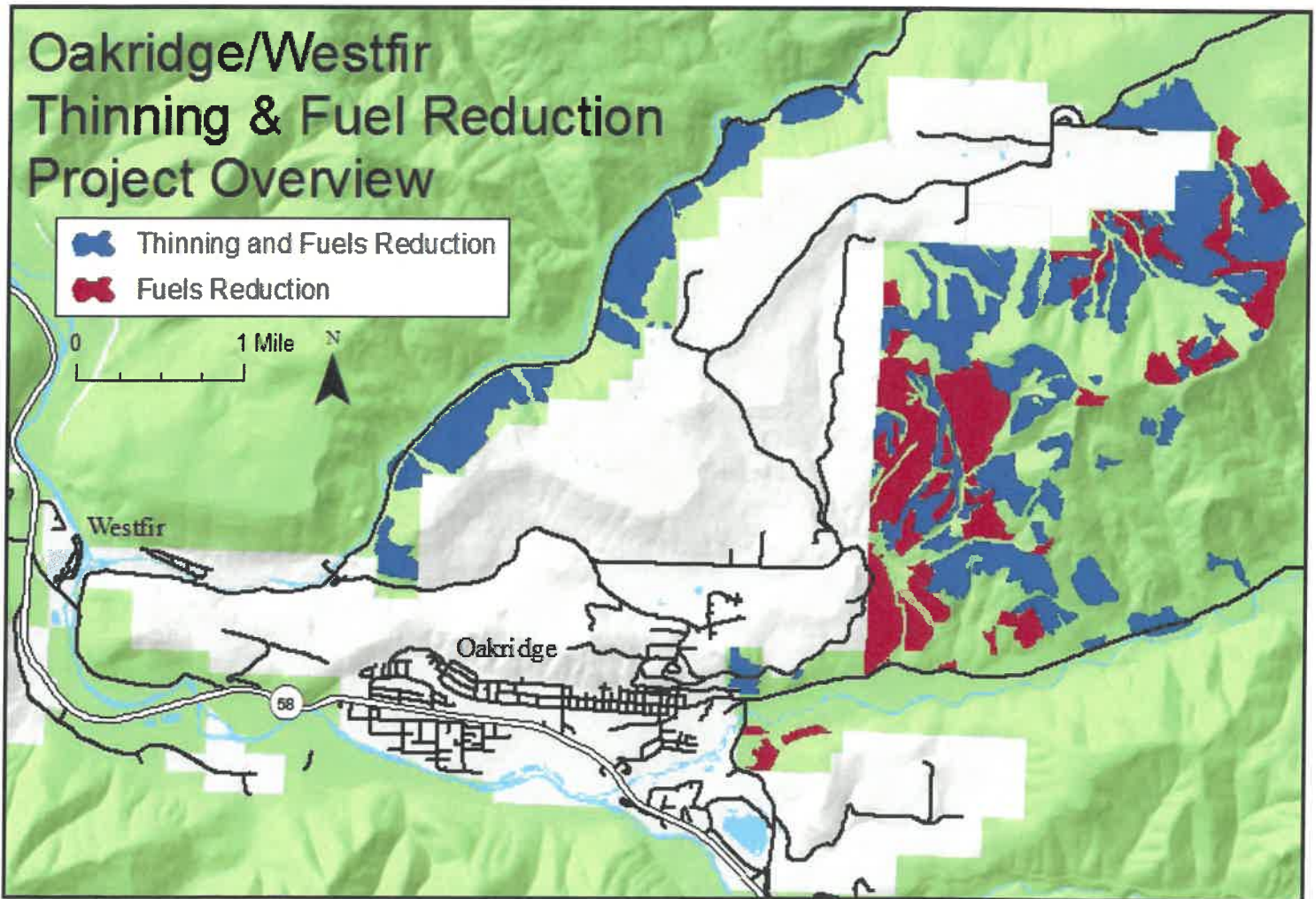




REDUCING THE RISK OF WILDFIRE

Oakridge/Westfir Thinning and Fuels Reduction Project



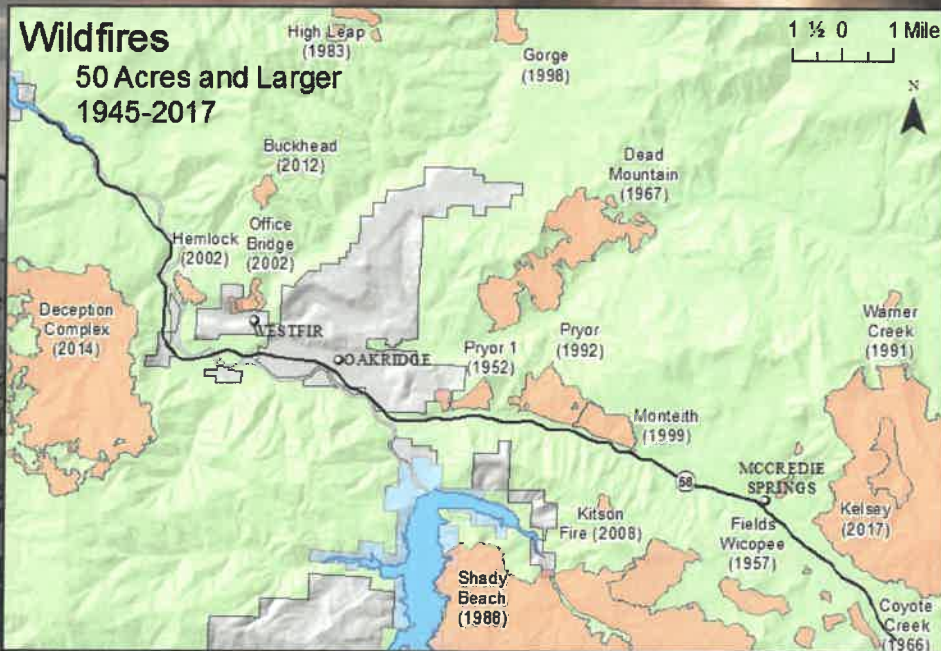
Living in the Oakridge/Westfir area means you are surrounded by beautiful mountains and lush forests, but it also means your home is at risk from wildfire. Each year, lightning and careless individuals ignite blazes in the surrounding forest. While local, state and federal fire crews are dedicated to stopping these fires before they reach our communities, the currently unnaturally dense forest makes it more difficult and dangerous for them to do their job.

In order to reduce the risk of a catastrophic, large wildfire to the Oakridge/Westfir and High Prairie areas, the Middle Fork Ranger District is implementing a thinning and fuels reduction project. The project takes place on National Forest lands that lie north of Oakridge and Westfir, and east of High Prairie (see map on the first page). It is designed to complement the Lane County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which assists land owners in reducing fire risk on private lands.

