

LOWER YOUR RISK: BE PART OF NATIONAL WILDFIRE COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS DAY!

News Release from **Oregon Department of Forestry**

Posted on FlashAlert: April 23rd, 2021 1:37 PM

SALEM, Ore. – May 1st is National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day. The 2020 wildfires burned more than a million acres in Oregon and damaged many homes and communities. This year you can help lower fire risks for your community and home!

The National Fire Protection Association encourages everyone to help with wildfire preparedness and reduce fuels around homes. NFPA offers ways to make your home and community safer ahead of fire season here:

<https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/National-Wildfire-Community-Preparedness-Day>

COVID-19 has changed life, but community members got creative for events to reduce wildfire risk. While more people work from home and community dynamics differ, you can still be part of Wildfire Community Preparedness Day.

Oregon communities competed nationally for \$500 grants to help with Wildfire Community Preparedness Day prevention projects.

Twenty-four Oregon communities received grants this year. For eight years in a row, State Farm Insurance has funded these grants. Oregon added eight communities to its list of winners this year compared to last year! Nationwide 150 communities will use these awards to reduce wildfire risk and create a safer future!

These 24 Oregon communities received awards:

- Ashland (13 communities)
- Eugene
- Grants Pass
- McKenzie Bridge
- Redmond
- Roseburg
- Sisters
- Springfield
- Sunriver
- White City
- Williams (2 communities)

What the experts say:

“Wildfire can happen anytime, anywhere,” said Oregon Department of Forestry’s Fire Prevention Coordinator Tom Fields. “The more we can do now to protect our homes and communities before fire strikes, will pay dividends in the long run. With the lion’s share of fires caused by people, it is time we take personal responsibility not only for our property, but also for our actions that could ultimately prevent disaster from striking at all.”

In light of last year’s fires and the ongoing drought, Keep Oregon Green, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and Oregon Department of Forestry are working hard to help people learn about defensible space, an effective way of protecting homes.

Keep Oregon Green President Kristin Babbs said, “We’ve already witnessed wildfire evacuations in April. If a fire accidentally starts on your property, whether by a rekindled debris burn pile or an equipment-sparked fire, it will be unlikely to spread to neighboring houses due to lack of fuel. Defensible space also increases a home’s chances of surviving a wildfire during the heat of summer.”

Office of State Fire Marshal Assistant Chief Deputy Claire McGrew said, "Wildfire safety starts with you and your property. Now is the time to take action to prepare our homes, families, and communities for wildfires by starting on our own property before there is smoke on the horizon."

Projects for Wildfire Preparedness Day can range from a few hours up to an entire day. These are some examples of what you can do:

- Remove debris and dry leaves within 3 to 5 feet from a home's foundation and up to 30 feet.
- Keep your roof and gutters free of downed tree limbs, broken branches, and leaves.
- Share wildfire safety information, or order free Firewise materials from the catalog or READY.gov.
- Pool resources to pay for a chipper service or bins to get rid of yard and tree debris.
- Make a map of the community and mark where elderly neighbors and people with animals live and assign helpers to assist these people during an emergency.

Keep Oregon Green is a 501 (c)3 non-profit that promotes programs and messages encouraging the public to work together in their communities to prevent the risk of wildfire. KOG's work targets residents, particularly those in the wildland-urban interface, and recreationists using Oregon's public and private lands.

State Farm's mission is to help people manage the risks of everyday life, recover from the unexpected, and realize their dreams. State Farm and its affiliates are the largest providers of auto, home and individual life insurance in the United States. They serve more than 83 million policies and accounts. Commercial auto insurance, along with coverage for renters, business owners, boats and motorcycles, is available. For more information, please visit <http://www.statefarm.com>.

National Fire Protection Association was founded in 1896, NFPA is a global, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission. For more information visit www.nfpa.org. All NFPA codes and standards can be viewed online for free at www.nfpa.org/freeaccess.

Oregon Department of Forestry's mission is to serve the people of Oregon by protecting, managing, and promoting stewardship of Oregon's forests to enhance environmental, economic, and community sustainability.

The Office of State Fire Marshal's mission is to protect people, property, and the environment from fire and hazardous materials. The office carries out these duties through prevention education, inspections, code enforcement, and preparedness and response activities. Our vision is to provide premier public safety services.

###