

NORTHEAST OREGON

FIREWISE COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

neighbors working together and taking action to reduce their wildfire risk



Lostine Canyon Community

Lostine, Oregon (Wallowa County)

Latitude: 45.4874° N **Longitude:** 117.4296° W



DATE SUBMITTED: April 6, 2019

This is a Firewise Community Wildfire Risk Assessment – a key step in becoming a Firewise Community through the Firewise Community USA Recognition Program prepared for the Lostine Canyon Community in Lostine, Oregon. The layout of the Assessment is as follows:

I. Overview	3
II. Firewise Assessment Process & Participants.....	6
ASSESSMENT PROCESS.....	6
ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANTS.....	8
III. Defining your Firewise Community	9
LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION.....	9
COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION	15
IV. Community Risk Assessment Observations	17
OBSERVATIONS	17
POSITIVE MODIFICATIONS SEEN IN THE COMMUNITY	19
V. Recommendations	22
VI. Next Steps.....	27
FIREWISE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN	28
FIREWISE COMMUNITY INTERESTED LANDOWNERS.....	28
WHERE TO GET HELP	29
RESOURCES.....	30
POTENTIAL FIREWISE COMMUNITY PROJECT IDEAS.....	31
TALKING ABOUT “FIREWISE COMMUNITIES” TO OTHERS.....	33

Prepared By:

Firewise and Natural Resource Consultants Irene Jerome, Ed Baird, Jenny Reinhardt with assistance from the Oregon Department of Forestry, Wallowa Resources, and the Wallowa County Community Wildfire Protection Committee in collaboration with the Lostine Canyon Community landowners

I. Overview

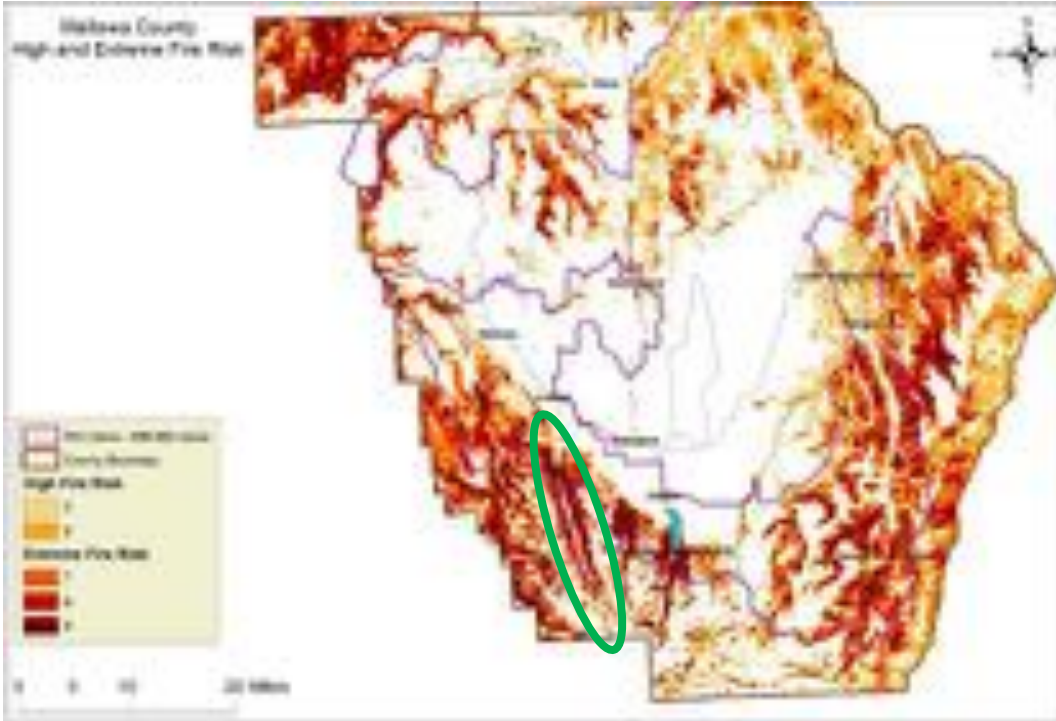
Historically, Northeast Oregon was managed naturally with fire and is considered a **fire prone landscape**. Whether caused naturally or by humans, fires are a regular occurrence, and are projected to become more frequent in the future. As our communities continue to grow, more people and more homes are exposed in these high fire prone areas.

The good news is that unlike floods, hurricanes or earthquakes, there are simple and often inexpensive ways to make our homes, lands, and communities safer from wildfire. With a good understanding of wildfire hazards, what causes homes to burn, and mitigation strategies, community residents can effectively reduce the wildfire risk and potential losses to their homes and neighborhoods - and improve their land's health at the same time. Wildfire does not stop at a property's boundaries – and in order to prepare our land to withstand a wildfire – we need to be managing for wildfire across ownership boundaries.

One way of doing this is by becoming a **“Firewise Community”**, a community of landowners dedicated to preparing for a wildfire and reducing their collective risk of wildfire. In fact, neighbors working with neighbors taking ownership in reducing wildfire risks has proven to be the most effective tool in helping communities survive a wildfire. For example, Pine Creek Community near John Day, Oregon – a community very similar to the Lostine Canyon Community, became a Firewise Community and implemented its recommendations prior to the 2015 Canyon Creek Complex Fire. While other communities affected by the wildfire lost over 40 homes, no homes were lost within the Firewise Community area because their area burned with much lower fire severity. This was attributed to the pre-work that they had all done as a community.

In Wallowa County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan the **Lostine Canyon Community (see Map 1 below)** was designated as a community in **“extreme danger” of wildfire** (see Map 2 below). Landowners in the community reached out to wildfire preparedness partners in 2018 to learn about becoming a “Firewise Community” in an effort to reduce their community's collective risk of wildfire.





Maps 1 & 2. Wallowa County, Lostine Canyon Community; Vicinity Map for State of Oregon. Wallowa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan areas of Extreme Wildfire Risk – including the Lostine Canyon Community.

The **National Fire Protection Association’s “Firewise USA”** recognition program is designed to teach people how to live with wildfire and increase their home and property’s chance of survival through proactive actions, while encouraging neighbors to work together to reduce losses and damage.

