by its sparsely populated forestland within the Cascades, as shown in Figures 3 and 4, below.

Figure 3. Linn County Community and Ecoregion Map

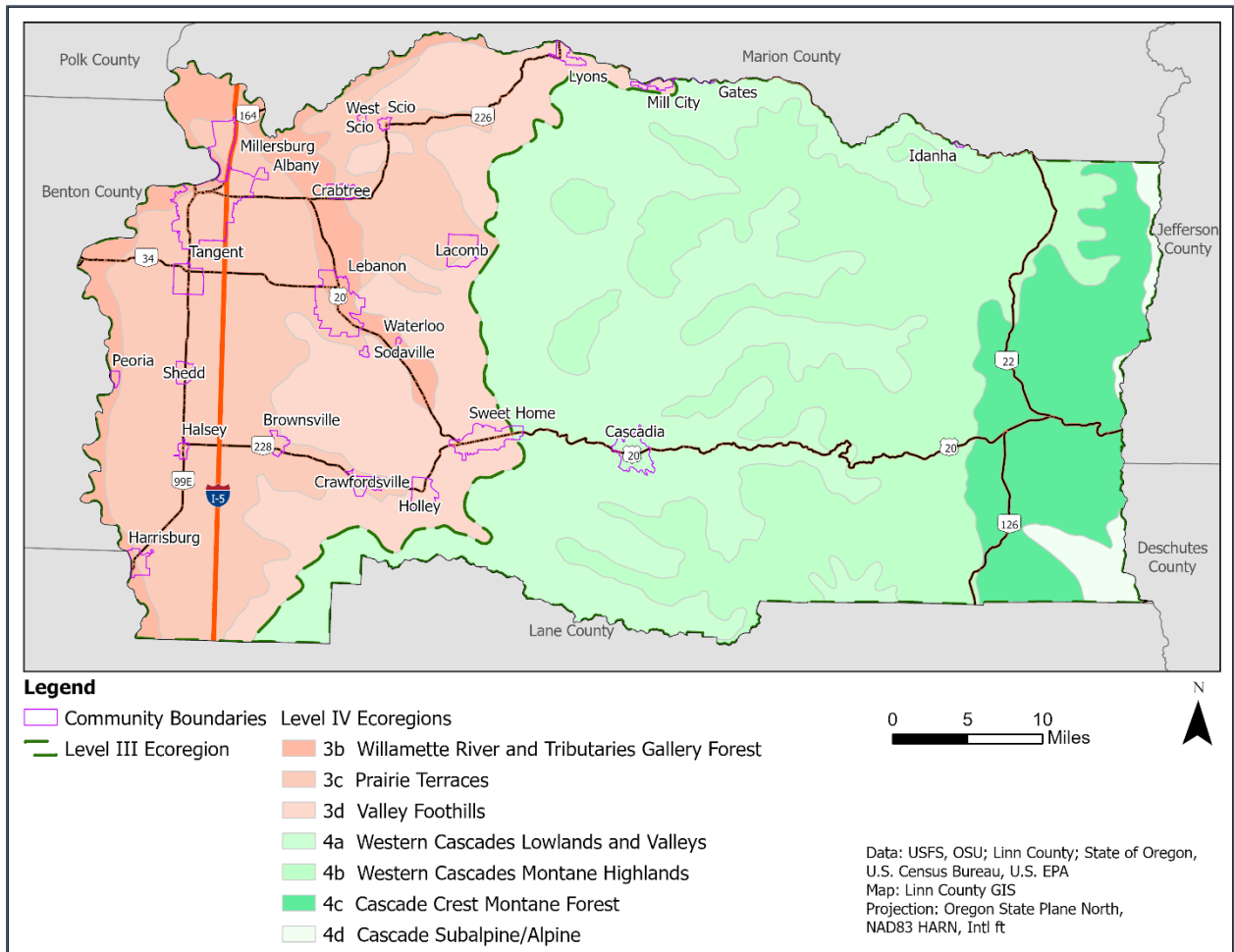
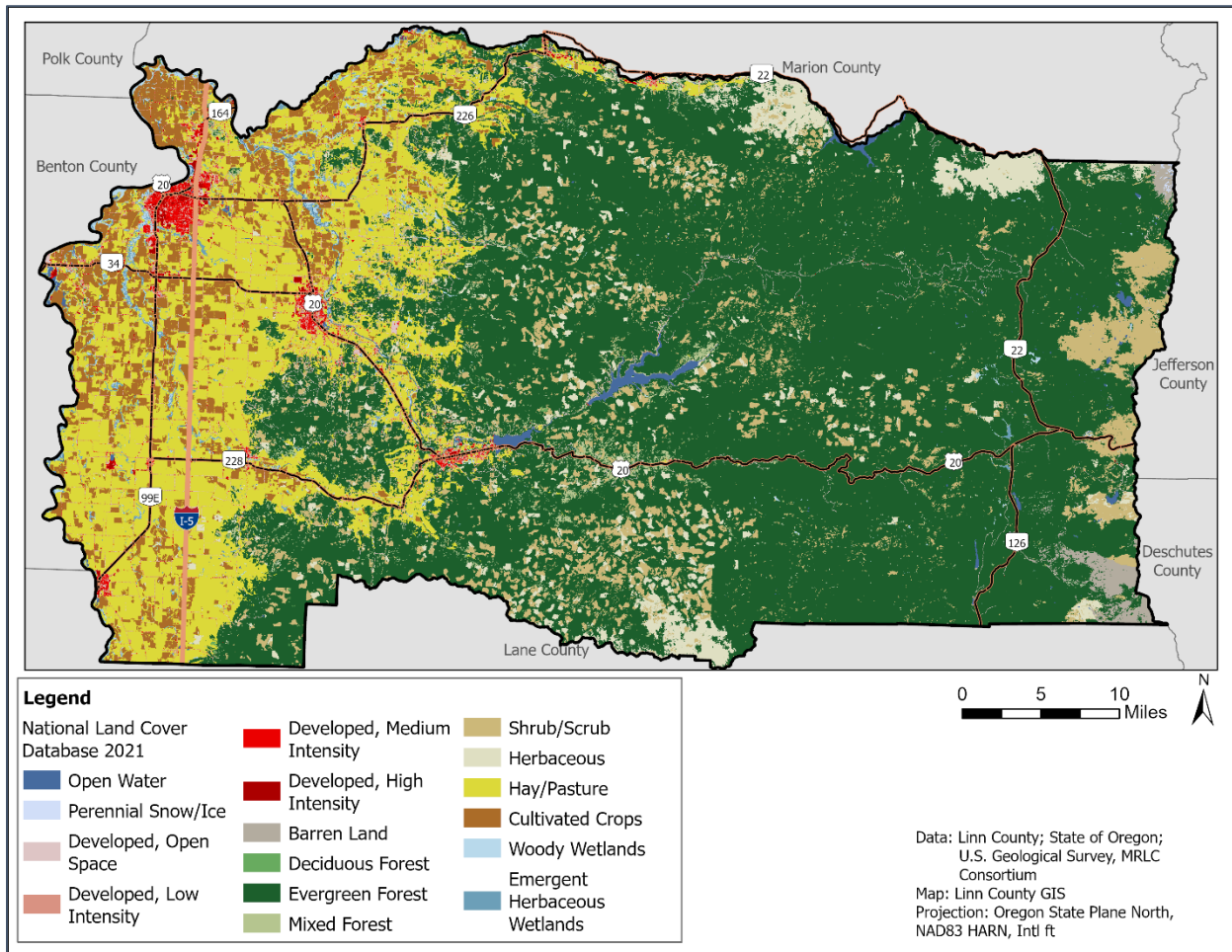


Figure 4. Linn County Land Cover Map



Land Ownership

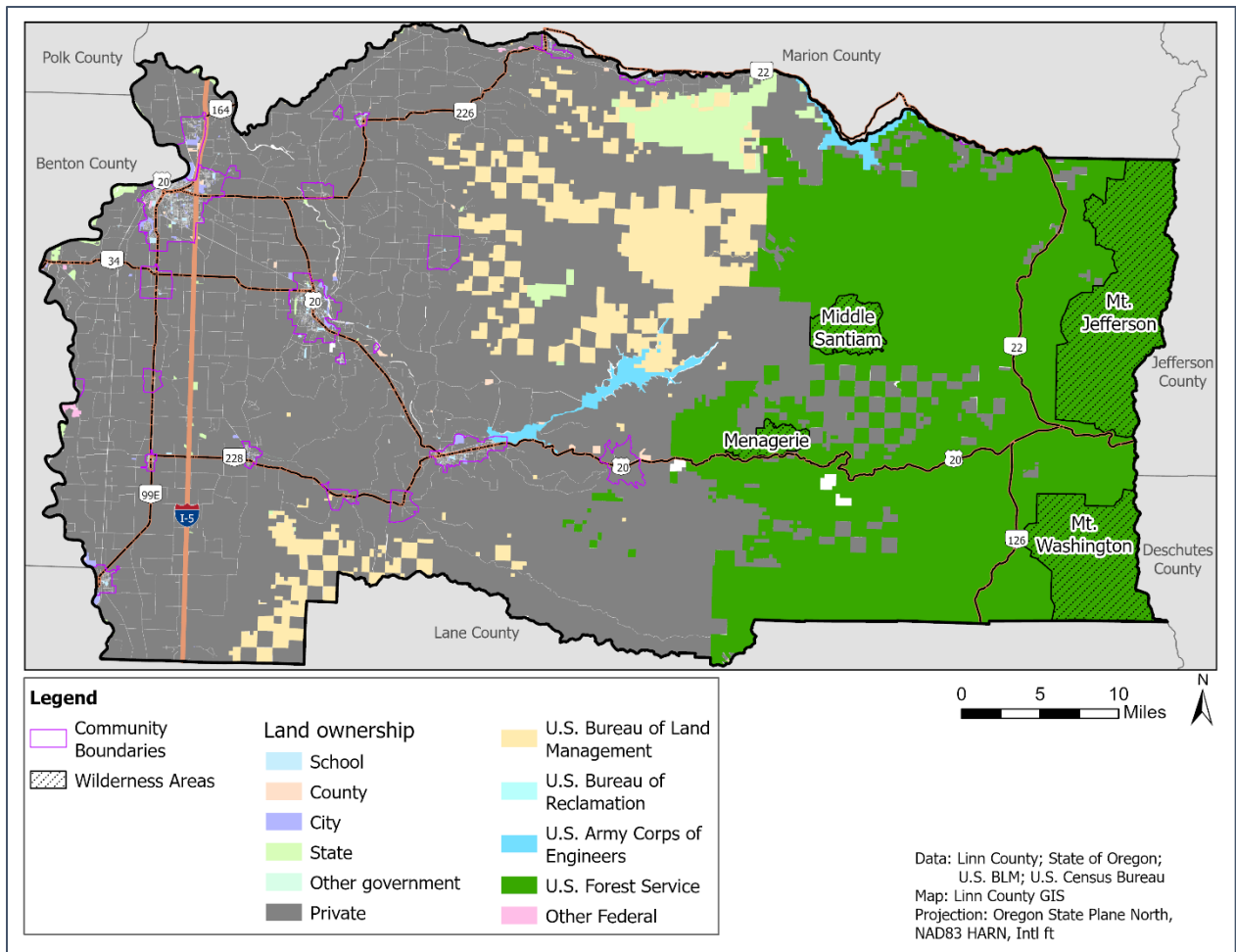
The majority of all land within the County, 60% or approximately 890,242 acres, is under private ownership.³⁸ This includes urban areas, agricultural land, non-industrial forestland, and industrial timberland. Another third is in federal ownership, with approximately 462,508 acres managed by the USFS (31%), 87,039 acres managed by the BLM (6%), and just over 10,000 acres managed by other federal agencies such as U.S. Fish & Wildlife and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (<1% of all lands). The State of Oregon manages approximately 22,668 acres in Linn County (2%), including the Santiam State Forest south of Mill City and Gates. Minimal amounts of land are managed by county, city, and Tribal owners.

Different land owners and managers have a variety of highly valued resources and assets to protect. Land owners also differ in their usage and management practices, which can impact wildfire risk in a particular

³⁸ Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer – Advanced Report for Linn County, Accessed from the Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer on February 13, 2023. Primary data Source: USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (2018). https://tools.oregonexplorer.info/OE_HtmlViewer/index.html?viewer=wildfireplanning.

area. On federal lands there may be multiple objectives that drive how the land is managed. The USFS manages four Wilderness Areas that are at least partially located within Linn County: Menagerie Wilderness, Middle Santiam Wilderness, Mount Jefferson Wilderness, and Mount Washington Wilderness. Wilderness areas, as defined by the U.S. Wilderness Act of 1964, are intended to be preserved for their natural, untamed, undeveloped, and primitive characters. As a result, motorized equipment, permanent structures, use of motor vehicles, and other acts may be prohibited or severely restricted.³⁹ Other areas of public lands managed by USFS, BLM, and ODF may be actively managed for timber and have less strict usage guidelines when compared to Wilderness areas.

Figure 5. Linn County Land Ownership Map



Fire Protection Coverage

There are 17 active local fire protection districts located within Linn County. Ten of the 17 fire districts are members of the Linn County Fire Defense Board, including Albany Fire Department, Brownsville Rural

³⁹ "Regulations", Wilderness Connect <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/regulations.php>

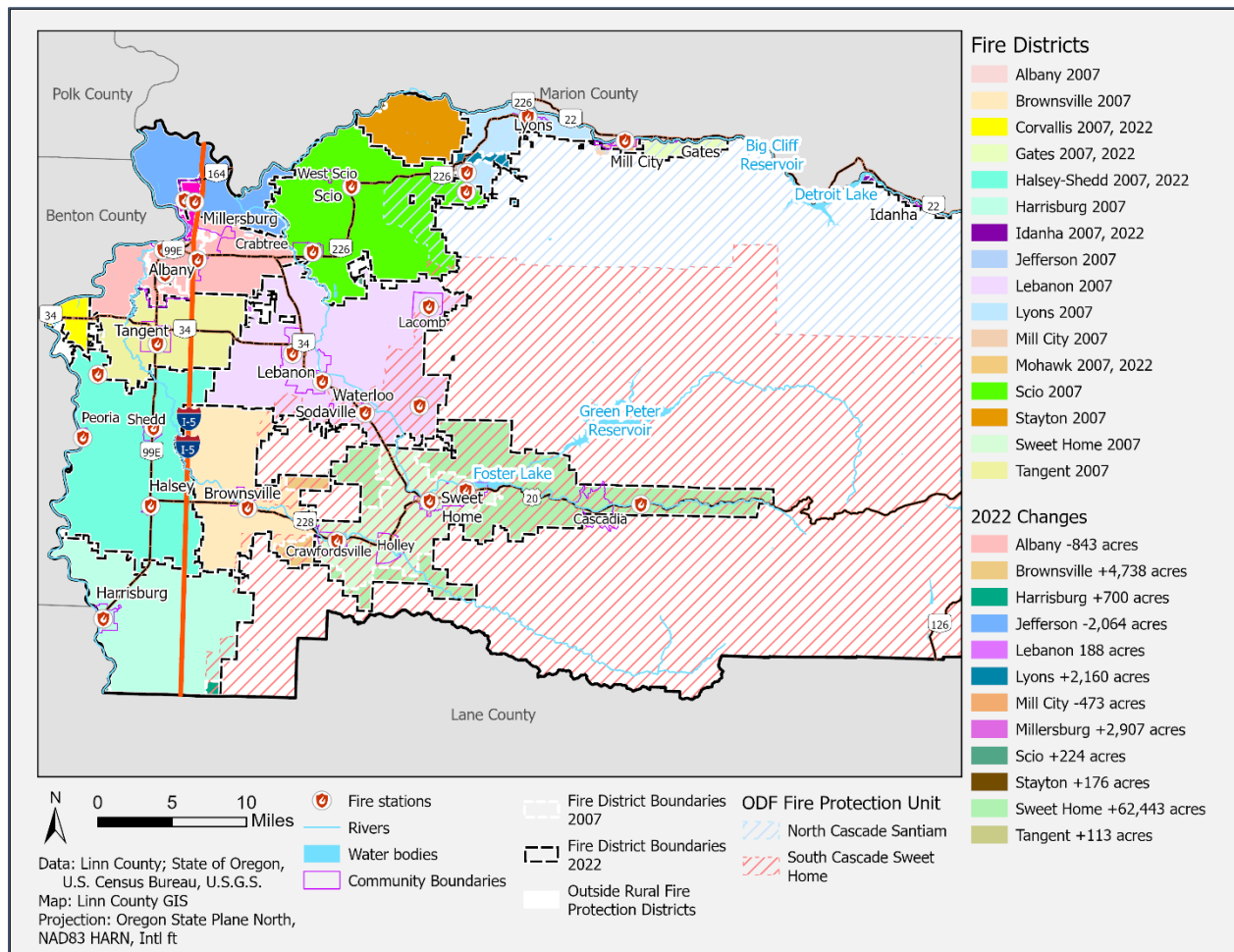
Fire Protection District, Halsey-Shedd Rural Fire Protection District, Harrisburg Fire & Rescue, Jefferson Rural Fire Protection District, Lebanon Rural Fire Protection District, Scio Rural Fire Protection District, Sweet Home Fire & Ambulance District, and Tangent Rural Fire District. The city of Millersburg has its own fire district but has an intergovernmental agreement with the Albany Fire Department to provide its emergency services. All districts within the LCFDB besides Jefferson have their main station located within Linn County. Lyons Rural Fire District's main station is located in Linn County, but it is a member of the Marion County Fire Defense Board along with Gates Volunteer Fire District, Mill City Rural Fire Protection District, and Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection District. Corvallis Fire Department is a member of the Benton County Fire Defense Board. Finally, Mohawk Rural Fire Protection District covers only 18 acres of land on the southern border of Linn County and is a member of the Lane County Fire Defense Board. Albany and Corvallis Fire Departments are the only all-career fire districts in Linn County, the remaining districts operate either through a combination of career firefighters and volunteers or rely entirely on volunteer firefighters.