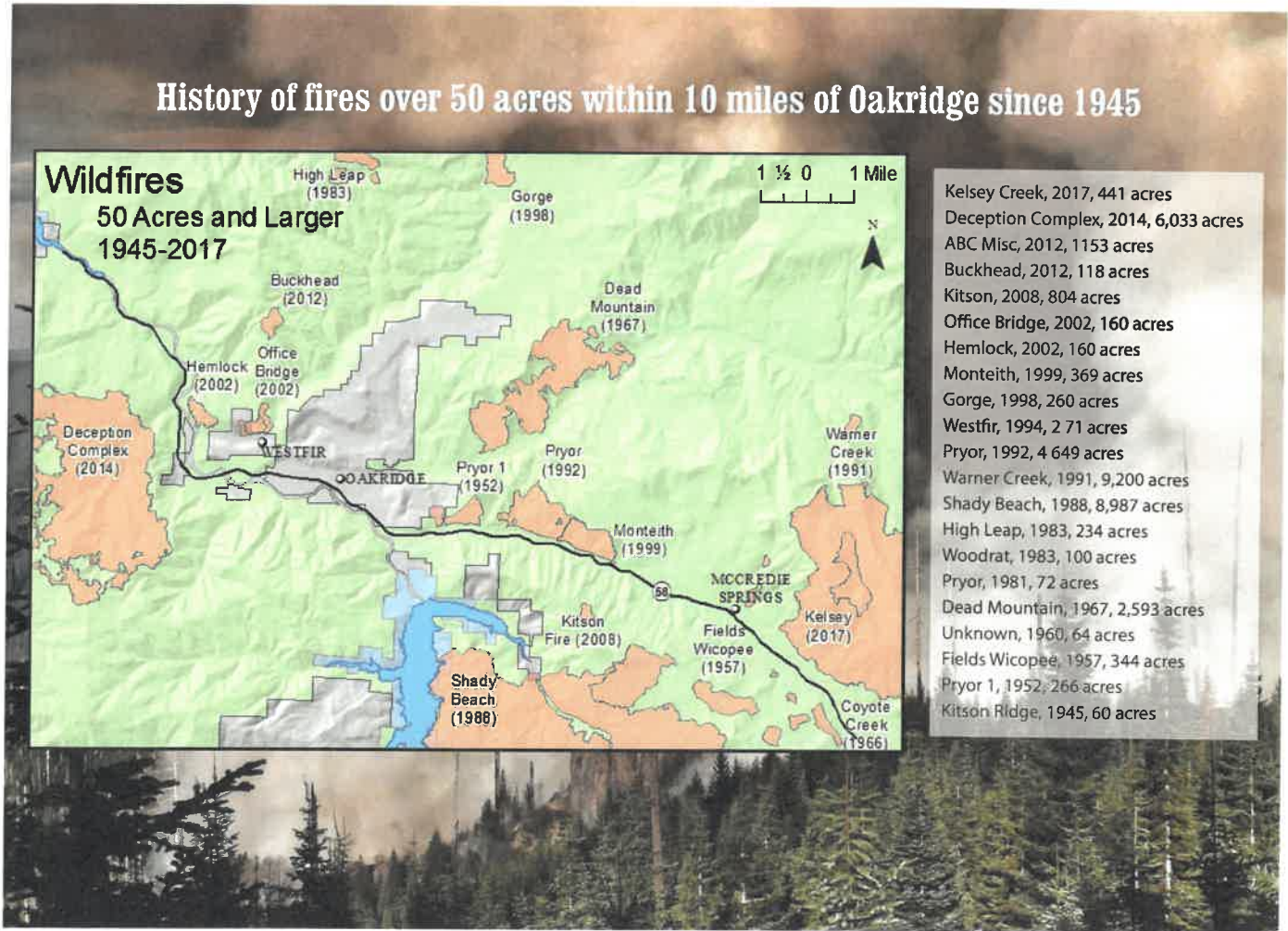
**BENEFITS
INCLUDE**

- Protecting residential areas**
- Enhancing firefighter safety**
- Reducing cost of fire suppression**
- Creating local jobs**
- Providing sustainable wood products**
- Improvements to roads**

History of fires over 50 acres within 10 miles of Oakridge since 1945



- Kelsey Creek, 2017, 441 acres
- Deception Complex, 2014, 6,033 acres
- ABC Misc, 2012, 1153 acres
- Buckhead, 2012, 118 acres
- Kitson, 2008, 804 acres
- Office Bridge, 2002, 160 acres
- Hemlock, 2002, 160 acres
- Monteith, 1999, 369 acres
- Gorge, 1998, 260 acres
- Westfir, 1994, 2,71 acres
- Pryor, 1992, 4,649 acres
- Warner Creek, 1991, 9,200 acres
- Shady Beach, 1988, 8,987 acres
- High Leap, 1983, 234 acres
- Woodrat, 1983, 100 acres
- Pryor, 1981, 72 acres
- Dead Mountain, 1967, 2,593 acres
- Unknown, 1960, 64 acres
- Fields Wicopee, 1957, 344 acres
- Pryor 1, 1952, 266 acres
- Kitson Ridge, 1945, 60 acres



BACKGROUND

Forests in the project area were shaped by the 1910 Dead Mountain Fire (Flat Creek and Dead Mountain area) or from logging that occurred in the 1920s and 1930s (North Fork of the Middle Fork Willamette River area). Most of these forests are now made up of densely stocked Douglas fir and other species ranging in age from 80 to 120 years. In most of the project area, the tops of trees are touching, or close to touching each other, thus increasing the risk of large, wind-driven crown fires. In only the last 25 years, we have experienced nine larger fires within ten miles of Oakridge and Westfir, as well as many smaller fires.