The **Community Wildfire Risk Assessment** is an important step in the Firewise USA Recognition process (see “Becoming a Firewise Community”). It is a tool to help residents and community members understand their wildfire risk at the community level and engage their community in risk reduction efforts. The assessment speaks to the general conditions of the overall community and does not provide details on each individual property.

This Community Wildfire Risk Assessment was done in collaboration with the Oregon Department of Forestry, Lostine Fire Chief, Wallowa Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service, members of the Wallowa Community Wildfire Protection Plan Committee, and local forestry consultants to assess the overall risk of wildfire in the Lostine Canyon Community and to identify proactive steps the community will take to reduce their risk.

“It is important to recognize that in high fire prone areas fires will start, fires will burn, and some fires will become large in nature. However, being prepared for these fires will improve how fire managers, landowners, and ecosystems respond to the wildfire event.” - Wallowa County Wildfire Protection Plan, 2018

BECOMING A FIREWISE COMMUNITY

Group of landowners wants to reduce their wildfire risk & prepare for a potential wildfire



Landowners reach out to fire & natural resource partners and engage neighbors in their community



Complete a Community Wildfire Risk Assessment



Create a Firewise Community Working Group



Complete a Firewise Community Action Plan



Have an Annual Firewise Day



Invest \$24.14 per each property (value of 1 volunteer hour)



Submit the Firewise Community Application



Complete new Assessment Every 5 years to Check on Progress

WHY BECOME A FIREWISE COMMUNITY?

Fire is part of the landscape – the Lostine Canyon Community is located in a landscape with an approximate 7 to 15 year fire return interval – meaning fires historically occurred every 7-15 years. It is not “if a fire will occur” - it is “when.” By making small changes to your home and property you can dramatically improve the chances that your home will survive a wildfire. However, wildfire does not stop at property boundaries. Neighbors working with neighbors taking ownership in reducing wildfire risks has been proven to be the most effective tool in helping communities survive a wildfire. Benefits of a Firewise community are:

- Save life and property as a direct result of homeowner action.
- Gain a more influential voice due to the power of “groups.”
- Provide access to grant opportunities only available to groups of landowners.
- Provide a more cost effective situation to hire contractors or consultants when more landowners are involved.
- Engage your neighbors through this effective tool.
- Engage only interested members of the community - Firewise is a strictly volunteer program.
- Lead through Community - Firewise is not run by the government.
- Create potential insurance incentives and discounts.
- Provide tangible links, connections and partnerships with fire, natural resource, emergency response and community assistance partners.
- Develop a central point of contact and a community plan in case of a wildfire.
- Build community connection & resilience – be prepared for other challenges and/or opportunities that come your community’s way in the future.



II. Firewise Assessment Process & Participants

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- **Initial Contact:**

An initial community assessment process was completed during Wallowa County's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) Assessment of the communities at risk for wildfire. The city of Lostine and its surrounding areas were extensively analyzed for conditions that lead to the high likelihood of a fire starting and the potential negative impacts that could occur if that fire burned. The Lostine Canyon Community "At Risk" analysis for the CWPP include the town of Lostine, the entire Lostine Corridor south to Lapover Ranch, the Upper and Lower Lostine Subdivision, and all the farm lands between the town of Lostine and the canyon.

What is a CWPP? A CWPP is a plan developed by a community or county in an area at-risk from wildfire. The *Community Wildfire Protection Planning* process is the collaboration between communities and agencies interested in reducing wildfire risk. In addition to enhancing safety and reducing risk to human structures and watersheds, communities with CWPPs are also given priority for USFS and BLM funded hazardous fuels reduction projects as authorized under the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA). In the end, CWPPs have helped communities better protect themselves for fire risk and better manage their forested landscape. The *Wallowa County CWPP* is located at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/FirePreventionDocuments/Wallowa%20CWPP.pdf>

- **Community Meetings & Progress:**

Lostine community members approached the Community Wildfire Protection Plan Committee and requested a briefing of the big picture findings regarding wildfire risk in the city of Lostine and surround communities. April 13, 2017 was the first meeting with members of the Lostine Canyon communities at the Lostine Grange. In attendance were 23 local residents, 4 Oregon Department of Forestry Representatives, 5 U.S. Forest Service (USFS) representatives, and 2 Wallowa Resources employees.



Photo 1. April 13, 2017 meeting with the Lostine Canyon Community at the Lostine Grange.

In November 2017 a smaller group of Lostine Canyon Community landowners held a meeting at a Lostine Canyon landowner's home asking to learn about the benefit of the Firewise Community Program and the process of becoming a

Firewise Community. The Lostine Fire Chief, 2 Wallowa Resources employees, the state fire marshal, and ten local residents were in attendance. While they were not able to attend, ODF and USFS, both members of the Wallowa CWPP Committee sent their support for the effort. At this meeting and two subsequent meetings the local residents decided to begin the steps of becoming a Firewise Community, including conducting their Firewise Community Risk Assessment.

The Firewise Community Risk Assessment was arranged within the Lostine Canyon Community and took place January 29th 2018. The Assessment covered the entire Lostine Canyon Community and community-wide challenges and opportunities; it did not assess any individual homeowner property issues. The Assessment was conducted in partnership with Fire



Photo 2. Lostine Canyon Wildfire Risk Assessment January 2018.

Management Personnel, Oregon Department of Forestry stewardship foresters, local landowners, Alyssa Cudmore (My Blue Mountain Woodlands Coordinator), Irene Jerome (Firewise Coordinator, Grant County), CWPP committee members, and approximately 12 landowners from the Lostine Canyon Community. The purpose of the field trip was to visit the community to discuss and identify issues that would need to be addressed in an effort to properly prepare for wildfire events. Structural firefighter Gary Willis provided structural protection considerations adjacent to structures while Oregon Department of Forestry forester, Tim Cudmore, generated discussion on fuels mitigation and characteristics that promote and reduce fire behavior.