Based on Linn County tax lots from 2007 and 2022, the overall area covered by rural fire protection districts has increased. Districts such as Sweet Home, Lyons, Brownsville, and Harrisburg gained area through annexation. Districts like Lebanon Rural Fire Protection also have an increased number of individual service contracts with homeowners outside of their district boundaries which are not reflected on the district boundary map.

ODF also provides wildland fire protection to one million acres of land in central and east Linn County. This area includes privately owned forests and public lands, such as state-owned forests and BLM forests through a contract. In certain areas, like the Santiam Canyon and southeastern Linn County, both a local district and ODF provide fire protection. This dual coverage has played a crucial role in recent fire responses, like the Priceboro Fire in 2023. ODF has access to statewide funding that can help bring additional aircraft, heavy equipment, and personnel when large fires require resources beyond the capability of the local field districts. ODF also frequently responds to mutual aid calls for lands outside of state-protected boundaries if those areas pose a threat to nearby protected lands.

The effectiveness of rural fire response strategies in Linn County relies on a combination of factors. Firstly, automatic mutual aid agreements among rural fire districts play a crucial role in facilitating assistance during fire incidents. Additionally, the State of Oregon provides reimbursement for local firefighting forces when mobilized under a Conflagration Declaration, allowing for the deployment of resources from across the state in response to large or threatening wildland fires. Despite these measures, extreme weather conditions can pose significant challenges. In such conditions, fire perimeters may rapidly expand, overwhelming the capacity of a rural fire agency to respond effectively. This highlights the importance of carefully considering response capabilities to avoid underestimating a community's risk. It is crucial to ensure that fire response assets are appropriately identified to address potential gaps in preparedness and mitigate the risk of major loss.

Figure 6. Linn County Fire District Map, Changes between 2007 to 2022



Map Discussion

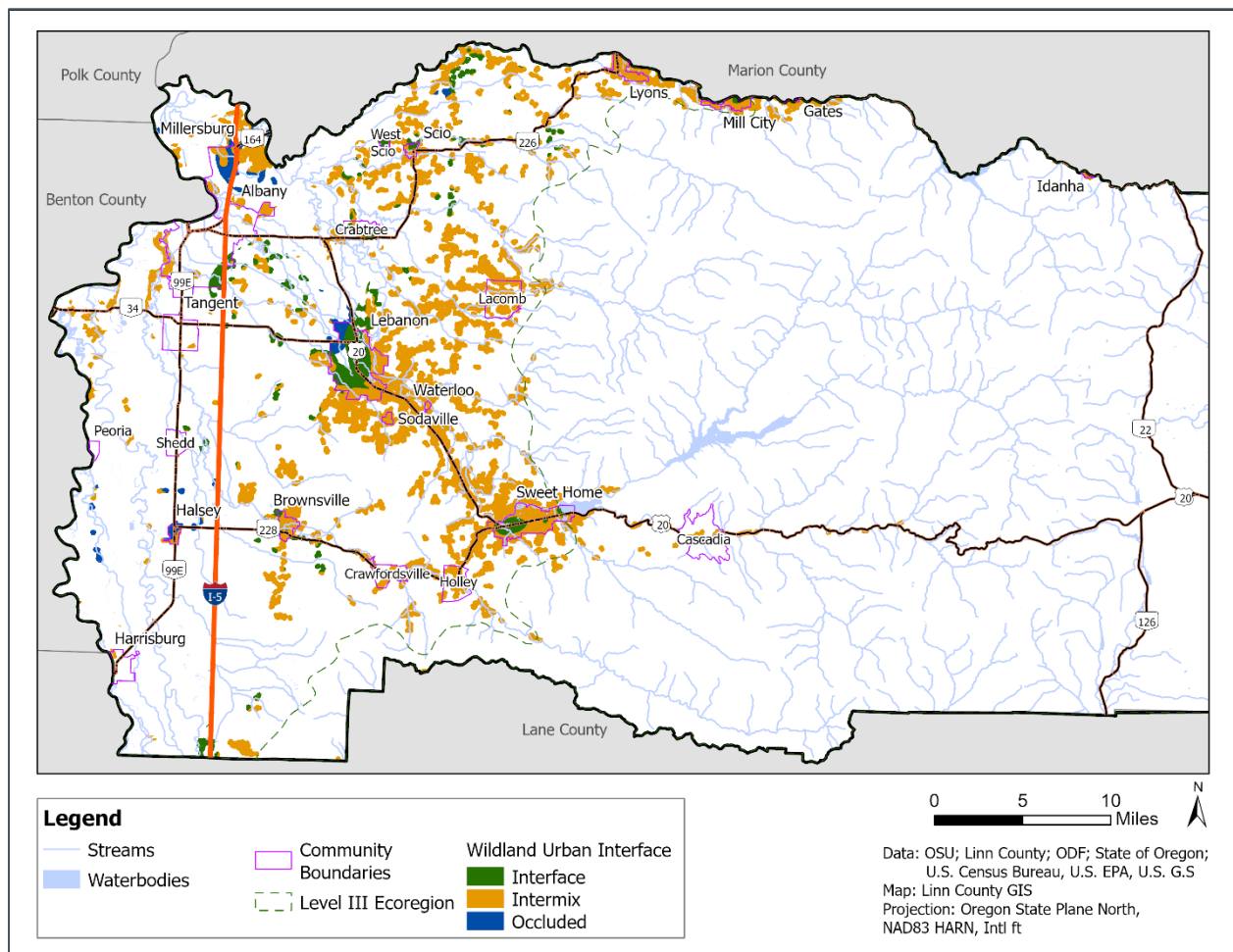
The following section contains a series of maps focused on potential wildfire-related conditions, risk factors, and other considerations that can help local, regional, and federal partners engage in the prioritization of risk reduction projects.

Wildland Urban Interface

The WUI is the area where homes meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation. This can be thought of as a transition zone between wildlands and human communities, and it makes the WUI a focal area for human-environment conflicts such as wildland fires. The word “urban” within the name can often be misleading, as the boundaries are generally inclusive of development in rural communities where fuels may be intermixed. The Steering Committee elected to use a WUI dataset developed by OSU in 2022, clipped to the boundaries of Linn County. For more information about the methods behind this dataset, see Appendix B: Risk Assessment Methods.

The Linn County WUI is approximately 114,314 acres or 179 square miles. The overall WUI area is 109 square miles larger than the WUI defined in the 2007 CWPP. The increase in WUI area can be partially attributed to the difference in methodologies between the previous and current assessments. The present methodology includes more specificity involving different kinds of WUI areas (intermix, interface, and occluded), which allows a wider identification of communities that may be at risk. But generally speaking, the size of the WUI is the result of a pattern of dispersed residential development throughout areas of abundant vegetative fuels. New construction in Linn County since 2007 has also contributed to an increase of WUI area. According to Linn County Address Records, at least 4,604 new structures for habitation have been built since 2007 in the County with 3,896 of those now being identified within the WUI.

Figure 7. Linn County Wildland Urban Interface Map



The vast majority of Linn County’s WUI, approximately 152 square miles, is defined as intermix. Generally, intermix areas are characterized by lower density developments that are scattered in a wildland area, where fuels are dispersed throughout. It is notable that several cities in Linn County are where the majority of area is classified as intermix WUI, including Lyons, Mill City, Sodaville, Waterloo, Brownsville, and Sweet Home. The high prevalence of intermix communities in Linn County means more

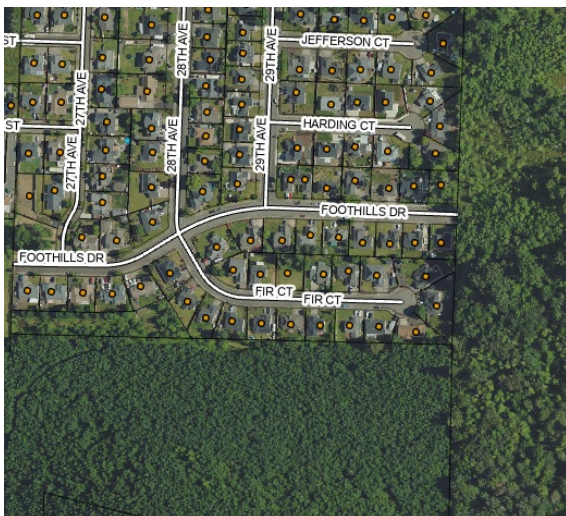
residents are exposed to potential fire events in areas where there are not clear lines of demarcation between human development and wildlands.

Figure 8. Example of an Intermix Community, Located in the Washburn Heights Subdivision near Brownsville (Linn County aerial photography 2022)



Smaller portions of the WUI are defined as interface or occluded, 20 square miles and seven square miles respectively. Interface areas tend to have more distinctly separate areas of human development and wildland fuels, though they often run adjacent to each other. Occluded areas are similarly distinct but are further removed from the wildland fuels - often not directly bordering fuel dense areas but within close proximity. Notable interface areas include the urban cores of Lebanon and Sweet Home, the city of Scio north of Thomas Creek, and communities at the southeast edge of Albany’s urban growth boundary including Grande Prairie Subdivision and the Mennonite Village. Notable occluded areas include the city of Halsey and residential areas on the periphery of Millersburg and Lebanon.

Figure 9. Example of an Interface Community Located in Sweet Home (Linn County aerial photography 2022)



The distribution of WUI areas across local fire protection districts shows that Lebanon, Sweet Home, and Scio Fire Districts have the largest amount of WUI by area. Close to 49,000 acres of WUI area is covered by the ODF’s wildland fire protection boundaries, summarized in Table 3, below.

Table 3. Distribution of WUI Area by Fire Protection District (Linn County, OSU 2023)

Fire District	WUI Area (Acres)	WUI Area (%)	Total Area (Acres)
Albany	5541	16%	34001
Brownsville	6491	15%	44889
Corvallis	898	19%	4763
Gates	1468	37%	4019
Halsey Shedd	2523	4%	67883
Harrisburg	1600	3%	55292
Idanha	156	12%	1327
Jefferson	3847	16%	23536
Lebanon	35769	42%	85946
Lyons	5246	31%	16934
Mill City	1039	87%	1188
Millersburg	1524	52%	2907
Mohawk	13	75%	18
Scio	16853	26%	64622
Stayton	4292	26%	16384
Sweet Home	22677	23%	98743
Tangent	1234	4%	28667
ODF North Cascade*	10364	4%	289500
ODF South Cascade*	38533	5%	803359

*ODF Districts overlap with various rural fire protection districts.

Overall Wildfire Risk

Overall wildfire risk is a relative rating that takes into account the likelihood of wildfires at various intensities and the exposure and susceptibility of mapped valued resources and assets across the

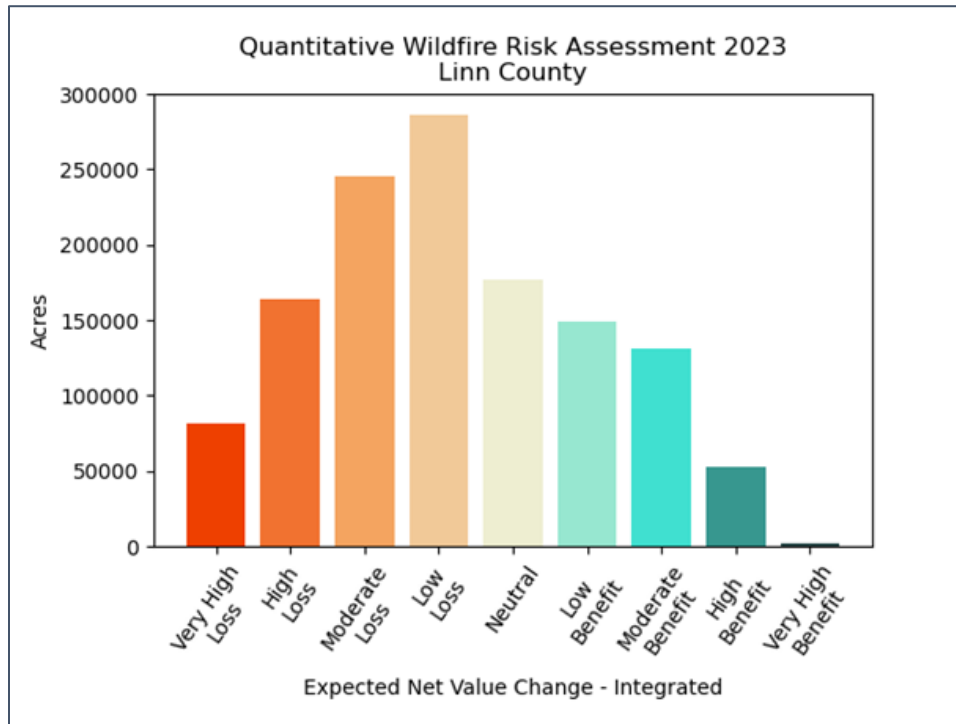
landscape. To understand how these factors are defined, how the risk categories are determined, and how the values are generally weighted against each other, see Appendix B: Risk Assessment Methods.

Community wildfire planning efforts often are framed as solely negative discussions based on the potential for devastating consequences, however it is also important to recognize that fire plays an ecological role in the landscape that can be beneficial in certain contexts to local habitats and timber resources. The 2023 QWRA takes this into account and assigned positive values to instances where low-intensity fire might benefit a valued ecological or timber resource – for example by providing a thinning effect in a forest stand or providing a necessary life cycle change to an animal habitat. This is balanced with the reality that many valued resources, such as homes, critical community infrastructure, perennial and annual crops, developed recreation sites, etc., will always reap negative consequences when exposed to wildland fire.

Blank areas (displayed on the overall integrated wildfire risk map in the color gray) either have no mapped assets or resources and/or are considered non-burnable. In Linn County, some areas that are considered non-burnable include water features (Green Peter and Foster Lake), lava fields (surrounding Belknap Crater in the southeast corner of the county), and mountain tundra (above the timberline of Mt. Jefferson in the northeast corner of the county). Heavily developed urban areas are considered non-burnable under normal circumstances. However, the fire simulations used in the QWRA were calibrated to allow a low probability of ignition to urban centers during extreme weather events. The overall wildfire risk map captures some possibility of fire on agricultural lands, particularly dryland (non-irrigated) agriculture, however many areas in western Linn County are blank due to a lack of recent cultivation data sourced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture from 2018 to 2023.

Linn County is primarily characterized by low and moderate wildfire risk countywide. The distribution of values on the bar chart below shows that negative outcomes are expected at a higher frequency than positive benefits.

Figure 10. Distribution of Integrated Loss and Benefit Values by Acre



Most areas within the Willamette Valley are predicted to have neutral to low negative consequences from wildfire. The risk rating tends to be more negative within the boundaries of WUI communities, where direct exposure of people, property, and infrastructure to wildland fuel sources is higher. In the forested foothills of the Cascades, particularly surrounding communities of Brownsville, Lebanon, Lacombe, Lyons, and Sweet Home, there are mixed benefits and negative consequences from fire.

