



NEWS

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OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY
SOUTHWEST OREGON DISTRICT
5286 Table Rock Rd
Central Point, OR 97502

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SOUTHWEST OREGON NEWS MEDIA

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WILDFIRE PREVENTION LAW PUBLIC MEETINGS SCHEDULED

The Jackson County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee and the Oregon Department of Forestry have sent letters to more than 13,000 landowners within Jackson county informing them of five public meetings to be held in January 2011. The meetings are to explain the land identification and classification process performed by the committee, as required by the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act, often referred to as Senate Bill 360.

Here are the dates and locations of the public meetings:

- January 11, 6:30 p.m., Historic Ashland Armory, 208 Oak St., Ashland
- January 13, 6:30 p.m., Bigham Knoll ballroom, 525 East E St., Jacksonville
- January 18, 6:30 p.m., Rogue River High School cafeteria, 1898 East Evans Creek Rd., Rogue River
- January 20, 6:30 p.m., Jackson County Fire District #4, 21200 Hwy 62, Shady Cove
- January 25, 6:30 p.m., North Medford High School performing arts theater, 1900 North Keene Way Drive, Medford

Following the meetings, the committee will hold a public hearing. At the hearing, the committee will collect final comment from the public about its draft findings. The hearing is scheduled for:

- February 1, 1:00 p.m., Jackson County Auditorium, 7520 Table Rock Rd., White City

The owners of lots affected by the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act are required to create fuel breaks around their homes and other structures to make homes and other buildings more defensible against wildfire. No fuel reduction treatment is required on unimproved lands.

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Fuel reduction treatment around homes has proved effective in protecting homes against wildfire damage or destruction. Wildfires in 2009 threatened homes in south Ashland and east Medford, and because of fuel-reduction treatment around homes firefighters were able to keep losses to a minimum.

In general, the lands affected by the Act in Jackson County are urban fringe areas, and rural areas where residential density is at least four residences per 40 acres.

Maps and a list of the lots included within forestland-urban interface areas in Jackson County are posted online at www.swofire.oregon.gov, and are available for review at the Oregon Department of Forestry's Medford Unit office at 5286 Table Rock Rd.

The Jackson County Forestland-Urban Interface Classification Committee reconvened in spring 2010 to review the maps of identified forestland-urban interface areas created by the 2004 committee. The 2004 committee identified 12,007 lots within Jackson County's forestland-urban interface areas. The 2010 committee increased the number of lots to 13,784, mostly by adding lots around the fringes of existing forestland-urban interface areas.

The committee also assigns a fire-risk classification to every forestland-urban interface area, which is composed of a group of residential lots. The classifications range from "low" to "extreme." Most of the forestland-urban interface areas in Jackson County are classified "extreme" due to the likelihood of wildfires breaking out in these areas, and the topographic and vegetation characteristics within these areas which favor aggressive wildfire growth and resistance to control.

The Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act, passed by the Oregon Legislature in 1997, was implemented in Jackson County in 2005, at which time landowners were mailed self-certification forms and detailed information about fuel break requirements. By law, the identification and classification of lands is to take place every five years, and new self-certification forms are to be mailed to the owners of lands within forestland-urban interface areas.

For more information about the Oregon Forestland-Urban Interface Fire Protection Act, call Brian Ballou, ODF fire prevention specialist, at (541) 665-0662.

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