To help individual landowners determine how to reduce their wildfire risk on their properties Gary Willis provided free Structural & Defensible Space Assessments for 13 interested landowners and ODF Stewardship Foresters Tim Cudmore & Eric Carlson provided Property Assessments to discuss broader fuels mitigation and forest health issues for 10 interested landowners.

On April 14, 2018 the greater Lostine Canyon Community met at the Lostine Presbyterian Church to learn about the proposed Firewise Community, hear about the potential insurance

benefits of becoming a Firewise Community, share lessons learned from the Structural & Property assessments, and hear from landowners who had completed a forest health thinning project. In attendance were 25 landowners, 3 ODF Foresters, 1 Wallowa Resources staff, and My Blue Mountains Woodland Partnership Coordinator.

In celebration of National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day, May 5, 2018, the Lostine Community met at a local landowner’s home to walk through an example of a Structural Assessment. The focus of the event was on “Firebrand Ignition of Structures.” The discussion of the day covered home loss due to firebrands starting spot fires and coming into contact with the structures. Present that day were 15 landowners; 1 Wallowa Resources staff member; My Blue Mountains Woodland Partnership Coordinator; and the Lostine Fire Chief.



Photo 3. Lostine Canyon Community meeting on 2018 National Community Wildfire Preparedness Day.

In May 2018 the Community applied for and received a \$500 Community Grant to go toward a community-led Firewise project.

WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANTS

Name	Role/Organization	Phone	Email
Bobbie Bull	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2502	rjrdbull@earthlink.net
Alyssa Cudmore	Wallowa Resources – My Blue Mountains Woodland Partnership	503-428-3777	alyssa@wallowaresources.org
Tim Cudmore	Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)	541-263-2756	Timothy.J.Cudmore@oregon.gov
Fred Brockman	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2050	fred_brockman@yahoo.com
Mike & Monica Eng	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2124	mikeeng@mac.com
Mary Hayward	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2494	
Irene Jerome	Grant County Firewise	541-620-4466	ijeromejnc@gmail.com

Name	Role/Organization	Phone	Email
Mickey McClendon	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2068	mickeymcclendon1@msn.com
George and Cheryl Oja	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2055	cgoja@me.com
Ron Polk	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-263-1774	rpolk@vcu.edu
Jenny Reinhardt	CWPP Contractor	541-910-0160	jenny.osu2learn@gmail.com
Rick Welch	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-569-2144	rewelch176@gmail.com
Gary & Sue Willis	Lostine Canyon Homeowner	541-490-1150	gwillis5050@gmail.com

III. Defining your Firewise Community

LANDSCAPE DESCRIPTION

The town of Lostine sits at the confluence of the Lostine River with the Wallowa River. At this juncture, the relatively flat valley was created by the meanderings of the Wallowa River. The river floodplain created rich farmland. Moving south along the Lostine River from town, the Wallowa Mountains abruptly rise on both sides of the river at the Lostine River Canyon. The mouth of the canyon is approximately one mile wide with primarily grass slopes and pastures used for livestock grazing. The

densely forested canyon combined with a narrow flood plain and steep canyon all create the conditions for extreme fire risk.

Highway 82 is the primary travel route into the county and it travels through the center of the town of Lostine. The Lostine Canyon Community is located south of Highway 82 approximately six miles up the Lostine River Road. The Lostine River Road continues south up the canyon for another 12 miles through the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest to the end of the road and the Two Pan Trailhead, a very popular access point for hikers, campers, and packers into the Eagle Cap Wilderness.

Lostine Canyon is to the south of the Lostine community and is managed by the Forest Service as part of the Eagle Cap Wilderness. A thin corridor in the canyon bottom along the Lostine River is the only “non-wilderness” management area. RY Timber lands border the west side of the Firewise Community boundary - with approximately 10,000 acres in industrial ownership. Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Service owns approximately 1,000 acres on the southeast side of the community (see map 3 below).



Looking south
toward the
Lostine Canyon
Community



Map 3. Approximate boundaries of the Lostine Canyon Firewise Community & surrounding landscape.

- **Common Vegetation Types**

The Lostine Canyon is a “V” shaped canyon supporting grass and timber on the east side of the canyon and heavily timbered stands on the west side of the canyon. The west side of the canyon has more continuous timbered stands with greater down woody material present on the forest floor. These dense stocking levels are expected to make successful suppression difficult. Opportunities for fire spread into the tree canopies will produce high intensity fires and significant spotting (hot embers being transported through the air and igniting fires in advance of the main fire). Both sides of the canyon are more heavily vegetated than historically, due to the absence of periodic fire.



Photo 4. Eastside of the Lostine River – slopes with a west facing aspect.



Photo 5. Westside of the Lostine River – slopes with an east facing aspect.

- **Topography**

At the Upper Lostine community the elevation is approximately 3,900 feet; from there, the west slope rises sharply to an elevation of 7,800 feet over a distance of two miles from river to ridge. The canyon has only one access road which poses serious threats to fire fighter and public safety.

- **Wind Exposure**

Topography heavily influences local wind patterns. The canyon and river valley topography create local prevailing surface wind patterns that shift from daytime (upslope) winds to night (downslope) winds. Additionally, winds aloft are responsible for more powerful wind events or gusts that typically originate from the west or southwest.