The area predicted to experience the worst outcomes from wildfire overall are the forested areas of the Cascades. These areas are mainly private industrial and federal forestland with highly valuable timber resources, recreation sites, drinking watersheds, and wildlife habitats. The terrain in the Cascades can often be rugged and, based on historic fire occurrence trends, there is higher likelihood of fire ignition in this area compared to the Willamette Valley. The resulting fires are more intense and difficult to suppress due to their remote nature. Intense fires are anticipated to have negative trickle-down effects to wildlife and drinking water quality. Areas where there may be very high negative consequences should be prioritized for proactive wildfire mitigation treatments, either within that land or on surrounding land. At the same time, there are many observable areas predicted to have beneficial consequences from fire. Some of the highest benefit areas are located in close proximity to areas of the highest negative consequence, demonstrating the complexity of potential wildland fire outcomes.

Figure 11. Overall Linn County Integrated Wildfire Risk Map

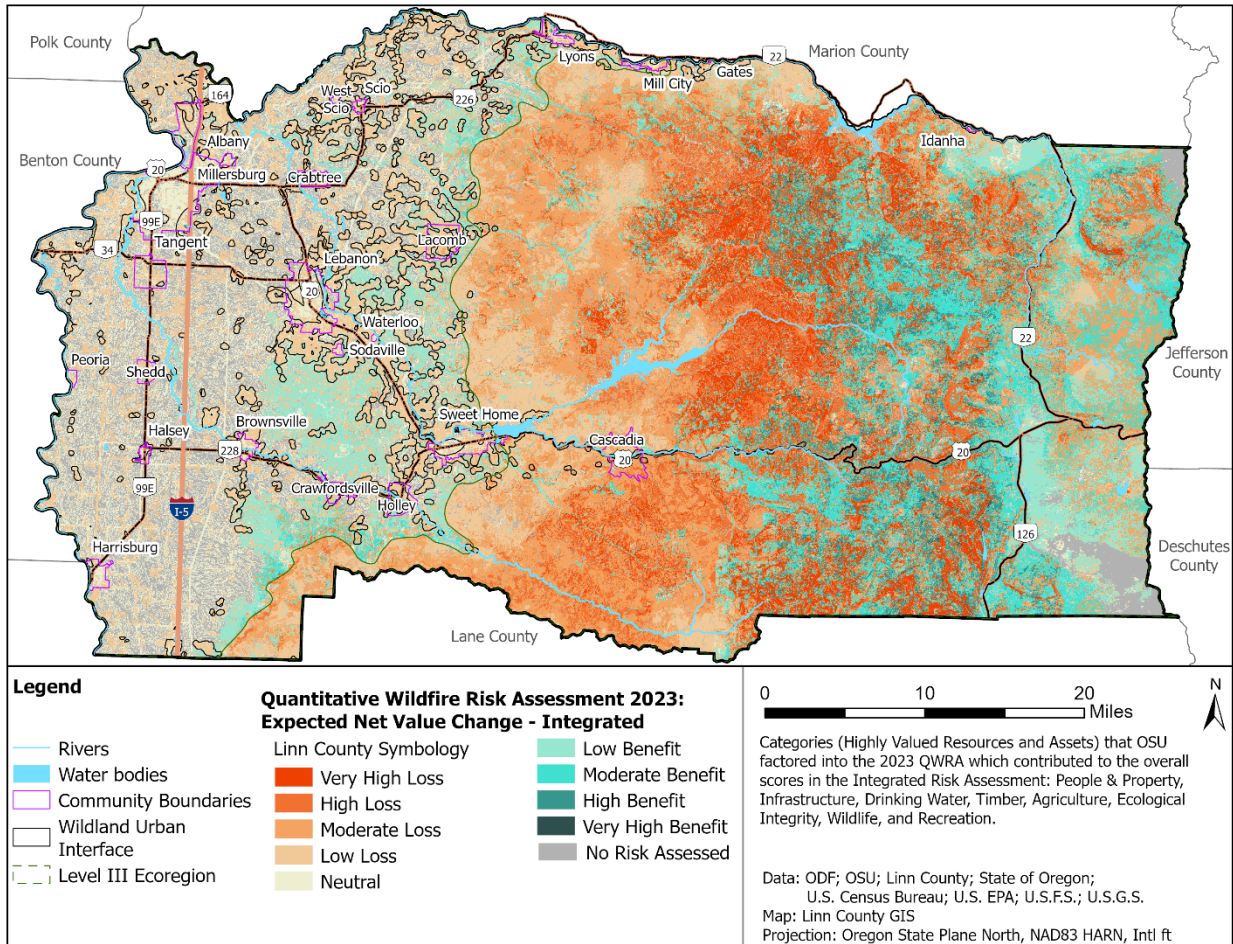
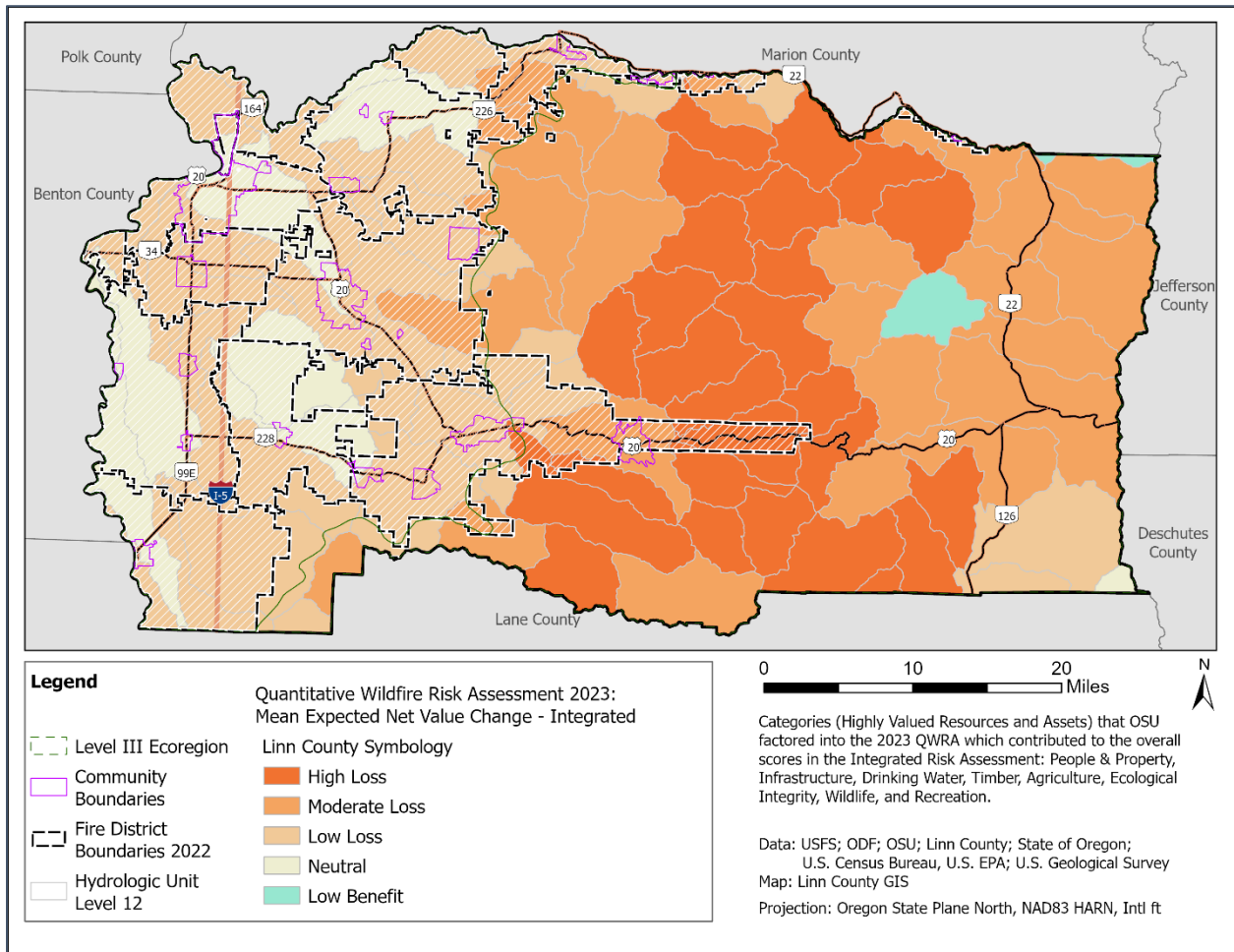


Figure 12. Overall Linn County Integrated Wildfire Risk Map - Summarized by Watershed



It may be useful to analyze risk to specific highly values and resources and assets in isolation to each other. Below are two maps which depict the overall risk to people and property and the overall risk to timber resources. Risk values are only displayed at the sites in the County where these resources are known to be found. These maps should be used in tandem with the overall integrated map to inform risk management strategies.