WHAT WILL BE DONE

To reduce the wildfire risk, two main activities are taking place. One is the thinning of forests that border these communities. This work will be accomplished by helicopter, cable and ground-based yarding. Log trucks will be used to transport the commercial logs to local mills. The second activity is prescribed fire to burn away the unmerchantable debris and wood left after logging activity is completed (otherwise known as fuels reduction). As a citizen, you can also take actions to help reduce the risk of wildfires in the area. Working with state and local officials, you can help make your property a defensible space. Contact Oregon Department of Forestry for more information.



(Left photo) Forest stand before a thinning treatment. (Right photo) Adjacent area after commercial thinning to a spacing similar to what's being accomplished through the Oakridge/Westfir Thinning and Fuels Reduction Project.

HOW IT WORKS

This project reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfires by reducing the density of trees in the forest, so that when a fire does occur, there is less wood, leaves and debris to burn. Spacing between trees will also be increased, which means it is less likely for a fire to move through the tree canopy – where it is extremely difficult to stop. The prescribed burns clean up the tops of trees, shrubs and other material that was not removed by logging. Other work includes cutting and removing trees under seven inches in diameter to take away the ‘ladder’ fuels a fire uses to climb into the canopy. What is left behind is a more open forest.



Unthinned Stand

Allows for fires with higher intensity and severity
Fire can easily climb into the canopy and move across the stand, which is very difficult to stop.



Moderately-thinned Stand

Lowers the intensity and severity of the fires
Fire is more likely to stay on the ground and only kill some trees. Firefighters can more easily and safely stop the blaze.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What has been accomplished?

By March 2018, we have thinned out approximately 500 acres of forest near Westfir along Forest Service Road 19, and another approximately 300 acres on Dead Mountain. We have treated 300 acres by removing small trees (under seven inches in diameter) and debris near the Fish Hatchery and from 8 acres along Airport Road. We have also completed three prescribed burns along Forest Service Road 19. Work is underway to thin stands on three timber sales on the east side of Oakridge.

How will this project impact the average citizen?

As the project continues, you may hear the noises associated with logging, such as a helicopter flying overhead and yarders at work. You will likely see more log trucks on High Prairie Road, MacFarland Road, Oakridge/Westfir Road, Fish Hatchery Road and Salmon Creek Road. You will likely see smoke in the air when we burn. For your safety, the Dead Mountain Trail is subject to temporary closures due to the proximity of logging and burning activity. After the projects are complete, while not highly visible from the town, your home will be safer from wildfire.

How many acres will you be burning?

We have a total of approximately 1,500 acres to burn when thinning is complete, and will be spreading the work out over several years. In 2018, we expect to conduct prescribed burns on approximately 200 acres outside of Westfir and 40 acres on the east side of High Prairie near Oakridge.

How do you manage smoke?

We plan prescribed burns when we have the best opportunity to minimize smoke impacts, and for smoke to be carried away from the area. Additionally, we are sensitive to air quality issues and avoid prescribed burning during red and yellow days, and adhere to Oregon Smoke Management directives. We also cover all of our debris piles to ensure that they burn cleaner.

What if the fire escapes?

We have several lines of defense set up to keep the prescribed burns from escaping. We will have fire line built completely around the unit, with hose line as well. There will be several crews of firefighters working during the burns, and they will monitor the sites daily.

Can I do anything to help?

Residents can Firewise their properties to make them more defensible in the event of a wildfire. There may be grants to help you complete this work. Contact Oregon Department of Forestry at (541)726-3588 for more information. We can also use your help explaining the goal of this project to your friends and neighbors.

Where can I get more information?

If you have any questions or concerns about this project, please call us at the Middle Fork Ranger District: 541-782-2283. We will be posting updates on our Facebook and Twitter sites, like and follow us @willamettenf.

This project was planned cooperatively with the City of Oakridge, Emergency Services Department, the Hazeldell Rural Fire Protection District, the City of Westfir, and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) in 2007-2008.