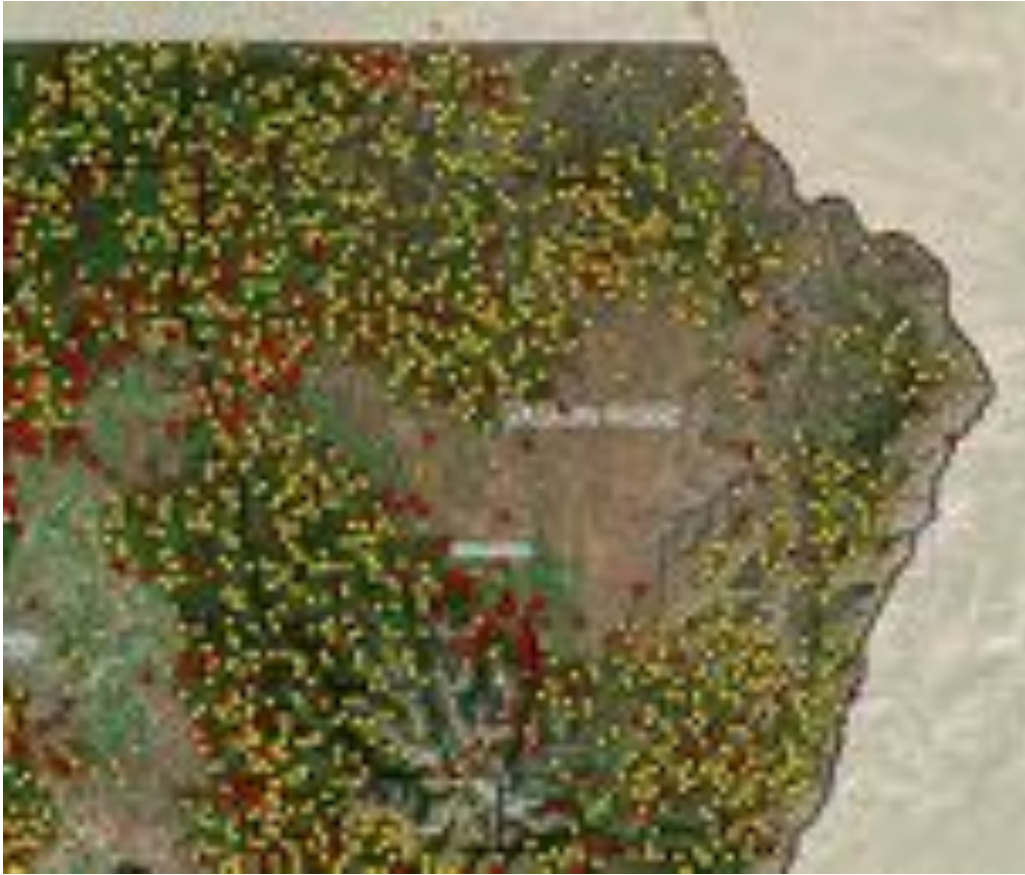
- History of Wildfire

The US Forest Service and Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) coordinate to collect data on wildfire starts. Data recorded between 1985 and 2015 (30 year period) show a high frequency of fire starts in the Lostine Canyon. According to their records, there were a total of 58 fire starts with 28% human caused and 72% lightning. This equates to approximately 1.9 fires per year, nearly two fires annually. Maps 4, 5 & 6 below show fire starts in Wallowa County, and the location and dates of large perimeter wildfires near the Lostine Canyon Community.

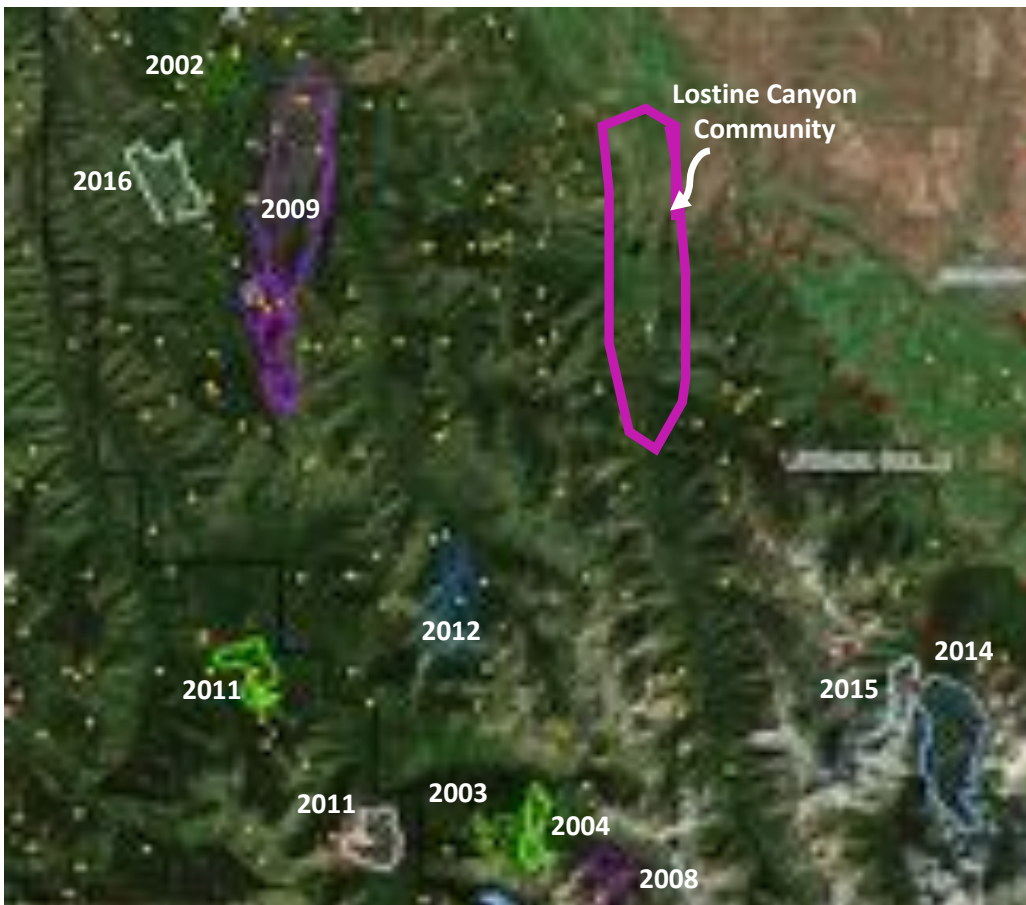
The narrow canyon of the Lostine Canyon can serve as a “chimney” for unplanned fire events resulting in extreme burning conditions that can directly compromise recreationists’ or community members’ lives, local water quality, fish habitat, as well as homes and structures. According to the Wallowa CWPP, the mouth of the canyon, where the Lostine Canyon community is located, is expected to require indirect attack with support of multi-suppression resources including aerial equipment. Fire spread rates are expected to occur at more than 1,000 feet per hour over 35% of the community at risk area; 53% of the area is expected to exhibit some type of canopy involvement (torching, crowning); and 47% of the area will be difficult to suppress.