Figure 13. Linn County Wildfire Risk to People and Property Map - West

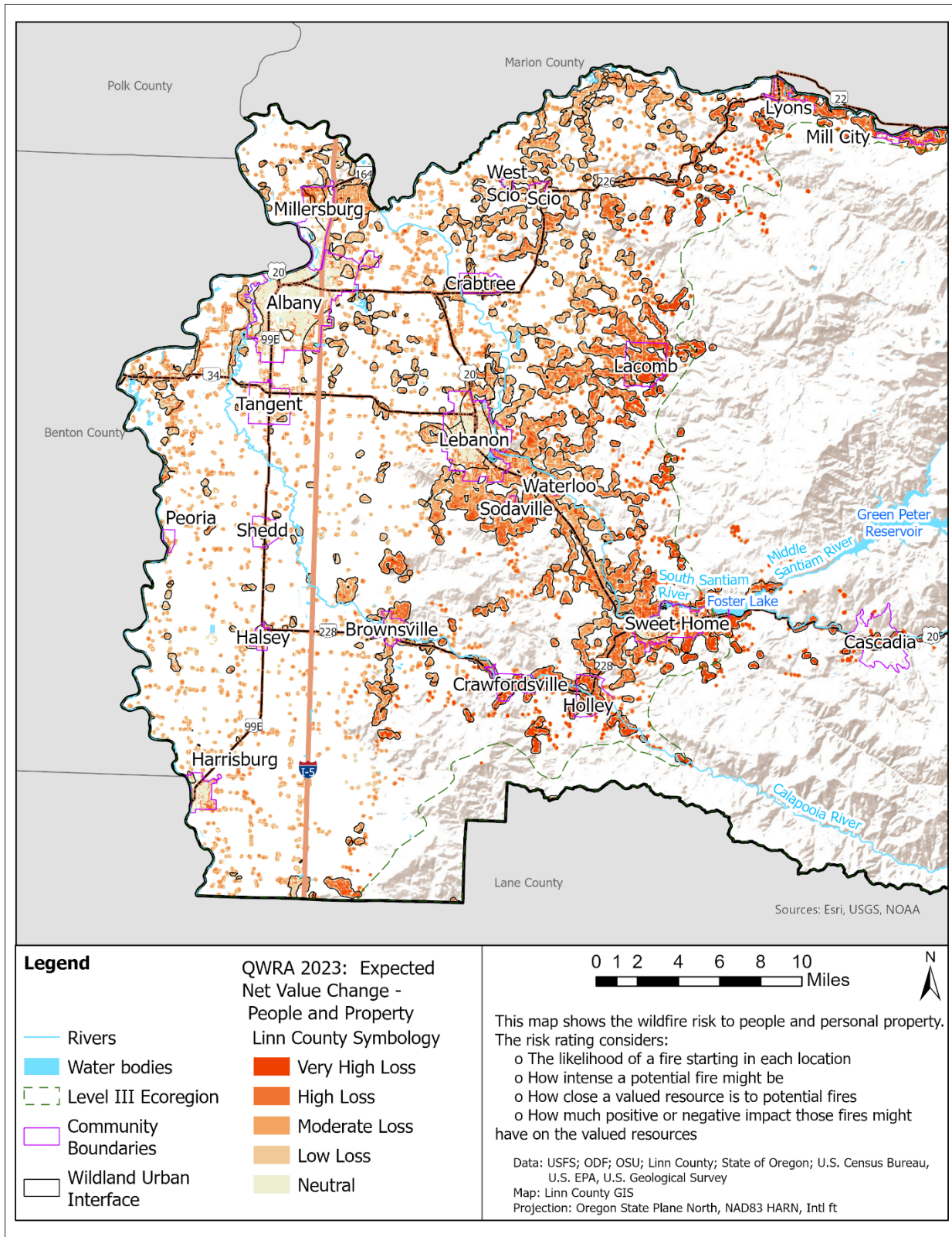


Figure 14. Linn County Wildfire Risk to People and Property Map - East

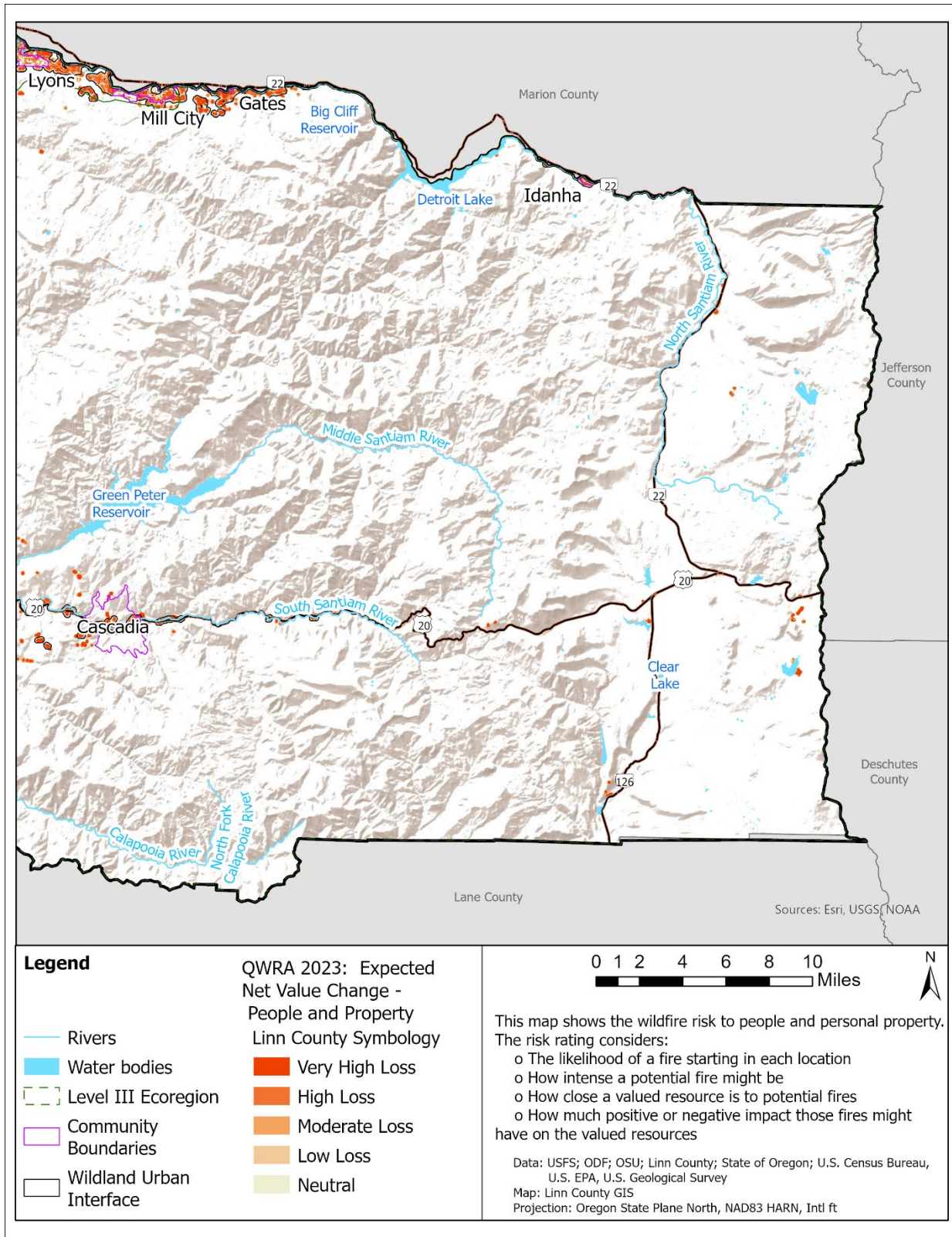
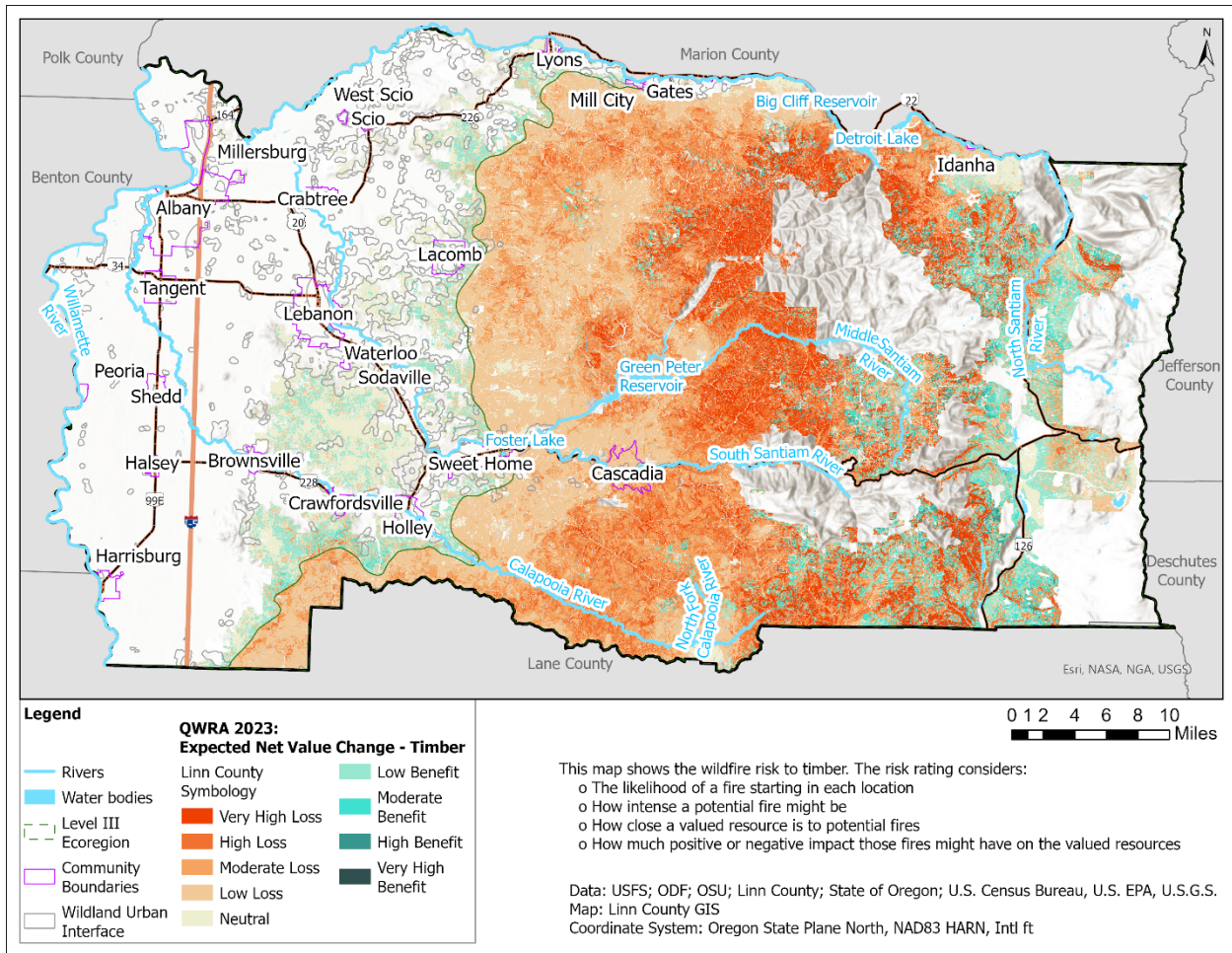


Figure 15. Linn County Wildfire Risk to Timber Resources Map



Communities at Risk

Communities within Linn County are not one-size fits all. There are many ways to classify community and the impact that wildfire risk has on these places varies greatly. There are cities, small towns, developed unincorporated communities, rural neighborhoods, and places where individuals are dispersed but drawn together by a central location - such as a post office, church, grange hall, or recreational area.

Different scales of analysis are necessary to capture communities at risk and pinpoint specific areas to prioritize for mitigation projects. The 2007 CWPP used a localized data assessment and lists Albany, Brownsville, Clear Lake Resort, Crowfoot, Gates, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Lyons, Marion Forks, Mill City, New Idanha, Scio, Sweet Home East and West, Waterloo, Sodaville, and various home clusters and subdivisions in the WUI as communities at risk. In 2020 ODF identified 508 communities at risk statewide, including 15 in Linn County.⁴⁰ The majority of Linn County communities at risk identified by ODF were given a low risk rating, summarized in the following table.

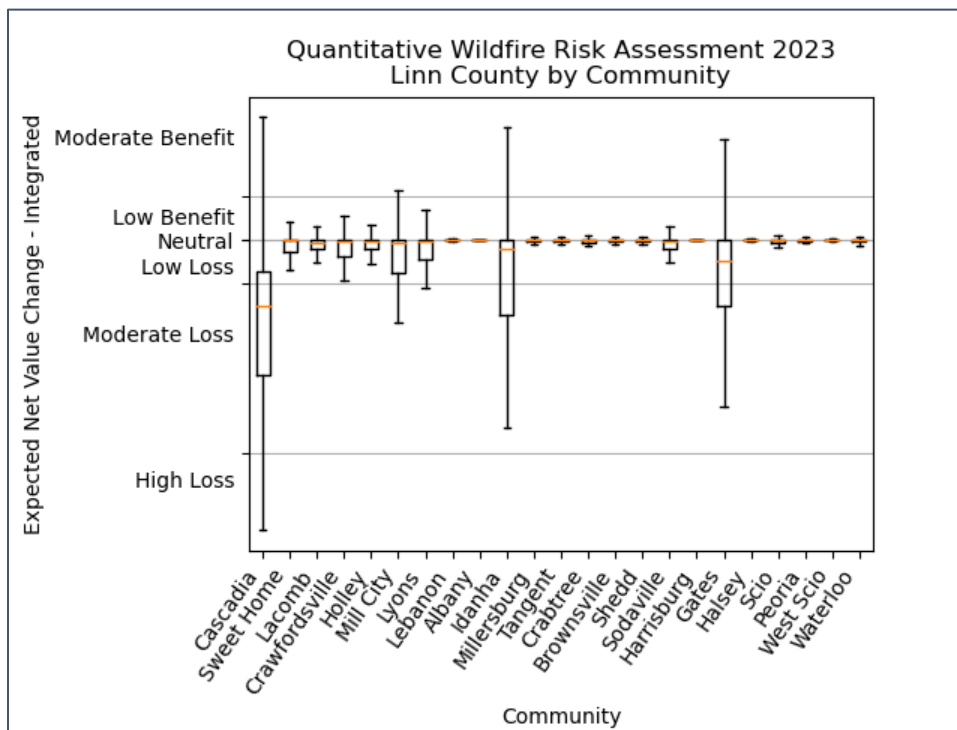
⁴⁰ <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/Fire/Communities-at-risk-report.pdf>

Table 4. Linn County Communities at Risk Identified by ODF's 2020 Communities at Risk Report

Risk Rating	Communities
Low (10)	Albany, Halsey, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Lower Willamette, Lyons, Scio, Sweet Home, Tadmor, Tangent
Moderate (3)	Marion Forks, New Idanha, South Shore
High (2)	Lost Prairie, Clear Lake Resort

For communities that have preset boundaries, like cities and census-designated places, the values from the overall wildfire risk map are extracted and summarized on the box and whiskers plot below. The rectangular box of each community represents the range of the middle 50% of values and the whiskers represent the highest and lowest values. The plot shows that communities have varying ranges of risk, with eastern communities such as Cascadia, Lyons, Idanha, and Gates showing larger ranges of negative risk. While these statistical models are helpful for understanding broad trends of risk, due to the fluid nature of fire and the non-consistent clustering of communities it is important to have some level of analysis that can capture risk outside of preset political and municipal boundaries.

Figure 16. Overall Wildfire Risk Values Summarized by Scatter Plot



Local Communities At Risk- Priority Areas for Mitigation

Between August and December of 2023, the following departments and agencies reviewed communities within their jurisdiction for potential wildfire hazards: USFS/BLM, ODF, the Linn County Fire Defense Board, and local fire districts. The agencies were asked to identify specific geographical areas and provide details on the specific attributes that make them priority areas of concern for wildfire mitigation

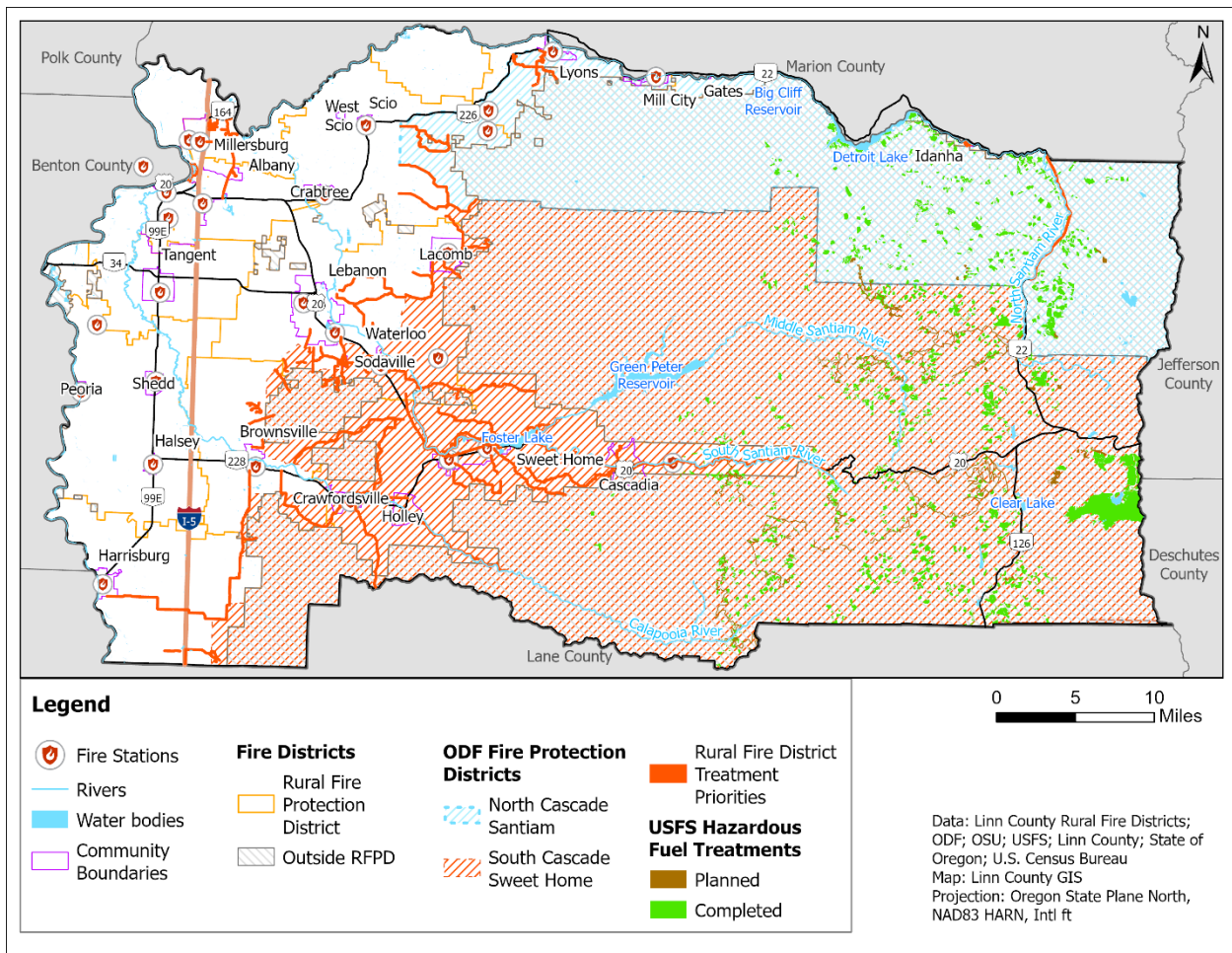
projects. Locations were identified by road names, subdivision names, river corridors, railroad tracks, and wilderness areas. In some cases, nearby locations with similar attributes were grouped together and assigned a condensed community name.

Responses regarding areas of concern were then converted by the Linn County GIS Department into a GIS layer, depicted in red on the “Fire Protection Agencies Priority Areas for Mitigation” map below. Attributes of each area are captured on the priority areas table located in Appendix C: Fire Agency Priority Areas for Mitigation. Some examples of these attributes include:

- High fuel loading or flammability
- Dense fuel along roadsides
- Inadequate water supply for fire response
- High housing density (typically interface or intermix communities)
- Lack of cell reception
- Dead end roads, limited ingress-egress, one way in and one way out
- Steep grade on roadways and driveways
- Bridge restrictions
- General response time concerns (distance)
- Unsafe conditions for first responders
- Historic high ignition incidence (from slash pile/debris burning, temporary camping in tents/RVs, high volume of recreators, agricultural and timber related uses)
- Structurally unprotected areas (located outside of a local fire district)

The Fire Protection Agency Priority Areas for Mitigation map does not show any areas that are guaranteed projects with funding or a set timeline for completion. It is a starting point for local wildfire mitigation groups to prioritize locations for further analysis that could be potential project sites for a specific grant or funding opportunity. To paint a fuller picture of current fuels reduction activity, the map also shows areas where the USFS has completed fuel treatment projects and where the agency designates planned areas for future phases of fuel reduction activities to achieve objectives such as connectivity between critical roads for response purposes. Please see Appendix C for more details.

Figure 17. Linn County Fire Protection Agencies Priority Areas for Mitigation Map



Social Vulnerability

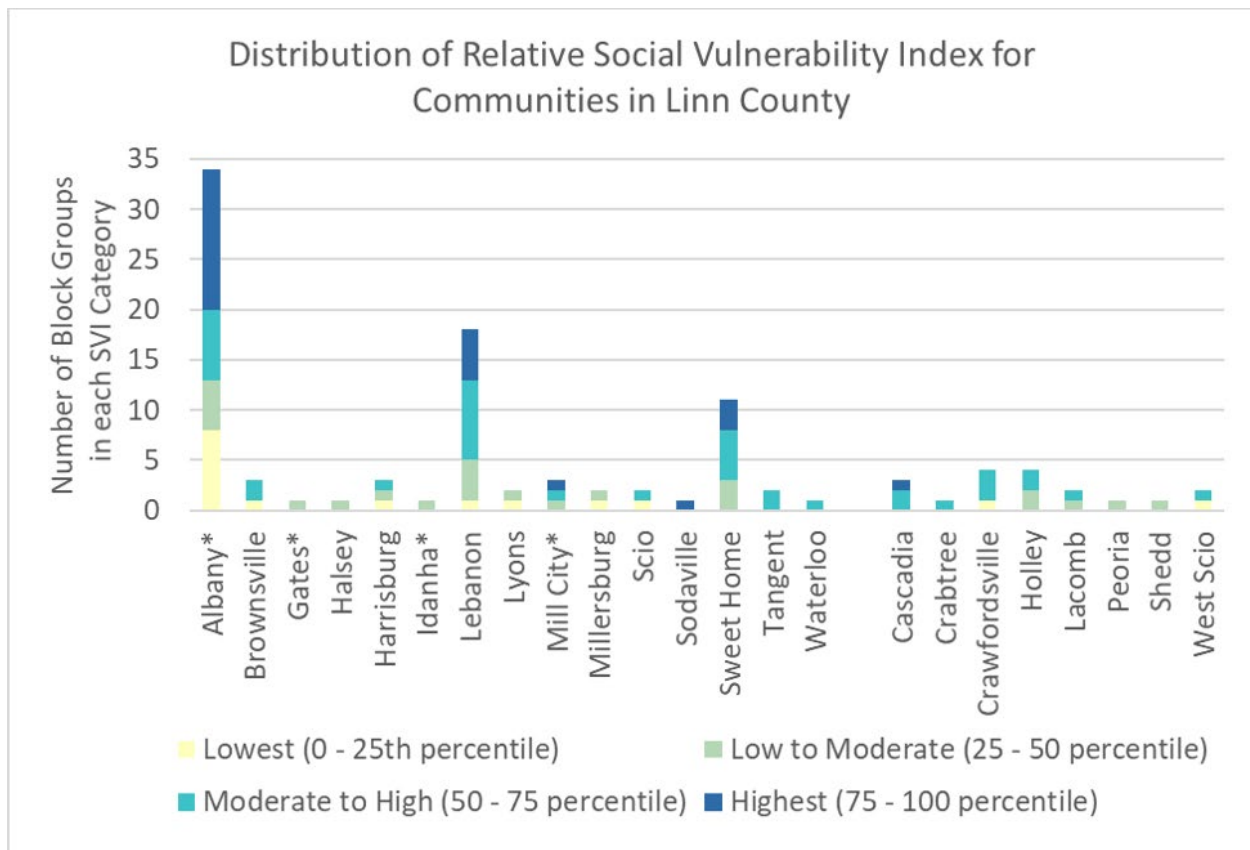
A main purpose of the risk assessment is to provide the most up-to-date risk information for analysis. An identified gap for analysis within the 2007 CWPP was a lack of consideration for the vulnerability of certain populations in Linn County, including the elderly, disabled, low income, and non-English speaking residents who many may not have the physical, financial, or informational resources for wildfire preparedness and evacuation activities. These conditions are often referred to collectively as social vulnerability. Social vulnerability is a combination of factors that may weaken a community’s ability to prevent human suffering and/or financial loss in a disaster situation. It is measured using a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI). At the time of the 2007 report, the State of Oregon did not have an SVI developed specifically for evaluating the vulnerability of populations to wildfire.

