

A Cohesive Strategy for Forest Restoration in the Rogue Basin



Natural fire is an essential element of a healthy forest and helps mitigate future fires by clearing fuels from the forest floor. Yet wildfires in the Western US have become more intense, burning hotter, longer and across more of the landscape, destroying communities, impacting livelihoods, and making the air dangerous to breathe.

The causes of more severe wildfires are climate change and outdated forest management practices. The Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative, an array of leaders in conservation and forestry, is tackling these challenges with the Rogue Basin Strategy.

Following years of collaboration and technical development, the Rogue Basin Strategy is a comprehensive science-based roadmap for healthier forests and communities across 4.6 million acres of Southern Oregon.



Implementing the Strategy with 1.1 million acres of strategic thinning and controlled burning in 20 years will:



- Reduce wildfire severity
- Assist wildfire control
- Reduce wildfire risk by up to 70%
- Reduce wildfire risk to homes by up to 50%
- Reduce wildfire risk to high quality old-growth forest for the Northern Spotted Owl by 47%
- Enable better smoke management



- Implement plans to restore old-growth forest
- Restore open forest where appropriate in the landscape
- Protect riparian and stream habitat
- Promote climate resilience in forests
- Set the stage for controlled burning with prudent mechanical treatments



- Embrace a proactive, restorative approach to active management that sustains jobs and economic activity
- Employ site-specific collaboration and planning to support local values
- Generate 1,700 jobs annually
- Deliver 83 million board feet of federal timber to local mills annually

BASED ON THE BEST FOREST SCIENCE

The forest science is clear: fire is critical for healthy forests, but certain overgrown forests need strategic thinning and controlled burning. There is scientific consensus around the tools that the Strategy recommends: We can reduce wildfire intensity, enable safe, effective fire suppression, and increase landscape resilience with strategic thinning followed by controlled burning.

Controlled burns create less smoke than wildfires and are conducted to minimize community impacts. Strategic, ecological thinning can expand the areas available for controlled burning, which provides communities and managers more options to reduce smoke impacts.

The Strategy relies on existing roads for forest thinning, and timber removal focuses on smaller trees that act as fuels and pose a threat to irreplaceable old-growth trees.



BUILT THROUGH TRANSPARENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative (SOFRC) holds regular public meetings with partners whose input is integral to the strategy and its implementation. This work is shaped by diverse voices like forestry experts, elected and government officials, community leaders and landowners.

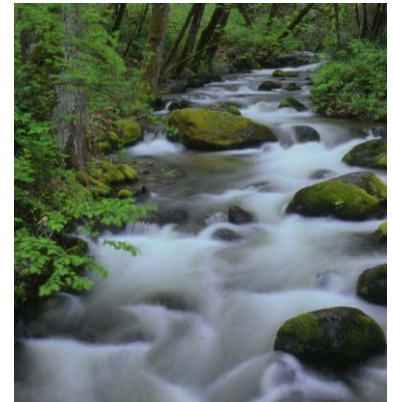
The Strategy depends on collaboration. Partners in the region implement the Strategy through site-specific projects informed by local knowledge.



A COLLABORATIVE WITH A WIDE NETWORK OF PARTNERS

SOFRC and its partners have begun implementing the Strategy in various forest and community projects. The Rogue Basin Strategy provides a framework for partners to implement shared stewardship through a common set of objectives. Already, the all-lands scenario is built into the Rogue Valley Integrated Fire Plan for Jackson and Josephine Counties. Ongoing engagement will continue to incorporate stakeholder perspectives.

With our science-based and collaborative approach, we're striving to reduce wildfire risk, better manage smoke, develop and protect complex forest habitats in the face of climate change and enhance the region's economy.



Other resources:

- Explore our StoryMap for an interactive visual experience to learn more about the Strategy: <http://bit.ly/RBS-storymap>
- Learn more about controlled burns at the Ashland Forest Resiliency Project: <http://www.ashlandwatershed.org>
- The Medford Mail Tribune wrote several in-depth articles on forest management (<http://bit.ly/rbs-mmt-series>), as well as an editorial urging leaders, "Let's get started!" (<http://bit.ly/rbs-mmt-editorial>)