Map 4. Large perimeter fire locations across Wallowa County 2002-2017, and approximate location of Lostine Canyon Community. Shapes indicate the extent of the fire (Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer).



Map 5. Fire locations Wallowa County 1992-2017 human caused (**red**) and lightning caused (**yellow**) (Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer).



Map 6. Large perimeter fire locations and fire starts near Lostine Canyon Community 2002-2017. Shapes show the extent of the fire; fire starts: human caused (**red**) and lightning caused (**yellow**). (Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer).

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Firewise Community Name: Lostine Canyon Community

City: Lostine

County: Wallowa

State: Oregon

Longitude: 117.4296° W

Latitude: 45.4874° N

Area (acres/square miles): ~approximately 15 square miles or 9,600 acres

Boundary Description: Approximate boundaries of the Lostine Canyon Firewise Community.



Landowner Community: The Lostine Canyon Community is a combination of part-time residents, full time residents, and vacant properties along with a few miscellaneous vacation rentals. Properties average from less than an acre to over 1,000 acres. Approximately 110 landowners are located within the general boundaries of the Firewise Community, and approximately 50% of those landowners do not live in the canyon as full time residents. The area of the Lostine Canyon Community encompasses approximately 9,600 acres of land. Landowners located in the upper portion of the canyon, towards the USFS boundary, are members of the High Lostine Homeowners Association. The homeowners' association has a Fire Preparedness Committee which meets on a regular basis to coordinate fire preparedness activities.

Number of dwelling units: There are approximately 120 structures located throughout the community.

Other: There is a 35-acre community parcel – owned collectively by the members of the High Lostine Homeowner's Association members.

IV. Community Risk Assessment Observations

OBSERVATIONS

The Lostine Canyon Community supports a variety of property owners ranging from full time residents, part-time, to absentee landowners. This in itself makes coordination more challenging. However, using mailings, word of mouth, email, and meetings when landowners have been in town – the Lostine Community landowners have managed to band together to collectively think about how to address wildfire risk more effectively together.

Several issues exist within the communities that could potentially impact fire protection. Some of these overarching concerns are listed below.

1. Adjacent Land. The Lostine Canyon Community borders the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. Most of surrounding national forest land is part of the Eagle Cap Wilderness Area. This is particularly challenging and important for residents of these communities due to the land management restrictions on types of treatment that can be conducted in a wilderness area. As a result it is even more important that landowners take a proactive stance on wildfire mitigation actions.



2. Locked Gates & Roads. While doing an overall assessment there were several locked gated access roads throughout the community. These gated roads can delay fire protection response and access should a fire occur behind the gate. Several gates were locked at the time of the assessment while other gates existed but were open. Many of these gated roads are dead ends and bordered by heavy dense timber stands that could potentially compromise homeowner and firefighter safety.



3. Home Distribution not mapped and Rural Address Markers not visible. Peppered throughout the area are residential homes tucked back in the timber without indicators that a home or structure exists. The main gauge of the number of structures is the mailboxes lining the road side. Rural address markers are not clearly visible for emergency services personnel. This could lead to emergency personnel unnecessarily driving down a road during a fire situation.



4. Bridge Access. Some of the bridge access will not accommodate a fire engine of any size which will limit suppression capabilities and response times. Other bridges may have weight restrictions.



5. Debris on homes. Heavy pine needles and vegetative debris accumulation was observed to occur very near or up against homes structures, and fuel tanks. Needles and debris collect on roofs, around the foundations, on decks, etc. Homes also have an accumulation of stored and natural debris around the structures; firewood stacked next to buildings, propane tanks, household belongings, etc.



6. Dense vegetation against structures. A number of homes had dense vegetation directly against the structures, under the decks and around propane tanks.



7. Forest in need of fuels reduction. Many forested areas near homes are dense, multi-storied and in need of fuels reduction. Vegetation adjacent to structures is an issue that includes the entire Home Ignition Zone out well beyond the structures.



8. Road & Driveway Access. Roads and driveways are in need of brushing to allow safe access for both fire apparatus and residential exit route if necessary. Many of these roads are narrow and do not appear to have turnouts or turn around areas for emergency vehicles. Many roads to homes are limited to the type and size of vehicle they can accommodate. Many roads in the area are “single way access roads” with no alternative travel route. This includes the main Lostine Canyon Road itself, which runs 12 miles upstream, to the south, to the Two Pan Trail Head. This trail head is a popular destination for recreationists venturing into the Eagle Cap Lakes Basin. On Labor Day 2018, more than 200 vehicles were counted, overflowing the trail head parking lot onto the Lostine River Road.

9. Livestock. Many landowners have livestock and pets. Locating and loading animals and maneuverings multiple trailers out of the Lostine Road in the event of a wildfire would be difficult.



V. Recommendations

When adequately prepared, a house can likely withstand a wildfire without the intervention of the fire service. Further, a house and its surrounding community can be both Firewise and compatible with the area's ecosystem. The Firewise Communities/USA program is designed to enable communities to achieve a high level of protection against Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fire loss even as a sustainable ecosystem balance is maintained.

- Fire can reach your home in one of two ways: on the ground or from the air. On the ground, a fire will burn anything in its path - plants, patio furniture, wooden decks or fences. The key is to interrupt a continuous path of fuel that leads to your house. From the air, burning embers called firebrands can travel a mile or more in advance of a fire. Firebrands can land on and around your house. Your home's exterior plays an important role in preventing a fire. See video - *Your Home Can Survive A Wildfire*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL_syp1ZScM



A homeowner/community must focus attention on the home ignition zone and eliminate the fire's potential relationship with the house. Research tells us that if we want to reduce the risk of wildfire burning homes, we need to focus on the home and its immediate surroundings up to 200 feet. This is called the Home Ignition Zone. This can be accomplished by disconnecting the house from high and/or low-intensity fire that could occur around it. To learn more about this zone & for a free Structural Assessment for your house & its surrounding structures – contact Gary Willis @ gwillis5050@gmail.com or 541-490-1150.