In 2021 the wildfire omnibus bill (Senate Bill 762) directed OSU to develop a statewide map of social vulnerability. The resulting map depicts the SVI which estimates how socially vulnerable a place is by considering various factors within the local population, such as the poverty rate, household age and disability composition, access to transportation, unemployment, limited English language skills, and

other factors.⁴¹ The SVI combines these indicators to create a single score for each area which is then ranked relative to all other areas in Oregon, for this study, of the same census type. The SVI helps illustrate the likelihood that one place is more socially vulnerable compared to other places in the state. Social vulnerability is mapped at a census block group scale for this study. For more information about the methods for developing the statewide SVI, see Appendix B: Risk Assessment Methods.

The following communities in Linn County contain one or more block group assessed at the highest social vulnerability: Albany, Lebanon, Mill City, Sodaville, Sweet Home, and Cascadia.

Figure 18. Distribution of Social Vulnerability Index for Linn County Communities



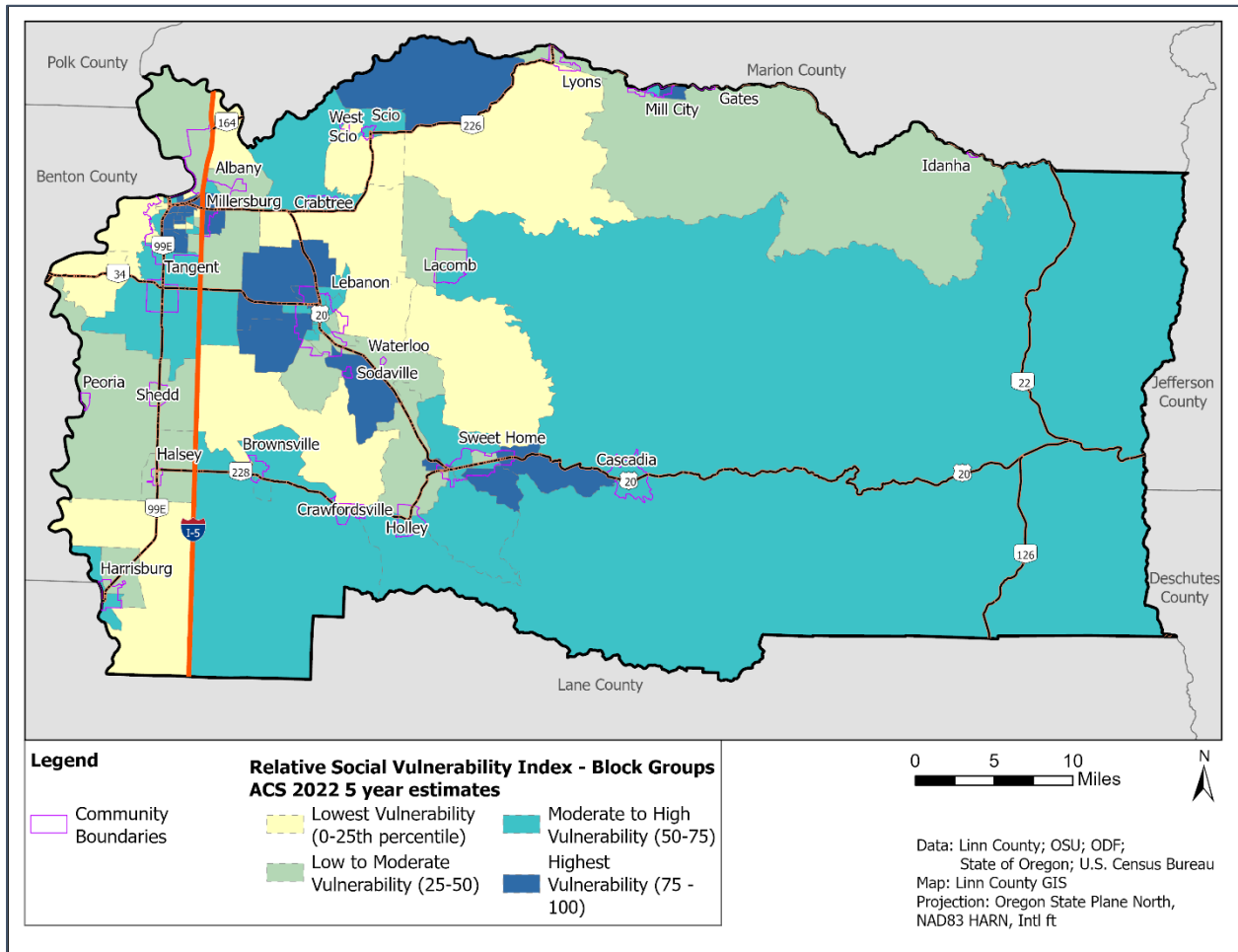
*Communities with boundaries that span multiple counties; only block groups from Linn County are included.

There is noticeable overlap of highly socially vulnerable communities with areas that have higher relative wildfire risk ratings - particularly in or near Cascadia, Mill City, Sweet Home, and Sodaville. Socially vulnerable communities should be prioritized for wildfire mitigation resources, particularly homeowner assistance programs and other grants or cost-share opportunities when possible. However, it is important to caveat this recommendation as the Social Vulnerability Index uses demographic data from the US Census American Community Survey 5-year estimates from 2018-2022. This source may not capture the full social impact of major events such as the 2020 wildfire season and COVID-19 pandemic

⁴¹ Mapping socially vulnerable communities, Oregon State University College of Forestry: <https://osuwildfireriskmap.forestry.oregonstate.edu/social-vulnerability>

on communities in Linn County - particularly within the Santiam Canyon. Other factors should be considered on a case-by-case basis to identify socially vulnerable communities, using the best available demographic and economic data.

Figure 19. Linn County Overall Social Vulnerability Map



Electric Utility High Fire Risk Zones

Two utility companies provide electrical service in Linn County: PacifiCorp (Pacific Power) and Consumers Power Inc. (CPI). Representatives from both utility companies attended Steering Committee meetings. Pacific Power is a large, multi-state investor-owned electric utility company with service territory throughout Washington, California, and Oregon, including parts of Linn County. CPI is a not-for-profit rural electric consumer-owned (cooperative) utility company serving parts of six Oregon counties include Benton, Lane, Lincoln, Marion, Polk, and Linn. Oregon Senate Bill 762 established new electric utility system mandates including a mandate that all investor-owned and consumer-owned utilities submit an

annual Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) to the Oregon Public Utility Commission.⁴² Each WMP must include a risk analysis of the utility’s service territory.

Pacific Power’s territory boundaries are expansive to various regions including southern Oregon and along the Columbia River Gorge. As a result, the main areas where Pacific Power identified high fire risk zones were concentrated around the communities of Medford, Grants Pass, Roseburg, and Hood River as well as some area in northeastern Oregon. Despite not identifying specific locations within Linn County as areas of high fire consequence, Pacific Power does undertake a number of system-wide mitigation actions, which are discussed in their 2023 Oregon Wildfire Mitigation Plan.⁴³

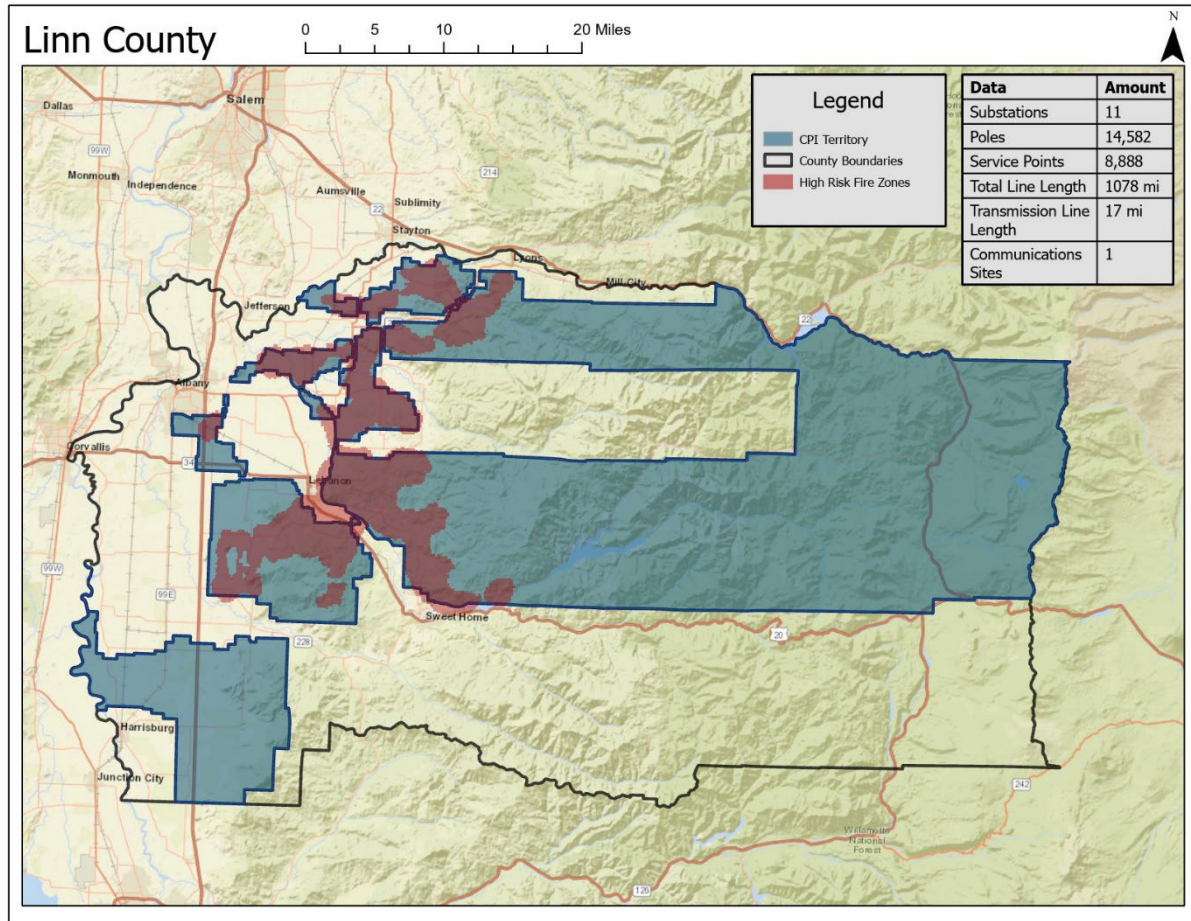
CPI’s territory is limited to a smaller service area with similar environmental factors across the nearby counties. CPI has a satellite facility located in Lebanon and maintains 11 substations throughout the service territory in Linn County. CPI staff assessments of fire hazards are conducted annually and made public in CPI’s Wildfire Mitigation Plan.⁴⁴ As an active stakeholder in the Steering Committee, CPI provided a map depicting “high risk fire zones” within their service area. This map is important both internally to CPI and externally for all CWPP partners. Internally, maps like this one guide CPI’s decision makers on prioritizing locations for preplanning mitigation efforts. Externally, this map should be used as a way to identify potential cross-jurisdictional mitigation projects and areas where multiple risk factors to personal property, infrastructure, and the landscape overlap. There are several priority areas of concern identified by response agencies which also fall into CPI’s high-risk fire zones including rural areas within or surrounding the communities of Lebanon, Sodaville, Sweet Home, Lacombe, and Scio.

⁴² Electric Utility Wildfire Mitigation Plans – Public Utility Commission of Oregon, Accessed 12-29-23: <https://www.oregon.gov/puc/safety/Documents/Wildfire-Mitigation-Plans-2022.pdf>

⁴³ Oregon Wildfire Mitigation Plan 2023, Pacific Power, Accessed 12/29/2023: https://www.pacificorp.com/content/dam/pcorp/documents/en/pacificorp/wildfire-mitigation/PacifiCorp_2023_Wildfire_Mitigation_Plan_12-29-22.pdf

⁴⁴ 2023 Wildfire Mitigation Plan, Consumers Power Inc, Accessed 12/29/23: <https://www.cpi.coop/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/2023-CPI-WMP.pdf>

Figure 20. Consumers Power Inc. Territory and High Risk Fire Zones within Linn County (Source: CPI 2023)



Concluding Statements

Limitations of Risk Assessment

The Steering Committee makes every attempt to ensure the accuracy and completeness of this assessment; however, limitations in data make it impossible to have a completely comprehensive assessment of every factor affecting wildland fires throughout the entire county. Wildland fires are highly complex events, in which behavior and potential damage may be affected by unpredictable variables such as wind patterns, extreme temperatures, and other factors. While periodic updates to data sources and methodology can help address these challenges, future community-level assessments done at a property or neighborhood scale will be necessary to refine existing analysis of risk. These assessments could take the form of treatment prescriptions for a specific fuels reduction project area or a Firewise USA Community Risk Assessment for a particular neighborhood, among other potential methods.

Maintenance

The data inputs of the Linn County CWPP Risk Assessment will require long-term maintenance to continue to support wildfire mitigation efforts effectively in the county. It is imperative to assign maintenance responsibilities to oversee updates of the risk assessment as new data becomes available. Action Item 4.1 designates Linn County (including the Emergency Management Department, Planning & Building Department and GIS Department) with the responsibility to incorporate, maintain, and update Linn County's Risk Assessment and GIS data elements, and maintain and review an inventory of priority fuels reduction projects in high-risk areas. The capacity to undertake these responsibilities will be dispersed among available staff within the County; however, additional grant funding or assistance may be necessary. To lower the overall burden of the update process, small updates to existing priority tables and maps should be completed during annual or semi-annual CWPP Committee meetings. Major updates of the CWPP should also be synced with the update cycles of existing major data sources. Currently, the PNW QWRA updates on an approximate five- to six-year cycle. Oregon Administrative Rule 629-044-1016 requires that the Statewide Wildland-Urban Interface be reviewed and updated within 12 months of the most current wildfire risk assessment, in this case the PNW QWRA. Therefore, the next CWPP update should be targeted within the next five to eight years, depending on other important factors such as Committee capacity, grant funding availability, and needs of CWPP partners.

Section 4: Stakeholder and Community Engagement

A key function of community wildfire planning is the meaningful discussion it promotes among community members and stakeholders and identification of opportunities for collaboration. A plan that accurately reflects the community’s interests and priorities will have greater legitimacy and success in implementing recommendations. The first step in ensuring a broad range of perspectives informed the Plan’s development was to convene a Committee with a broad representation of local, state, and federal agencies and organizations. As the planning process continued, additional stakeholders were identified and helped to inform the Plan’s development. A project website provided information about the update process and Committee meeting agendas and notes. Committee meetings were held online by Zoom and interested parties were welcome to attend. Appendix D contains documentation of Committee meetings.

