

Joint Chiefs' Funding at Work: Improving Landscapes and Protecting Communities

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Since 2014, a partnership between the USDA Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service has improved the health and resiliency of forest ecosystems and mitigated wildfire threats where public and private lands meet. So far, the United States Department of Agriculture has invested more than \$247 million in the partnership, known as the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership. One of the projects that received funding is the Greater La Pine Basin Cohesive Strategy Project. The local collaborative effort addressed the threat of wildland fire across federal, state, and private lands, increased forest resiliency, restored forest habitat, and ensured high-quality water in the upper Deschutes Basin of Oregon. Much of the project focused on removing overcrowded, dead, dying, or diseased trees, which forestry professionals know as hazardous fuels reduction. The project included outreach and education to assist local communities in becoming more fire-adapted. About 10,000 people live around this fire-prone landscape.

Nearly 20 diverse partners worked together on this 345-thousand-acre project southwest of Bend, Oregon, on the Deschutes National Forest. Through this type of shared stewardship, the Forest Service and NRCS are coming together with tribal governments, states, and other partners to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire on state, federal and private lands. These projects are more important than



Partners look at a tree stand on the Greater La Pine Basin Cohesive Strategy Project, USDA Forest Service photo

ever. More frequent and intense wildfires have increased risks to lives, homes, and communities, threatening the foundations of rural prosperity, especially in the West. Vegetation treatments and prescribed fire are among the most effective ways to lessen wildfire risks while also creating jobs and protecting prosperous rural communities.

In July 2020, just a year after the project wrapped up, the Rosland Road Fire was detected on the Deschutes National Forest, outside of La Pine, Oregon. The fire grew quickly in hot and dry conditions, threatening the nearby community of Newberry Estates. Fortunately, firefighters were helped when the fire moved into an area on the forest that had been treated to reduce hazardous fuels as part of the Greater La Pine Basin Joint Chiefs' Project. This treated area

helped slow fire activity and allowed firefighters better, safer opportunities to engage the fire, compared to nearby untreated areas that experienced more severe, destructive fire activity. Firefighters were able to contain the Rosland Fire Road at 393 acres. You can watch a video about this fuels treatment success story here.

Starting each fall as weather conditions permit and continuing again in the spring, projects like this happen with federal, state, and local partners across the country to help reduce wildfire risk. The Department of Agriculture and the Forest Service recently announced a 10-year strategy to confront the wildfire crisis and improve forest resilience. The agency will work with partners over the next decade to treat up to an additional 20 million acres on National Forest System lands and up to an additional 30

million acres of other Federal, State, Tribal, and private lands.

The new strategy will sustain and restore healthy, resilient fire-adapted ecosystems; helping communities in fire-prone landscapes adapt to inevitable wildland fires. In some communities, planned prescribed fire is the best solution to prevent damage to property and can ultimately save lives.

[Forest Health partners](#), [wildfire](#), [fuel reduction](#), [treatment](#)



Marking a tree for a thinning on the Greater La Pine Basin Cohesive Strategy Project, USDA Forest Service photo

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