- Historically, the Willowa Valley was been managed with fire and was considered a *fire-adapted ecosystem*. This means that fires, whether caused by lightning or intentional burning by Native Americans, kept these forests in balance and thriving. Frequent, low intensity fires would burn through the forests maintaining a complex and diverse ecosystem. Because of fire, much of the forested landscape was far more open than it is today. Over most of the 20th century fire was largely eliminated from the landscape. The lack of natural disturbance has left unnaturally high tree densities and hazardous fuels throughout the forests. As a result, when a wildfire is ignited -

it has the potential to burn at a higher severity and over a larger area than it might have in the past. One way to reduce this large-scale wildfire risk on your property outside this “home ignition zone” and to mimic Wallowa County’s historic fires - is through “restoration forestry.” In restoration forestry, fire-prone and diseased trees are removed, leaving more space for healthier trees to grow. Further if a wildfire took place, it would allow the fire to move through the landscape at a lower intensity without killing all of the trees. Snags or dead trees, and smaller vegetation or “flashy fuels” may be preserved as habitat for wildlife depending on the landowner’s goals. For a free Property or Forest Health Assessment Contact ODF Forester, Eric Carlson @ Eric.C.Carlson@oregon.gov or 541-263-2890.



- The Oregon Department (ODF) of Forestry Protection Unit for Wallowa County is responsible for all wildland fire suppression on private lands, as well as all non-federal public lands. These private lands take into account much of the Wallowa Valley’s foothills, agricultural lands, and grass prairies with some overlap with city and rural protection areas. ODF has responsibility for a total of 741,808 acres of private lands for wildland fire protection. Summer thunderstorms often result in multiple fire starts that deplete an already limited amount of firefighting resources. As a result, homes in Lostine communities are extremely vulnerable, which can be exacerbated depending on where agency firefighting resources are located at any given time, especially when resources are stretched thin locally, regionally, and nationally due to other fire activity across the northwest states or nation. Homeowners must be proactive in creating defensible space in and around their homes.
- The closest protection agency is located in the City of Lostine, staffed entirely of volunteer firefighters. Establishing additional water sources in the Lostine Canyon Community can expedite turnaround time for firefighting resources. There are fire hydrants within the community (located in the upper section of the Canyon in the High Lostine Homeowners’ Association). In a fire event, firefighting crews can use the 2.5-inch ports on the fire hydrants to access water after consultation between the captain(s) and a High Lostine water committee member.
- Residents in most areas of the Lostine Canyon Community have no alternative access routes in the event of the need for evacuation. Access routes could potentially be cut off leaving individuals’ lives at risk. Developing alternative routes and/or quick alert systems for residents

would be beneficial. Landowners making contact with fire professionals are necessary to determine safe engine access, road navigation, and adequate turn around area.

- Recreationists using the trail head to the Lakes Basin could possibly complicate fire suppression efforts at the communities. Firefighting objectives during an incident could shift from structure protection to evacuation and rescue. This re-enforces the need for landowners to take ownership of fire mitigation efforts.
- The amount of locked gates on several roads in the communities gives reason for concern when fire response is concerned. A locked gate will delay actions of suppression resources. It would be prudent for communities and fire response personnel to have a plan for access to the roads including a map of which roads are gated, who can have the combinations/key, circumstances when it would be appropriate for fire and emergency personnel to have access.
- Vegetation in communities can be modified using a variety of tools that include mowing, watering property, thinning of timbered stands, pruning of trees, etc. Coordination with local protection agencies is the best approach on best fire mitigation practices. This includes Home Ignition Zone, road access vegetation, and properties outside the home ignition zone, if deemed necessary for protection of life and property. Structural and Forest assessments can be done on your property contact Gary Willis @ gwillis5050@gmail.com or 541-490-1150. Help identify community members who would like to do fire mitigation but do not have the means or knowledge to begin the process.
- Water access is limited in the subdivisions. Hydrants are installed throughout the High Lostine Subdivision; however, water storage capacity to supply the hydrants is limited. The small tributaries in the community that run in the spring months are dry creek beds by the end of August. There is a small lake privately owned at the mouth of the canyon, as well as a few ponds that would be good locations to draft water or for use by a helicopter with bucket. The Lostine River divides parts of the subdivision; however, access points for drafting should be identified, mapped and made known to fire resources. A community Engine is stationed in Lostine with local homeowners receiving Engine Operation training.
- It is important to ensure homeowner preparedness in the event of an evacuation. Considerations should include: What are the plans for livestock and pets? Does anyone need more time to evacuate due to medical issues? Does anyone have critical medication needs? Is their important paper work that needs to be readily available?
- Communications is variable. Which residents still have house phones, cell phones? Is there cell coverage throughout the communities and if not, where are the hotspots? Are the hotspots known and identified on maps?

- There is no known data base for GPS points for structures. Development of a plan to map and GPS all homes and structures will aid emergency workers during fire situations.
- Improvements are needed on rural address markers. Are they established, accurate, and visible?

POSITIVE MODIFICATIONS SEEN IN THE COMMUNITY

The following photographs were taken in the Lostine Canyon community and are examples of good Firewise practices.

1. Green lush grass around structures will keep the grass at a high moisture content and eliminate potential for ground fire spread when kept green.



2. Thinning of stands to remove ladder fuels and open the over story canopy to reduce potential for fire spread into the tree crowns. Beyond home's immediate vicinity or ignition zone – leaving patchy vegetation and tree cover to let the fire move freely and to provide habitat for wildlife.



3. High Lostine Home Owner's Association Fire Prevention Committee has established hose caches in 50-gallon drums stationed throughout the community with instructions.



4. Well signed driveway entries with open vegetation, clear access, and legible address markers.



VI. Next Steps

Ten members of the community have volunteered to serve on a Lostine Canyon Community Firewise Committee. Their tasks will include: coordinating and partnering with local wildlands and structural firefighting agencies; coordinating and partnering with local wildfire prevention and planning agencies and organizations; coordinating communication with other community members about Firewise practices and resources; developing a Firewise Community Action Plan; planning and conducting an annual Wildfire Community Preparedness Day event; updating the Action Plan at least every three years; updating the Community Wildfire Risk Assessment at least every five years; and completing the annual reporting and renewal requirements to maintain recognition as a Firewise Community.