This section outlines the strategies the Committee used to engage stakeholders and the broader Linn County community in the update of the CWPP as well as a summary of the outreach efforts, including:

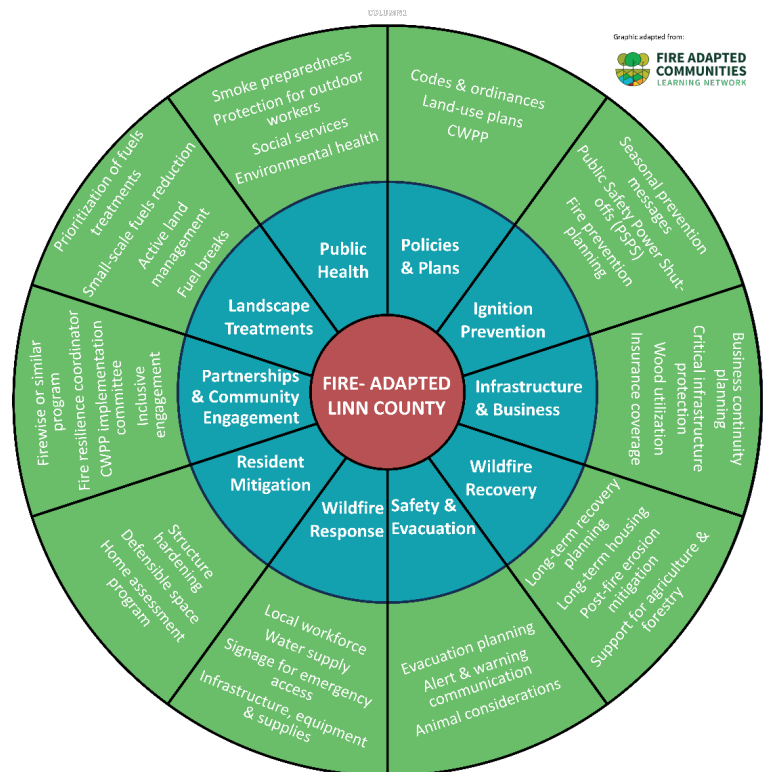
- Focus Groups summarizes the two focus groups held with key constituents and describes how the feedback received was incorporated into the CWPP.
- Linn County Fire Defense Board describes input received from fire agency members related to local areas of concern as well as information about individual fire agency needs.
- Wildfire Ready Night Community Open House summarizes the feedback received from community members regarding their priorities and concerns and indicates how the feedback was included in the Plan.

Focus Groups

Methods

Key community constituents were invited to attend one of two in-person community engagement sessions, or focus groups, held in August 2023. The sessions included an overview of the CWPP planning process and discussions with participants to identify concerns, obstacles, and opportunities for reducing wildfire risk in Linn County. The sessions were organized around the Fire Adapted Communities (FAC) Framework as a method for considering pathways to fire adaptation in Linn County. Focus group participants worked with the FAC wheel graphic, adapted from the Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network for Linn County, to explore the range of options that communities have for wildfire adaptation, including a set of components that make up

Figure 21. Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network Wheel Adapted for Linn County. <https://fireadaptednetwork.org/resources/>



community wildfire adaptation and examples of specific practices that communities can undertake to reduce their wildfire risk.

The packet shared with participants, including the agenda, a Frequently Asked Questions document with sources and resources, and a FAC worksheet modified for use with a Linn County audience, is included in Appendix E: Community Engagement Documentation.

Results

The local jurisdictions' focus group, hosted by the Albany Fire Department on August 2, 2023, included city managers and other representatives from cities within Linn County. Seven people attended representing seven cities, including Scio, Sweet Home, Harrisburg, Albany, Sodaville, Mill City, and Millersburg, and Benton County Emergency Management, plus eight subject matter experts including Steering Committee members. City leaders shared specific concerns facing their jurisdictions and community members as well as priorities for projects or practices to reduce risk from wildfire. The main topics of concern included:

- Evacuation planning, such as outdated infrastructure, fuels management along routes, lack of egress options, livestock evacuation, and timely and accessible messaging, with a focus on higher risk neighborhoods and cross-county communication and coordination.
- Evacuation supplies and equipment that are mobile and can be moved to sites as needed.
- Improved communication between county and city agencies for all emergencies using a variety of communication methods.
- Seasonal prevention messaging related to backyard burning and recreational safety, aimed at residents and visitors.
- Active land management, including fuels treatment on surrounding federal and private lands, coupled with lobbying to change forest management laws.
- Increased education and flexibility for property owners to practice fuel reduction during safe burn windows coupled with increased enforcement to ensure safety.
- Home hardening education focused on properties at the edge of communities in the WUI.
- Funding for infrastructure and building hardening.
- Increased access to defensible space, or home impact zone, education and assessment programs, including for landscapers, developers, and realtors.
- Increased funding for fuels treatment on private land.
- Water supply issues that impact fire suppression and defensible space vegetation maintenance.
- Workforce development for forestry and fuels management.
- State and federal land use and environmental laws that impact where development can occur.
- Strategies to ensure that new development is more resilient to wildfire.
- Ensuring the CWPP is a living document.

The community organization focus group, hosted by the Scio Fire Department on August 24, 2023, included representatives from various local and regional community groups, agencies, associations, and other organizations. 23 people attended, plus nine subject matter experts including Steering Committee members. Participant areas of interest and expertise ranged from public health, wildfire recovery, and

fire-vulnerable communities to youth workforce development, small woodlands management, recreation, watershed health, and the Rodgers Mountain Firewise community. Participants shared specific concerns facing their organization and the people and areas they serve, as well as their priorities for projects or practices to reduce risk from wildfire. The main topics of concern included:

- Improving public alert and warning communications, including better coverage across residential areas.
- Evacuation planning, such as road and signage upgrades to improve visibility, e.g., high glow road markers, pre-determined evacuation and safety zones, and plans for pets and livestock.
- Developing community resilience hubs that can service multiple functions, such as for evacuation and as clean air, warming, or cooling shelters, and stockpiling evacuation supplies and equipment that are mobile and can be moved to sites as needed.
- Identifying and pre-planning for the needs of fire-vulnerable population through a working group.
- Smoke preparedness and response planning and funding, including outreach and training for outdoor workers.
- Home hardening resources for upgrading migrant/seasonal housing.
- Local economy and business restructuring to better support local companies during recovery efforts.
- Opportunities to bring neighbors together to share ideas and resources for wildfire prevention, preparedness, and recovery.
- Structure hardening and defensible space and landowner education, programs, and funding.
- Increased funding and assistance for fuels reduction on private land, and increased fuels reduction coordination between ODF and local fire departments.
- Creation of community fuel breaks and landscape scale fuels reduction projects.
- Code compliance with new development, including loose enforcement of development standards in forest zones.
- Post-fire restoration and support for forestry through grants, landscape surveys, weed mitigation, etc.

Feedback received during both focus group meetings was catalogued and reviewed by the Committee, with updates made to the draft action items to better address the concerns, as appropriate. Appendix E: Community Engagement Documentation includes the Community Input Integration table documenting feedback received and how it could be addressed in the Plan, as well as focus group notes, sign in sheets, and agenda packets.

Linn County Fire Defense Board

Methods

The Steering Committee worked with the LCFDB to talk with local fire districts to gain feedback that informed the Plan's risk assessment and updates to the action items. Members of the Steering Committee attended the August 24, 2023, regular meeting of the LCFDB to provide an update on the CWPP process, forge collaborative connection between the Committee and local fire districts, identify

the priority needs within each District, and identify high risk areas within each District based on their local knowledge. At the meeting, each district was asked to identify the most vulnerable areas within their districts and as well as describe their primary day-to-day needs and long-term goals and aspirations, with opportunity for follow up via email. Following the meeting, additional information regarding unmet needs and areas of most concern to the fire districts was gathered, including from the bordering northern districts within the Marion County Fire Defense Board via email and from OSFM district profiles and grant records. Meeting notes and other materials from the August 24 LCFDB meeting are included in Appendix E: Community Engagement Documentation.

Results

By far, the most common need identified was firefighter staffing and capacity – both during fire season and year-round. Many districts also mentioned specific needs for new firefighting apparatus, including engines and tenders. All of the rural fire protection districts (RFPD) indicated that they had some sort of fire assistance agreements with other districts or state agencies. For the most part, these agreements are in the form of mutual aid. Districts that have overlapping boundaries with ODF also have agreements in place with that agency. Section 3: Risk Assessment provides maps and data indicating areas of concern to local fire districts. Fire district needs are reflected in the CWPP action items, included in Section 5: Action Plan. Appendix C: Fire Agency Priority Areas for Mitigation provides further detail about priority areas of concern, including project area, rationale for inclusions, proposed project types, proposed methods, and proximity to federal lands. Appendix F: Fire Agency Profiles summarizes each fire agencies wildfire issues and needs.

Linn County Wildfire Ready Night

Linn County Wildfire Ready Night, a community open house, was held on December 6, 2023, hosted by the Sweet Home Fire District. The event was promoted through members of the Steering Committee, the County, and local outreach channels. There were 40 participants and 22 steering committee members and other partners in wildfire protection including local, state, and federal agencies, and local and regional organizations and non-profits (e.g., Red Cross, CPI, South and North Santiam Watershed Councils, and the Community Services Consortium, among others). Participants included a cross-section of people from across the county from rural and urban areas.



Methods

The evening included background presentations and success stories followed by stations with maps and other materials where people could have discussions with the partners. The presentations included:

- An introduction to the Linn County CWPP, an overview of wildfire risk in Linn County, and the CWPP goals and examples of some of the action items.

- Updates and success stories from agency partners, including the LCFDB, Linn County Emergency Management, ODF, and the USFF/Willamette National Forest.
- Information on how community members can take action and prepare for wildfires at home, including how to request a defensible space assessment.

Following the presentations, participants had an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on the CWPP risk assessment and maps, goals, and action items with Steering Committee members and partners at a series of stations. Community members were able to have questions answered and were connected with resources. See Appendix E: Community Engagement Documentation for notes, meeting materials, and presentations.

Results

Questions and concerns raised by participants included assessing and protecting one's home, where to get resources for fuels reduction work, getting registered for alert systems, access and bridge weight limits, evacuation, ideas for educational programs, and inventory of water resources on private property and needed access agreements, among others. At the December 2023 Committee meeting, members discussed the feedback received and updates were made to the CWPP to address any outstanding concerns.

Section 5: Action Plan

The action plan section of this document details the goals and action items that guide the implementation of the Linn County CWPP. The goals and action items are vital components of the CWPP and serve as a roadmap for implementation. It has the following parts:

- Action plan framework and methods describes the overall framework for the CWPP and how the goals and action items were developed.
- Goals describes goals of the Linn County CWPP.
- Action items describe wildfire adaptation and mitigation strategies identified through the CWPP planning process, including priority actions and the action item matrix which summarizes the action items in relation to the Plan goals.

Action Plan Framework and Methods

This section provides information on the process used to develop the goals and action items in the CWPP:

- Goals are intended to represent the general ends toward which the CWPP is directed. Goals identify how CWPP partners intend to continue working toward mitigating the risk of and adapting to increased occurrences of WUI fire. They do not specify how Linn County is to achieve a given level of performance. The goals are guiding principles under which specific recommendations outlined in the action items were developed.
- Action items are detailed recommendations for activities that local, state, and federal agencies, organizations, community members, and others can engage in to reduce the risk of impacts from wildfires on people, property, and natural and cultural resources.

The action plan was developed through review of the 2007 CWPP, an analysis of the issues identified in the risk assessment, community engagement feedback, through background research on advances in community wildfire protection, mitigation, and adaptation, and a review of other Oregon CWPPs. It sets forth the five goals of the CWPP and identifies 43 action items that will further progress toward the agreed upon wildfire risk reduction and adaptation goals, including 11 top priority actions for implementation in the next one to five years provided sufficient funding and resources. The action plan also establishes roles and responsibilities, timelines for implementing action items, potential costs and funding sources, where possible, and locations.

To update the goals, the Committee reviewed the goals identified in the 2007 CWPP to ensure the goals were broad enough to reflect best practices in wildfire risk mitigation, adaptation, and current concerns, in addition to addressing the three HFRA requirements of collaboration, prioritized fuels reduction, and treatment of structural ignitability. The Committee discussed proposed updates to the goals at the May 17, 2023 meeting and approved them at the June 23, 2023 meeting. The updated goals were shared and validated through the ensuing community engagement process.

To inform the action items, Committee members and the agencies they represent reviewed 2007 CWPP action items for which they had been assigned responsibility and suggested updates based on progress

made, continuing relevancy, and current concerns. Several new action items were identified by new and existing partners, and a few no longer relevant or completed action items were removed. To further refine the action items, the Committee considered the results of the wildfire risk assessment and integrated feedback from stakeholders and community members received during the engagement process. A crosswalk documenting the 2007 action items and 2023 action items is included in Appendix A: Action Item Worksheets.

Lastly, the Committee identified 11 top priority action items to ensure that funding and resources are used efficiently and effectively to move toward the Plan's goals. Committee members completed a survey to inform a conversation about prioritization. The survey asked respondents to select up to eight action items they felt should be top priorities for implementation in the next one to five years.

Considerations for prioritizing included:

- The wildfire risk assessment,
- Potential project benefits (e.g., number of people served, communities in high risk areas, acres of fuels reduced, number of homes inspected with defensible space work completed, etc.),
- Increased capacity or collaboration that will enhance future work,
- Feasibility,
- Cost and need for and/or availability of funding, and
- Community support.

The Committee discussed the survey results at the December 12, 2023 meeting and confirmed the top priority action items represented a broad range of projects that support all five CWPP's goals and could be implemented in the next five years given sufficient funding and resources.

Goals

Plan goals guide the direction of future activities aimed at reducing risk and losses from wildfire and helping communities adapt. The goals listed here serve as the guiding principles for agencies and organizations as they continue to implement action items.

- **GOAL 1:** Enhance wildfire and emergency response and recovery capabilities to protect life, the built environment, and natural systems.
- **GOAL 2:** Empower residents and other stakeholders with knowledge, decision-making tools, and resources to understand and reduce wildfire risks and increase preparedness.
- **GOAL 3:** Reduce structural ignitability through the use of non-regulatory incentives.
- **GOAL 4:** Prioritize and implement fuels treatment projects on private and public land to reduce risk, increase resiliency, and create defensible landscapes.
- **GOAL 5:** Increase opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and building capacity to implement wildfire projects.

Action Items

Action items are organized according to the primary goal they support; however, some action items support multiple goals. Each item has an identified lead, or co-lead, organization for continuing oversight and “ownership”, as well as potential partners in carrying out the action. Partnerships have been formed with a variety of agencies, entities, and organizations. The timeline for target completion, estimated cost and potential funding sources, when available, and location are also indicated for each action item. Priority action items are noted below followed by Table 5. Linn County CWPP Action Items, which includes a summary of all 43 action items.

To facilitate implementation, each action item is described in further detail in a worksheet that includes purpose or rationale, ideas for implementation, and priority for the coordinating organizations, in addition to status and timeline, coordinating and partner organizations, cost and potential funding sources and partners, and project location. In some cases, information about what went well for actions that are being carried forward is also included in the action item worksheet. See Appendix A: Action Item Worksheets.

Priority Action Items

The Committee’s top priority action items for completing in the next one to five years, given sufficient funding and resources, organized by goal, include:

- 1.1 Assess and address deficiencies in equipment and resources available for wildland firefighting for rural fire departments.
- 1.5 Increase evacuation preparedness in high-risk WUI areas.
- 1.11 Review emergency communication systems and procedures to improve accessibility by residents and consistent messaging across jurisdictions.
- 2.7 Identify opportunities and barriers to support fire-vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income, elderly, disabled, non-English speaking) with wildfire disaster preparedness. Work to embed wildfire disaster preparedness within ongoing community health education efforts in fire-vulnerable populations.
- 3.2 Complete the fire structural risk assessments in Albany, Brownsville, Lebanon, and Sweet Home fire districts, and utilize this as a model program for other Linn County fire districts for conducting voluntary defensible space assessments for homes within the WUI; document results using Survey 123, a centralized online platform.
- 4.2 Engage in pre-suppression fire planning with partners and collaborators to create fuel breaks and enhance access across landownerships.
- 4.4 Seek additional resources and manage and administer grants to provide cost-share to private forest landowners to manage fuels, buffer high value resources, and reduce landscape-level wildfire risk.
- 4.6 Implement landowner assistance programs to support creating defensible space around communities particularly with vulnerable populations (i.e., elderly, disabled, isolated or fire-affected areas, etc.) and incentivize fuels reduction activities. Create local workforce development opportunities through employment of fuels reduction crews.

- 4.11 Seek funding to implement fuels reduction efforts surrounding critical infrastructure sites, including removal and possible replacement with nonflammable landscaping material.
- 5.1 Create and formalize a CWPP Advisory Committee to oversee implementation, identify and coordinate funding opportunities, and sustain the Linn County Wildfire Protection Plan.
- 5.3 Resource a Fire Adapted Communities (or general Hazards Mitigation) Coordinator position to coordinate implementation of the CWPP, secure external funding, manage community-focused education and support programs, and seek additional opportunities for partnerships that advance wildfire resilience in Linn County.

Action Item Matrix

Table 5, below, includes all of the identified action items, organized by the CWPP goals. The action item number, description, indication of top priority, timeline, lead organization and partners, cost, funding sources and partners, and location are noted. Each action item has a corresponding action item worksheet including further details in Appendix A: Action Item Worksheets.

*Timeline for Target Completion: Short Term (1-3 years), Medium Term (4-10 years), Long Term (10+ years). No anticipated end date if term not noted.

Table 5. Linn County CWPP Action Item Matrix

#	Action Item	Top Priority	Status & Timeline*	Lead Organization (& Partners)	Cost \$ range or staff time	Funding Source / Partners	Location
Goal 1: Enhance wildfire and emergency response and recovery capabilities to protect life, the built environment, and natural systems.							
1.1	Assess and address deficiencies in equipment and resources available for wildland firefighting for rural fire departments.	X	Ongoing, Medium Term (4-10 years)	Linn County Fire Defense Board (Linn County Road Dept., Linn County EM, ODF, power companies, hospitals, private contractors)	\$4,800,000 - \$5,500,000	ODF Volunteer Fire Capacity Grant, OSFM Wildfire Season Staffing Grants & other OSFM grants as available.	Countywide
1.2	Inventory alternative firefighting water sources in Wildfire Urban Interface, including helicopter dip sites, including a rural drafting location in the Harrisburg Rural Fire Protection District.		Ongoing	Oregon Department of Forestry (Linn County Fire Defense Board (local districts), Harrisburg RFPD, water districts)	Existing staff time	ODF	Primarily within District boundaries and in areas identified by with fire districts as lacking water supply, including Harrisburg RFPD
1.3	Improve addressing and visibility in rural areas.		Ongoing	Linn County Fire Defense Board and Local Fire Districts (Linn County GIS, Roads, Dispatch, and Planning)		Special Districts Association of Oregon, OSFM, Linn County Road Dept. Operating budget	Countywide
1.4	Enhance interoperable communications by addressing communications deficiencies.		Ongoing, Medium Term (4-10 years)	Linn County Sheriff-Dispatch, Linn County Undersheriff, Linn County Emergency Management (Linn County Fire Defense Board)	Project is currently underway; funding has been sourced		Countywide
1.5	Increase evacuation preparedness in high-risk WUI areas.	X	Ongoing	Linn County Emergency Management	To be determined	To be determined	Countywide
1.6	Augment volunteer fire fighter training to improve response capacities, especially in rural fire districts.		Ongoing, Short Term (1-3 years)	Linn County Fire Training Council (Linn County Emergency Management)	\$50,000 - \$75,000	ODF, OSFM, and Oregon Department of Public Safety Standards & Training (DPSST)	Rural Fire Districts Countywide
1.7	Seek funding to build a smaller secondary substation on the east side of the Harrisburg Fire & Rescue's fire district.		Ongoing, Short Term (1-3 years)	Harrisburg Rural Fire Protection District	\$80,000 - \$100,000	To be determined	3328 Mt. Tom Drive, Harrisburg
1.8	Enhance signage that addresses bridge weight limits in the rural areas.		Ongoing	Linn County Road Department (Fire Defense Board, ODOT, cities/road managers)	\$40,000,000 - \$100,000,000	ODOT, County Road Department, city road managers	Countywide
1.9	Assure firefighters have properly fitted, and current PPE that meets accepted PPE standards.		Ongoing, Short Term (1-3 years)	Linn County Fire Defense Board (Fire Departments)	\$450,000 - \$550,000	To be determined	Countywide
1.10	Formalize and maintain strong, flexible partnerships and seek funding to stage supplies and support at emergency wildfire evacuation sites and clean air shelter sites in local communities.		Ongoing, Medium Term (4-10 years)	Linn County Emergency Management and Linn County Health Services (Local evacuation site partners (school districts, Linn Benton Community College, City of Sweet Home)	\$200,000 for evacuation trailers, \$2.5 million for emergency warehouse space	Federal, State, and private grants	Albany, Brownsville, Harrisburg, Santiam Canyon, and Sweet Home
1.11	Review emergency communication systems and procedures to improve accessibility by residents and consistent messaging across jurisdictions.	X	Ongoing, Short Term (1-3 years), w/ongoing coordination	Linn County Emergency Management (local jurisdictions, neighboring counties, especially Marion, Benton, and Lane)	Existing staff time	Linn County Sheriff, Oregon Emergency Management	Countywide
Goal 2: Empower residents and other stakeholders with knowledge, decision-making tools, and resources to understand and reduce wildfire risks and increase preparedness.							
2.1	Collaborate with developers/builders, fire protection agencies, and relevant County agencies to collect and distribute educational materials regarding fire-resistant construction materials and techniques, fire code standards for access, water supply, fuel breaks, defensible space, and fire-resistant vegetation and landscaping in the WUI.		Ongoing	Linn County Planning & Building Department	\$4,000 to design, print and distribute educational brochures plus existing staff time	Linn County Planning & Building Operating Budget	Unincorporated Linn County & contract cities (Brownsville, Halsey, Lyons, Mill City, Millersburg, Scio, Sodaville, Tangent and Waterloo). Other jurisdictions (Sweet Home, Albany, Lebanon) could potentially partner.

*Timeline for Target Completion: Short Term (1-3 years), Medium Term (4-10 years), Long Term (10+ years). No anticipated end date if term not noted.

#	Action Item	Top Priority	Status & Timeline*	Lead Organization (& Partners)	Cost \$ range or staff time	Funding Source / Partners	Location
2.2	Expand and promote existing communication campaigns to educate visitors and recreators about wildfire prevention (i.e., accidental ignitions) and risk mitigation while visiting Linn County.		Ongoing	CWPP Committee (Linn County Fire Defense Board, Linn County Emergency Management, OSFM, ODF, USFS, BLM, Potential Partners: Keep Oregon Green, Linn County Parks, Oregon State Parks, local tourism boards/visitor association)	\$75,000	OSFM, ODF, Local Fire Departments	Countywide, with a focus on tourism and recreation areas
2.3	Formalize the dissemination of educational campaign materials for WUI residents about ignition prevention, with an emphasis on promotion during burn bans.		Not Started	Linn FDB and ODF and (Linn County Communications, Fire Districts PIO Group, OSFM)	\$50,000 - \$75,000		Countywide, with focus on the WUI
2.4	Continue supporting and expanding the Smokey Bear Fire Protection Programs in schools		Ongoing	ODF (US Forest Service)	\$10,000 - \$20,000 and existing staff	Federal and State grants, ODF budgeted dollars	Countywide, with focus on the WUI
2.5	Engage K-12 students with place-based fire ecology, behavior, and risk lessons to support the next generation in understanding the ecological role of fire on Linn County landscapes and learning to live alongside fire.		Not Started, Short Term (1-3 years) for curriculum pilot, Long Term (10+ years) for establishing year-round courses	Watershed Councils - North/South Santiam and Calapooia (OSU Extension/Outdoor School Program, ONREP, local school districts incl. Sweet Home, East Linn, GAPS, North Santiam, forestry clubs, CTC)	Staff and materials costs to be determined	OWEB, ODF (forestry grants), Educational foundation grants	Countywide, potentially start with Eastern Linn County schools / youth programs
2.6	Establish and maintain programs to aid vulnerable populations during unhealthy and hazardous air quality conditions caused by wildfire.		Ongoing for education, Medium Term (4-10 years) for supply distribution program	Linn County Public Health (Linn County Emergency Management, Linn County Developmental Disabilities, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, local service providers (youth and homeless outreach nonprofits, Santiam Hospital and Samaritan Health clinics)	\$90,000 for DIY filter / N-95 mask distribution for low income / medically vulnerable households	ODHS, OHA, DEQ, EPA	Countywide
2.7	Identify opportunities and barriers to support fire-vulnerable populations (e.g., low-income, elderly, disabled, non-English speaking) with wildfire disaster preparedness. Work to embed wildfire disaster preparedness within ongoing community health education efforts in fire-vulnerable populations.	X	Ongoing, Short Term (1-3 years)	Linn County Health Services (Linn County Emergency Management, Regional Healthcare Coalition, Linn County Public Health Outreach Group, Linn Benton Lincoln Health Equity Alliance, local healthcare providers and nonprofits)	Existing LCHS staff resources, identify funding amounts for future grants	LCHS Operating Budget, ODHS grants (HB 2990 Resilience Hub/Network funding), private and public health grants	Countywide
2.8	Conduct a Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Code audit to determine the efficacy of current wildfire mitigation policies and development standards. Update the Linn County Comprehensive Plan Natural Hazards (Goal 7) element and Linn County Land Development Code to align with statewide wildfire mitigation statutes and new legislation.		Not started, Short Term (1-3 years)	Linn County Planning & Building Department (Linn County Board of Commissioners, Linn County Planning Commission)	Staff time	LC P&B Operating Budget, DLCD Technical Assistance Grants	Legislative code updates would affect unincorporated Linn County only.
2.9	Support formal and nonformal educators in planning, integrating, and implementing wildland fire focused education for Linn County K-12 students via at least two professional development opportunities.		Not Started, Medium Term (4-10 years)	Oregon State University Forestry & Natural Resource Extension Service (OSU Extension Fire Program & Oregon Natural Resources Education Program, local school districts (Sweet Home, Lebanon, North Santiam), Western Oregon Outdoor School, North and South Santiam Watershed Councils)	\$60,000	OSU Extension	Mid-Willamette Valley, including Linn County
Goal 3: Reduce structural ignitability through the use of non-regulatory incentives.							
3.1	Enhance structural protection in structurally unprotected areas.		Ongoing, Short Term (1-3 Years)	Linn County Planning & Building Department (OSFM, Linn County GIS, local fire districts)	Staff time	Linn County Planning & Building Operating Budget	Areas outside local fire protection districts countywide

*Timeline for Target Completion: Short Term (1-3 years), Medium Term (4-10 years), Long Term (10+ years). No anticipated end date if term not noted.

#	Action Item	Top Priority	Status & Timeline*	Lead Organization (& Partners)	Cost \$ range or staff time	Funding Source / Partners	Location
3.2	Complete the fire structural risk assessments in Albany, Brownsville, Lebanon, and Sweet Home fire districts, and utilize this as a model program for other Linn County fire districts for conducting voluntary defensible space assessments for homes within the WUI; document results using Survey 123, a centralized online platform.	X	Ongoing	Linn County Fire Defense Board, Oregon State Fire Marshall (Fire Districts, ODF)	\$75,000 - \$150,000	OSFM, FEMA, and Local Fire Districts	Albany, Brownsville, Lebanon, and Sweet Home fire districts and other fire districts serving WUI communities.
3.3	Share information about State fire hardening building code standards for voluntary use and seek funding for a home hardening cost-share/incentive program.		Ongoing for education, Medium Term (3-5 years) for grant program	Linn County Planning & Building (WUI city jurisdictions, Oregon Building Code Division, building industry (Western OR Builders Association, Willamette Association of Realtors)	\$250,000 - \$500,000	Operating Budget (for education), Oregon Building Codes Division and FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation/BRIC Grant (for home hardening grant program)	Countywide, for grant program consider targeting high-risk WUI areas and socially vulnerable populations. Santiam Canyon for post-wildfire Fire Hardening Grant Program.
3.4	Seek funding to upgrade critical infrastructure sites through building hardening retrofits such as fire-resistant roofing, siding, and screening, and water supply improvements such as adding community water tanks or emergency vehicle access to natural water sources, for identified critical infrastructure throughout Linn County.		Long Term (10+ years)	Local Jurisdictions in partnership with Linn County Emergency Management (local fire districts, school districts, water districts, local construction companies)	TBD - individual project costs will vary	Local capital improvement funding, FEMA Pre-disaster Mitigation/BRIC Grant (for high-risk areas) & HMGP (for post-fire affected areas), private foundation grants	Potential sites identified across the County, see worksheet for more information.
Goal 4: Prioritize and implement fuels treatment projects on private and public land to reduce risk, increase resiliency, and create defensible landscapes.							
4.1	Incorporate, maintain, and update Linn County's Risk Assessment and GIS data elements, and maintain and review an inventory of priority fuels reduction projects in high-risk areas. Refer to Appendix C of the Plan for priority areas.		Ongoing	Linn County Emergency Management as CWPP Committee Convener (Linn County Planning & Building and GIS, ODF, and Linn FDB)	Staff Time	Linn County Operating Budget	Countywide
4.2	Engage in pre-suppression fire planning with partners and collaborators to create fuel breaks and enhance access across landownerships.	X	Ongoing	USFS (ODF, BLM, and private industrial land owners)	\$2,500,000	Various	Various
4.3	Support small woodland owners to make management decisions about forest health and fuels management through educational workshops, courses, field tours, and/or voluntary inventories of private timber land.		Ongoing, Long Term (10+ years)	OSU Extension Forestry and Natural Resources (ODF, NRCS, South Santiam Watershed Council/North Santiam Watershed Council, Oregon Small Woodlands Association)	\$75,000 - \$150,000 for inventories, existing staff time for education	ODF Small Forestland Grant and Landscape Resiliency Grant, USFS, OSU Extension	Countywide
4.4	Seek additional resources and manage and administer grants to provide cost-share to private forest landowners to manage fuels, buffer high value resources, and reduce landscape-level wildfire risk.	X	Ongoing	ODF and South Santiam Watershed Council / North Santiam Watershed Council (Landowners, Local Loggers & Contractors, NRCS, Linn SWCD, OSU Extension, Oregon Small Woodlands Association)	\$50,000 - \$250,000 per project (up to 160 acres)	ODF Small Forestland Grant and Landscape Resiliency Grant, USFS Urban Forestry Grant	Priority fuels reduction areas, WUI areas
4.5	Identify incentives for improving maintenance of fire breaks and reducing hazardous vegetation.		Ongoing	Oregon Department of Forestry (Private landowners, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management)	To be determined, depends on project size and scope.	USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant, ODF Landscape Resiliency Grant, Oregon State Fire Managers Grant, OSFM Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant	Priority areas can shift from year to year depending on fire regime and local priorities and concerns.

*Timeline for Target Completion: Short Term (1-3 years), Medium Term (4-10 years), Long Term (10+ years). No anticipated end date if term not noted.