LOSTINE CANYON COMMUNITY FIREWISE COMMITTEE

Name	Phone	Email	Address
Fred Brockman	541-569-2050	fred_brockman@yahoo.com	64210 Tamarack Rd
Dick Bull	509-628-0818; 541-569-2502	rjrbull@earthlink.net	64474 Lostine River Rd
Mike & Monica Eng	541-569-2124	mikeeng@mac.com	64705 Lostine River Rd
Ron Polk	541-263-1774	rpolk@vcu.edu	64403 Lostine River Rd
John Pollard	435-640-4644	jrpollard@me.com	83850 Painted Pony Ln
Mickey McClendon	541-569-2068	Mickeymclendon1@msn.com	64255 Tamarack Rd
Gary Willis	541-490-1150	Gwillis5050@gmail.com	64446 Lostine River Rd
Jackie and Ron Wagner	541-324-0299; 541-569-2301	rjnwagner@live.com	64944 Fir

LOSTINE CANYON FIREWISE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

To be developed by the Lostine Canyon Firewise Committee in 2019.

LOSTINE CANYON LANDOWNERS INTERESTED IN FIREWISE

The following landowners have either participated in a Lostine Canyon Firewise Community event, or have expressed an interest in learning more about the Firewise program:

Bobbie Atkins and Ron Hayes	64721 Eagle Rd
Howard and Linda Banks	64829 Granger Rd
Jennifer Barden	64278 Lostine River Rd
Gay Behnke	64276 Tamarack Rd
Fred and Odette Brockman	64210 Tamarack Rd
Bobbie and Dick Bull	64474 Lostine River Rd
Nancy Clarke and Jim Dameron	64353 Lostine River Rd
Rowan Cypher and John Pollard	83850 Painted Pony Ln
Mike and Monica Eng	64705 Lostine River Rd
Donna Goebel	64855 Granger Rd
Kyle Greenley	64217 Lostine River Rd
Mary Hayward	64853 Granger Rd
Laura Lewis	64760 Eagle Rd
Kate Loftus	64707 Lostine River Rd
Mickey and Sandy McClendon	64253 Tamarack Rd
Matt and Lora Melchiorson	64872 Fir Rd
Steve Morris	64452 Lostine River Rd
Cheryl and George Oja	64191 Tamarack Rd
Ron and Terry Polk	64403 Lostine River Rd
Dennis and Loyal Prazeau	64910 Fir Rd
Carey and Joel Roth	64382 Tamarack Rd

Jacqueline and Ron Wagner	64944 Fir Rd
Rick Welch	64368 Tamarack Rd
Paul and Kathleen Wecks	64280 Tamarack Rd
Milan and Karen Westenskow	64801 Granger Rd
Gary and Sue Willis	6446 Lostine River Rd

WHERE TO GET HELP

Structural Wildfire Risk Assessments for your home and structures:

Gary Willis
gwillis5050@gmail.com
541-490-1150

Property and Forest Health Assessments for your land and forests:

Eric Carlson, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF)
Eric.C.Carlson@oregon.gov
541-263-2890

Stewardship Forester – Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF):

Tim Cudmore
Oregon Dept. of Forestry
802 OR Hwy 82
Wallowa, Or 97885
541-886-2881
timothy.j.cudmore@oregon.gov

District Conservationist – Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS):

Abe Clark
Enterprise Service Center
401 NE 1st Street, Suite E
Enterprise, Or 97828
541-426-4521 Ext. 3044
abe.clark@nrcs.usda.gov

Extension Forester – Oregon State University (OSU) Extension Office:

John Punches

10507 N. McAlister Rd.
La Grande, Or 97850
541-963-1010
john.punches@oregonstate.edu

Lostine Fire Chief:

Dusty Tippit
lostinefire@gmail.com

Wallowa County Emergency Services Manager:

Paul Karvoski
541-426-4543 x165
wcdes@co.wallowa.or.us

Forest Consultants/Contractors – talk to your ODF Forester and/or visit the My Blue Mountains Woodland Consultant section on their website:

<http://www.mybluemountainswoodland.org/index.php/resources>

Wallowa Resources – My Blue Mountains Woodland Partnership Coordinator

If you know of other communities interested in becoming Firewise Communities, contact Alyssa.

Alyssa Cudmore
Wallowa Resources
401 NE First St, Suite A
Enterprise, OR 97828
503-428-3777
alyssa@wallowaresources.org

RESOURCES

- **Firewise USA Resources:**
<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildfire/Firewise-USA/Firewise-USA-Resources>
- **Wallowa County Community Wildfire Protection Plan:**
<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Fire/FirePreventionDocuments/Wallowa%20CWPP.pdf>
- **FireYour Home Can Survive A Wildfire Video:**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL_syp1ZScM
- **Living with Wildfire Video:**
www.livingwithwildfire.com
- **How to Make Your Home & Property Fire Safe:**

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/forests/wildfire/how-make-your-home-property-fire-safe>

- **Land Manager's Guide for Creating Fire Resistant Forests:**
<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9087>
- **Reducing Fire Risk on Your Forest Property:**
<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/pnw618>
- **Fire Resistant Plans for Home Landscapes - Selecting plants that may reduce your risk from wildfire:**
https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/concern/administrative_report_or_publications/pr76f369j?locale=en
- **Firewise Landscaping Checklist:**
<https://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/Firewise%20Landscaping%20Checklist.pdf>
- **Reducing Hazardous Fuels on Woodland Property:**
<https://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/Reducing%20Fire%20Risk%20on%20Your%20Forest%20Property.pdf>
- **Thin for Quality & Health, Not Spacing:**
<https://www.co.josephine.or.us/Files/Thin%20for%20Quality%20and%20Vigor%20Not%20Spacing.pdf>
- **Oregon Wildfire Explorer:**
<https://oregonexplorer.info/topics/wildfire-risk?ptopic=62>
- **Prescribed Burning:** A case study of a woodland in Southwest Oregon
<https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/em9226>
- **Story of Citizens Firewise Community in Bend, Oregon.**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=153&v=SCZUbdIdeFU

POTENTIAL FIREWISE COMMUNITY PROJECT IDEAS

- Develop Community Wildfire Response Plan with local fire officials and emergency responders.
- Join forces with neighbors and pool your resources to pay for a chipper service and host a chipping day for residents to remove excess vegetation from their property, as well as community property.
- Hold a Firewise education day that provides information about proper plant and construction choices, introduces local staff, and distributes pertinent Firewise information for the community.
- Create a fuel removal project that enlists local volunteers.