#	Action Item	Top Priority	Status & Timeline*	Lead Organization (& Partners)	Cost \$ range or staff time	Funding Source / Partners	Location
4.6	Implement landowner assistance programs to support creating defensible space around communities particularly with vulnerable populations (i.e., elderly, disabled, isolated or fire-affected areas, etc.) and incentivize fuels reduction activities. Create local workforce development opportunities through employment of fuels reduction crews.	X	Ongoing	Linn County Juvenile Department, Community Services Consortium, Santiam Canyon Long Term Recovery Group, and Stayton Fire District (ODF, OSFM, Northwest Youth Corps/Oregon Conservation Corps, local fire districts)	Over \$600,000 combined for 3-year programs, additional funding will be needed for ongoing programs	OSFM Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant, OCC Grants	Multiple locations countywide, including WUI areas with medium to high wildfire hazard with elderly/disabled landowners. See action item worksheet for details.
4.7	Identify partners and interest to explore and promote opportunities for multiple uses of small diameter biomass within fuels reduction projects and marketing for other uses.		Not started	CWPP Committee (Potential partners: ODF, USFS/BLM, Sweet Home Fire District, Linn County FDB, Small Woodlands Association, Freres Lumber)	To be determined	To be determined	Countywide
4.8	Explore the development of a Linn County Fuels Management Cooperative through the Small Woodland Association for sustaining fuels management within the WUI.		Not started	Oregon Department of Forestry (Small Woodlands Association, Fire Defense Board)	To be determined	To be determined	Countywide
4.9	Work with forestland managers and watershed managers to protect watershed health in high-risk areas while reducing wildfire hazards.		Ongoing	Oregon Department of Forestry and Watershed Councils (USFS/BLM, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, local governments, Linn SWCD, ODA, NRCS, water control districts, other community-level partners.)	\$5,000 per acre	ODF Landscape Resiliency Grant, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board	In high-risk areas/watersheds countywide
4.10	Inventory road conditions along high-risk community routes and reduce hazardous vegetation in public right of ways to enhance access and create fuel breaks, and to keep access roads large enough for emergency vehicle passage.		Ongoing	Linn County Roads Department in consultation with ODOT, local jurisdictions, and local fire agencies	\$820,000 per year, increasing with inflation	Linn County Roads Operating Budget	County-wide in each maintenance district: Albany (northwest), Scio (northeast), Halsey (southwest) and Sweet Home (southeast). Specific priority areas identified in Appendix C.
4.11	Seek funding to implement fuels reduction efforts surrounding critical infrastructure sites, including removal and possible replacement of vegetation with nonflammable landscaping material.	X	Not Started, Medium Term (4-10 Years)	Local Jurisdictions in partnership with Linn County Emergency Management (ODF, OSFM, local fire districts including Sweet Home Fire District, school districts, electric utilities, surrounding public & private land managers)	To be determined, individual project costs will vary	ODF Landscape Resiliency, Title III, USFS CWDG, FEMA, OSFM CWRR	Identify specific critical infrastructure in fire-prone areas
4.12	Seek grant funding to support fuels reduction and creation of defensible space around communities in Sweet Home Fire District.		Ongoing	Sweet Home Fire District and ODF	To be determined	USDA, USFS, FEMA, IAFC	Sweet Home Fire District
4.13	Conduct electrical system Right of Way tree trimming and vegetation management.		Ongoing	Consumers Power Inc. (contractors: Asplundh and Jensen's)	\$3,250,000 Annually	CPI operating budget	System wide throughout the CPI service territory including many WUI areas in Linn County.
4.14	Conduct CPI Electrical Transmission and Distribution System Hardening.		Ongoing	Consumers Power Inc.	\$500,000 Annually	CPI operating budget, possible state and federal grants.	System wide throughout the CPI service territory. Focus on high fire risk areas as defined by CPI.
4.15	Enhance CPI Electrical Transmission and Distribution System Intelligence.		Ongoing	Consumers Power Inc.	\$530,000 Annually	CPI operating budget, possible state and federal grants.	System wide throughout the CPI service territory. Focus on high fire risk areas as defined by CPI.

*Timeline for Target Completion: Short Term (1-3 years), Medium Term (4-10 years), Long Term (10+ years). No anticipated end date if term not noted.

#	Action Item	Top Priority	Status & Timeline*	Lead Organization (& Partners)	Cost \$ range or staff time	Funding Source / Partners	Location
4.16	Increase Environmental Intelligence: Use weather data for operational planning and decision making.		Not started, Short Term (1-3 years)	Consumers Power Inc.	\$20,000 between 2023 & 2024	CPI operating budget	System wide at substations and communications facilities located in high fire risk zones as defined by CPI.
Goal 5: Increase opportunities for collaboration, coordination, and building capacity to implement wildfire projects.							
5.1	Create and formalize the CWPP Committee to oversee implementation, identify and coordinate funding opportunities, and sustain the Linn County Community Wildfire Protection Plan	X	Not Started, Short Term (1-3 years)	Linn County Emergency Management (Linn County Planning & Building, LCFDB)	Existing staff time	Partners existing budgets	Countywide
5.2	Establish a working group to coordinate and sustain effective countywide public education and outreach activities, including members of the Fire Defense Board prevention committee and the CWPP Committee.		Not started	CWPP Committee and Linn County Fire Defense Board (co-leads) (Sweet Home Fire District, ODF, OSFM, USFS/BLM, OSU Fire Extension	To be determined	Partners existing budgets	Countywide
5.3	Resource a Fire Adapted Communities / Hazards Mitigation Coordinator position to coordinate implementation of the CWPP, secure external funding, manage community-focused education and support programs, and seek additional opportunities for partnerships that advance wildfire resilience in Linn County.	X	Not Started, Short Term (1-3 years)	Linn County Emergency Management	\$50,000-\$80,000 per year for one full time position (or \$25,000 for one 11-month RARE position)	Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program, OSFM Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant, Ford Family Foundation Matching Funds, University of Oregon RARE Program	Countywide

Section 6: Plan Implementation and Maintenance

The plan implementation and maintenance section of this document details the formal process that will ensure that the Linn County CWPP remains a relevant document, the actions in it are implemented, and the Plan is reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It has the following parts:

- Plan implementation describes how the Linn County CWPP will be implemented and includes a discussion of the Plan’s convener, advisory committee, and committee membership;
- Plan maintenance describes how the plan will be maintained and updated and includes a discussion on the semi-annual and annual meetings; and
- Five-year review of plan describes the methods by which the CWPP will be updated.

Plan Implementation

It is critical that Linn County have a “living document” that is consistently updated to reflect current needs and priorities. The Plan’s format allows the Committee to review and update sections as new data and information become available, resulting in a CWPP that remains current and relevant to Linn County and CWPP partners. The benefits of a current and relevant CWPP include:

- Allowing communities to identify local priorities that shape management decisions affecting public lands around them, increase landscape resilience, contribute to fire adapted communities, and ensure safe and effective wildfire response.
- Building community partnerships and collaboration between fire departments, local/state/federal governments, community-based organizations, private landowners, and other partners.
- Identifying a variety of funding sources and opportunities available to communities.
- Facilitating fuels reduction and forest health treatments across landscapes, in accordance with the goals of the HFRA and the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy.

The Linn County CWPP is a shared plan that was developed using a collaborative process. Continued collaboration and coordination are key to ensuring the effective implementation of the CWPP, which is a non-regulatory document that provides a framework for building and sustaining partnerships to support wildfire risk reduction and adaptation projects across Linn County.

Convener

The Linn County Emergency Management Program (Emergency Management) in the Linn County Sheriff’s Office will serve as the convener and will oversee the Plan’s implementation and maintenance. Emergency Management will chair the CWPP Committee and fulfill the chair’s responsibilities, including calling meetings to order at scheduled times or when issues arise, (e.g., when funding becomes available or following a major wildfire event). The Linn County Planning and Building Department will provide support.

The convener’s key roles are to:

- Coordinate Committee meeting dates, times, locations, agendas, and member notification.

- Document outcomes of Committee meetings for inclusion in future CWPP updates as an appendix.
- Serve as a communication conduit between the Committee and key Plan stakeholders, (e.g., monthly meetings of the Linn County Fire Defense Board).
- Identify emergency management related funding sources for wildfire mitigation projects.

Advisory Committee

The core members of the Steering Committee that developed the 2024 Plan will continue in an advisory role to oversee implementation, identify and coordinate funding opportunities, and sustain the CWPP. The Committee will act as the coordinating body and serve as a centralized resource for wildfire risk reduction, adaptation, and WUI issues and opportunities across Linn County. Additional roles and responsibilities of the Committee include:

- Identifying, evaluating, and prioritizing funding opportunities for wildfire risk reduction projects and coordinating with stakeholders and other partners to develop competitive, fundable grant proposals.
- Developing and coordinating ad hoc and/or standing subcommittees as needed.
- Documenting successes and lessons learned, including engaging constituents, stakeholders, and the broader Linn County community.
- Evaluating and updating the CWPP in accordance with the prescribed maintenance schedule.

Members

The following organizations were represented and served as core members of the Committee during the development of the CWPP. These groups will continue to be members of the Committee during the implementation and maintenance phases of the CWPP.

- Linn County Emergency Management Program, Linn County Sheriff's Office
- Linn County GIS
- Linn County Fire Defense Board
- Linn County Planning and Building Department
- Linn County Public Health
- Linn County Roads Department
- Northwest Oregon Interagency Fire Management, NW Oregon District Bureau of Land Management, Siuslaw and Willamette National Forests
- Oregon Department of Forestry, North and South Cascade Districts
- Oregon State Fire Marshal
- Oregon State University Extension Fire Program
- South and North Santiam Watershed Councils
- Sweet Home Fire and Rescue
- Utility Providers (Consumers Power, Inc., Pacific Power)

Some of the additional participating organizations and other stakeholders could also serve on subcommittees tasked with specific risk reduction activities.

Because of the importance that the CWPP planning process places on collaboration and the fact that wildfire mitigation and adaptation is a shared responsibility among a number of diverse stakeholders, the Committee may look to expand current membership. Potential future Committee members may include:

- Calapooia Watershed Council
- CTC, Guistina, Weyerhaeuser, Freres, and other timber company representatives
- Community Services Consortium YouthBuild
- Firewise Community leaders
- Linn County Roads, Juvenile Department, Health Services, and Parks Department
- Linn County Small Woodlands Association
- Linn Soil and Water Conservation District
- Santiam Long Term Recovery Group
- Tribal representatives
- Community representatives
- Culturally specific community based organizations
- Home Builders Association
- Insurance representatives
- Local elected and/or appointed officials
- Recreational organizations

Project Identification and Prioritization

Through the Linn County CWPP update process, 11 top priority projects have been identified for implementation in the next one to five years, with 32 additional projects identified for implementation. Projects have been identified to address local conditions, values-at-risk, and priorities for action in line with the HFRA, including improved intergovernmental collaboration and increased partnerships between public and private entities with the goal of protecting communities from catastrophic wildfire, hazardous fuel reduction projects on federal and non-federal lands, investments and activities aimed at reducing structural ignitibility in at-risk communities, and partnerships to protect and restore watersheds, as well as additional strategies for community wildfire adaptation and mitigation.

The Committee will continue to identify and prioritize wildfire risk reduction and adaptation projects across Linn County, including a review and prioritization of outstanding action items during the annual review and update process. New projects may be identified by or presented to the Committee from a variety of sources; therefore, the project prioritization process needs to be flexible. As projects are completed and new data becomes available to inform an update of the risk assessment, additional projects may become ripe for identification and prioritization.

Depending on the potential project's intent and implementation methods, several funding sources may be available and appropriate. However, the Committee and the County cannot ensure they will be undertaken. Completion of projects will depend on the availability of funding and adequate staffing. Funding to undertake hazard adaptation and mitigation projects must also cover administration and costs.

The Committee may choose to use a similar process to prioritize additional projects as was used during the Plan's update. This included Committee members identifying their top priority actions for the next one to five years using a survey tool that suggested the following considerations, followed by discussion and confirmation:

- The wildfire risk assessment,
- Potential project benefits (e.g., number of people served, communities in high risk areas, acres of fuels reduced, number of homes inspected with defensible space work completed, etc.),
- Increased capacity or collaboration that will enhance future work,
- Feasibility,
- Cost and need for and/or availability of funding, and
- Community support.

The Committee may consider additional criteria or developing a more formal prioritization process if it is determined to be necessary.

When a new action is identified for implementation, the Committee should convene a meeting to review the issues surrounding grant applications and to share knowledge and/or resources. This process will afford greater coordination and less competition for limited funds. A letter of support signed by all members of the Committee could be used in grant applications to show community support for the mitigation action.

The Committee and community leadership have the option to implement any of the action items at any time, regardless of CWPP priority. Committee members may also wish to continue to use internal organizational prioritization processes for projects they manage. This allows for the implementation of mitigation strategies as new opportunities arise, such as funding for action items that may not have been identified as a top priority.

Plan Review and Maintenance

Plan review and maintenance is a critical component of the CWPP, establishing a process for continuation of the CWPP Committee, evaluating the resources necessary for continued successful implementation, and setting a course for future actions and updates. Based on an understanding of community preferences and local needs and capacity, activities that can lower the risk to wildfire risk and support community adaptation have been identified. Proper review and maintenance of the CWPP ensure it will continue to support efforts to reduce wildfire risk in the WUI through the identification of attainable CWPP's goals and projects. Linn County and CWPP partners have developed a method to ensure that regular review and updating of the CWPP occurs. The Committee is responsible for maintaining and updating the CWPP through a series of meetings outlined in Table 6, below.

Table 6. Plan Maintenance Meeting Schedule

Semi-Annual Meeting	Annual Meeting	Five-Year Review
Review current actions and document successes and lessons learned	Monitor and update local Risk Assessment data	Review plan update questions
Identify new issues, needs, and opportunities	Report on continued community engagement, adjust methods as needed	Update Risk Assessment data and findings (every 3 to 5 years based on the availability of the PNW QWRA)
Prioritize potential projects	Document successes and lessons learned	Update additional Plan sections as necessary

Semi-Annual Meeting

The Committee will meet on a semi-annual basis to:

- Review existing action items to determine ripeness, including identifying top priority actions that have not been implemented and determining why.
- Document successes and lessons learned, including identifying the extent to which CWPP goals are being met.
- Identify issues that may not have been pinpointed when the plan was developed or new opportunities to support implementation and collaboration.
- Examine collaborative relationships and their contributions to implementation, including existing participants and potential new partners.
- Prioritize projects, including potential funding opportunities and needed partnerships.

Linn County Emergency Management, with support from Planning and Building, will be responsible for documenting the outcome of the semi-annual meetings for inclusion in future CWPP updates as an appendix. These meetings will be scheduled outside of fire season (March-May and November-January) and could regularly take place on the second Wednesdays in May and November. The Committee will use the process detailed in the above section to prioritize projects, including fuels reduction projects. Surveys or other tools will be developed to facilitate contributions in advance of meetings.

Annual Meeting

The Committee will meet annually to discuss and make updates to the local elements of the Risk Assessment data based on local areas of concern, receive updates on local CWPP planning efforts, discuss methods of continued community engagement and involvement, and document successes and lessons learned based on actions that were accomplished during the past year. Surveys or other tools will be developed to facilitate contributions in advance of meetings.

On an annual basis, Linn County Emergency Management, with support from Planning and Building and GIS, will complete the following tasks in an effort to incorporate, maintain, and update the County’s wildfire Risk Assessment and GIS data elements, including an inventory of priority fuels reduction projects in high-risk areas:

- Meet semi-annually with the LCFDB and fire department representatives to update community maps and digitize local data as appropriate to the departments' needs;
- Update the Risk Assessment GIS data layers on a timely basis, including when a new PNW QWRA becomes available via OSU (typically every three to five years), and/or ODF, USFS, and BLM studies or assessments are published; and
- Assist local community efforts in identifying potential fuels reduction projects and drafting grant applications.

Linn County Emergency Management will be responsible for documenting the outcomes of the annual meetings.

Five-Year Plan Review

As the CWPP will be integrated into the wildfire chapter of the Linn County NHMP, a review of the CWPP for needed updates will be set at five-year intervals to ensure up-to-date data and recommendations are available to meet the requirements of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. As a result of the review, the Committee may determine that a full CWPP update is not required, or if required, the update timing is in advance of but offset from the NHMP update so it can be accomplished with existing staff resources.

During the five-year plan review, the following questions should be asked to determine what actions are necessary to update the CWPP. Linn County Emergency Management, with support from Planning and Building, will be responsible for documenting the outcomes of the five-year plan review, for inclusion in an appendix of Committee meetings documentation in future plan updates. Table 7, below, provides a list of questions that can be used by the Committee for reviewing and determining the need to update the CWPP.

Table 7. Five-year Plan Review Questions

Background and Community Profile Data - Sections 1 and 2
Has the community wildfire protection and risk reduction framework at the local, state, or federal level changed?
Have responsibilities of partner agencies changed?
Has recent fire occurrence been accurately reflected in the plan?
Are there changes in population density, demographics, or land ownership patterns in the County, including socially and economically vulnerable communities?
Have there been changes to key County assets or resources?
Risk Assessment Data - Section 3
Has the wildfire risk across the County changed?
Have new tools, data, or analysis techniques emerged to better evaluate wildfire hazard and risk to communities?
Have local communities developed plans and implemented activities that might change the County's overall risk?
Stakeholder and Community Engagement Data - Section 4
Are there new organizations or other stakeholders that should be brought to the table?
Action Plan Data - Section 5
Do the CWPP goals and actions address current or expected conditions?
Have actions been effectively implemented?
Are the actions continuing to move the community toward meeting the CWPP goals?
Are there new funding sources available to address wildfire adaptation and mitigation?
Are there new actions items that should be added and prioritized?
Plan Implementation and Maintenance Data - Section 6
Are the structures and methods established for implementing the Plan still relevant?
Have there been any lessons learned documented from significant wildfires in other parts of the state that might be applicable to Linn County?
Has implementation occurred as anticipated?
What obstacles and challenges have arisen that have prevented or delayed implementation? Legal? Financial? Institutional?
What opportunities have arisen that could accelerate implementation?