- Host a community disaster training.
- Place articles in the local paper about wildfire and the need for your community to be prepared for it. Showcase your accomplishments.
- Team up with a service, youth or religious group(s) to help lower income, disabled or elderly residents create defensible space.
- Modify HOA covenants to include Firewise concepts.
- Work with your HOA to educate and inform out-of-town property owners about wildfire risk.
- Launch a subdivision work day to create defensible space in common areas or on high risk roads adjacent to forested lands.
- Invite firefighting professionals and/or county personnel to your neighborhood meetings. Topics could be: fire season predictions, defensible space, wildfire preparedness, forest health, evacuation procedures, what to do with problematic properties, insects, tips for mitigation, low-water and fire-resistant plants, and more.
- Distribute Firewise information at community festivals.
- Include homeowner tips in community newsletters.
- Widely advertise the fire mitigation & forestry contractor list for county.

TALKING ABOUT “FIREWISE COMMUNITIES” TO OTHERS

What is the Firewise Communities Program?

Firewise Communities/USA is a national recognition program developed to recognize communities that maintain an appropriate level of fire readiness. In a Firewise community, residents understand and accept their wildfire risk, and have worked together to improve the safety and resilience of their homes and landscapes to withstand a wildfire.

Firewise offers a series of practical steps that residents can take to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire including landscaping techniques and the use of fire-resistant home construction materials. Research tells us that if we want to reduce the risk of wildfire burning homes, we need to focus on the home and its immediate surroundings up to 200 feet. This is called the Home Ignition Zone. If you would like to prepare your land outside this “home ignition zone” to reduce wildfire risk – fire resilient, and healthier forest .



Why Firewise?

Because we live in a fire-prone environment and fire agencies can't solve the problem alone. Wildfires can put dozens (even hundreds) of homes at risk simultaneously. Firefighters may not have the resources to protect each home. In fact, a wildfire may prevent firefighters from even reaching your home. As residents of Josephine County, it's our responsibility to take action to increase our homes' chances of surviving a wildfire. When a neighborhood is prepared, firefighters can focus more of their resources on the main body of the fire – as opposed to individual structures.

How Homes Ignite

Fire can reach your home in one of two ways: on the ground or from the air. On the ground, a fire will burn anything in its path - plants, patio furniture, wooden decks or fences. The key is to interrupt a continuous path of fuel that leads to your house. From the air, burning embers called firebrands can travel a mile or more in advance of a fire. Firebrands can land on and around your house. Your home's exterior plays an important role in preventing a fire.



Do I have to cut down all my trees?

Think “lean, clean and green.” Firewise encourages the use of vegetation that is healthy and green throughout the year. Deciduous trees and shrubs that drop their leaves every fall typically burn with much less intensity than evergreens, and are a better choice to plant close to your house.

Neighbors working together

In many cases, homes within a neighborhood share Home Ignition Zones. This means that the condition of your home and yard affect how well your neighbor's home will fare during a wildfire, and vice versa. Neighbors can help neighbors, and they are often inextricably linked together in their wildfire safety solutions.



Diagram courtesy of City of Ashland, Oregon

How many homes make up a community?

Firewise is designed for neighbors to work together on a smaller scale. A community could be an entire subdivision or Homeowner's Association, a ditch association, or simply a group of residents who live on a certain road, or share a common hazard. The size of your Firewise community is up to you!

How do I become a Firewise community?

Contact the Oregon Department of Forestry at Wallowa, or your local fire chief to let them know you are interested in becoming a Firewise community. There are several Firewise neighborhoods in Northeast Oregon. The program is designed for everyone! It's simple, and it doesn't need to cost a lot of money. Grants are available to assist eligible landowners with work on their property – both around their homes and the rest of their land.

Other reasons “why”:

- **Framework for Action.** Meeting the criteria for becoming a Firewise Community helps communities get organized and find direction for their wildfire safety efforts. Like the first rungs on a ladder, the criteria help get a community started toward annual, systematic action to reduce their risks from brush, grass and forest fires.
- **Learning About Wildfire.** As people go through the process, they learn about wildfire risks in the community and the simple things they can do to reduce them. They connect with experts – local fire fighters, state forestry professionals, and national researchers – to continue to learn about fire and find resources to accomplish fire-safe actions.
- **Peace of Mind.** People who work with experts to learn about wildfire and take action start to see results quickly. Knowing that they are using the best information available and actually taking steps to reduce the risk of damage from fire helps people start to feel safer in their environment and in their homes. Having a plan for what to do in the event of a fire helps people become calmer and more prepared to act quickly.
- **Community-Building.** As neighbors get together to do work, often meeting one another for the first time, they build a stronger bond with each other. Activity can help rally people to a common cause for the good of the neighborhood. This strengthening of community ties can benefit residents in many ways, and is especially helpful during an emergency.

- **Citizen Pride.** While the work can be fun, it isn't always easy. Neighbors work very hard in communities to remove brush and debris, clean up common areas, and dispose of green waste. They are rightly proud when they achieve national recognition for their efforts.
- **Publicity.** The program provides communities with metal signs, a plaque and other materials that can be presented publicly to honor their status as a Firewise USA recognition site. These recognition ceremonies are great ways to shine the spotlight on community efforts. News media find this to be a great story to cover, and the national program features community stories regularly on the website and in its publications. All this publicity results not only in satisfaction for the residents involved, but also provides one more way to reach large numbers of people with information about wildfire safety.
- **Access to Funding and Assistance.** Preference is sometimes given to Firewise USA sites over other candidates when allocations of grant money are made for wildfire safety or fuel mitigation. The reason is that there are invariably more requests than available funds when grants are available through state or federal agencies. If requests are equally worthy, some officials tend to have more confidence in communities that have demonstrated the foresight of becoming a recognized Firewise USA site.