

2005 ANNUAL REPORT

JOSEPHINE COUNTY INTEGRATED FIRE PLAN

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED



*Free Woody Vegetation
Disposal Day, April 2005*



*Planning for Fuels Reduction in
Wolf Creek, July 2005*



*Murphy Community Fire Meeting,
March 2005*

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January 2006

INTRODUCTION

In 2002, the Biscuit Fire burned over 500,000 acres and resulted in costs exceeding 150 million dollars. A majority of the acres burned in Josephine County, Oregon. Lessons learned from the fire helped agency and community partners in the County recognize the need for integrated planning and coordination among diverse agencies and organizations to address wildfire risk, hazardous fuels reduction, emergency management and education. Over the past decade, wildfire has gained national attention as well. In response to the destructive and costly fires that have impacted the nation, particularly in the west, legislators and the White House have put increased emphasis on community wildfire protection plans (CWPP). The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 provided guidance for CWPPs that identify and prioritize hazardous fuels treatment projects.

In 2003, Josephine County initiated a collaborative process with local fire districts, county departments, state and federal land management agencies, community organizations, and citizen volunteers to develop a county-wide fire plan. Representatives from these groups dedicated significant time to attend meetings and join committees to develop goals and objectives for the fire plan, identify needs, and develop recommendations to reduce wildfire risk throughout the County.

On November 8th, 2004 the Josephine County (OR) Board of County Commissioners adopted the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan (JCIFP). This report illustrates the accomplishments, challenges, and lessons learned from the first year of implementation of the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan. The report also includes next steps and opportunities for updating and strengthening the plan, monitoring activities. Finally the information summarized here may have relevance to state and federal policies related to community fire planning. Issues addressed in this report include:

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Many of the issues and recommendations highlighted in this report are discussed in further detail in in-depth reports that are available on the JCIFP website (<http://www.co.josephine.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=158>) or at <http://ri.uoregon.edu/programs/CCE/communityfireplanning.html>.

SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I. Community Fire Plans in Josephine County as of November 2005

- Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan (2004)
- Applegate Fire Plan (2002)
- Illinois Valley Fire Plan (2005)
- Wolf Creek Rural Fire Protection District Strategic Plan (2005 - *not a CWPP*)

II. Fuels Reduction Treatments in Josephine County (FY 2005)

2004/2005 Defensible Space and Fuels Reduction on Private Land

Administrator	Location	Acres
Illinois Valley Community Development Organization	Thompson Creek	200
Lomakatsi Restoration Project	Williams	100
Lomakatsi Restoration Project	Cave Junction	100
Oregon Department of Forestry	Countywide	300
Applegate Fire District	Applegate	340
Applegate River Watershed Council	Applegate	50
Total Acres Treated on Private Land		1090

BLM, Medford District Fuels Reduction (FY 2005)

Treatment Type	WUI Acres Treated	Non-WUI Acres Treated	Total
Hand Treatments	4220	350	4570
Prescribed Fire	2878	1043	3921

**Acres treated in FY 2005 as reported by the Medford BLM*

Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest (FY 2005 Ranger District)

Treatment	Acres Treated
WUI Acres	962
Non WUI Acres	870
RAC funded hazardous fuel reduction WUI Acres	141

**Acres treated in FY 2005 as reported by the Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest*

III. Education and Outreach

- Woody vegetation disposal day: 140 people from the City of Grants Pass and Josephine County disposed of over 300 cubic yards of woody vegetation
- Six public meetings in the Rural/Metro area (currently classified as unprotected) with over 200 participants
- 2nd annual Wolf Creek Wildfire Fair with over 80 community members in attendance

COLLABORATION

The Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan has fostered public and private partners through the development of the integrated fire plan since August 2003. Partners involved with the development and implementation of the fire plan include:

Josephine County Fire Defense Board

- Applegate Fire District
- Illinois Valley Fire District
- Grants Pass Dept. of Public Safety
- Wolf Creek Rural Fire Protection District
- Williams Rural Fire Protection District
- Rural/Metro Fire Department

Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest
Bureau of Land Management, Medford District
Josephine County Senior and Disabled Services

Oregon Department of Forestry
Oregon Department of Transportation
Oregon Office of the State Fire Marshal
Josephine County Emergency Management
Josephine County Planning
Josephine County GIS
Applegate Partnership
Lomakatsi Restoration Project
Siskiyou Field Institute
Illinois Valley Community Development Organization
Jackson County

Collaboration has been the single most important aspect of the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan. Public agencies that did not always collaborate prior to the development of the plan now meet on a monthly basis to review a range of issues from emergency response to land management issues. These agencies have leveraged their resources and increased their effectiveness in coordinating mitigation and response efforts. Similarly, collaboration between public agencies, private organizations, and community groups has been equally as strong.

Community groups such as the Illinois Valley Community Development Organization have worked closely with the County and BLM to coordinate neighborhood fuels reduction efforts and create a process that can be replicated in communities throughout the County. Lomakatsi Restoration Project has been working with neighborhoods and on landowner outreach on fuels reduction, fire mitigation, and utilization in Williams and Cave Junction since 2001. The Applegate Fire District has made significant strides in reducing hazardous fuels, illustrated by the fact that over 90% of landowners in the fire district have completed defensible space around their homes.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

As successful as the collaboration has been in Josephine County, there are challenges that remain present, including the inclusion of all stakeholders with a vested interest in wildfire issues in Josephine County and the tenuous ability of all partners to continue engaging in the collaboration.

There remain a multitude of organizations, citizen groups and individuals that have an interest in and concerns about wildfire protection in Josephine County. All JCIFP committees hold open meetings, but there may be organizations and individuals that are not aware or do not have time or resources to participate in meetings.

Many of the community organizations and citizens participating in the JCIFP process are doing so on volunteer time or very limited resources. Sustaining collaborative relationships during implementation will continue to be an ongoing challenge.

Recommendations and Next Steps

- Partner agencies and organization should continue to dedicate meaningful resources towards ongoing coordination, communication, and participation in JCIFP activities.
- JCIFP Committees should evaluate goals, objectives, and actions annually.
- Expand the coalition to include those not involved in the past (e.g., business, industry, insurance, real estate, environmental, and community groups).
- Continue to monitor the successes and challenges of JCIFP collaboration.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

The Emergency Management Board (EMB), which coalesced during the development of the fire plan, has taken responsibility for monitoring the fire plan, convening various fire plan committees, and serving as the liaison to the Josephine County Board of County Commissioners. This Board was responsible for development and signing of a 2005 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County, Forest Service, BLM, ODF, and the County Fire Defense Board focused on long-term implementation of the fire plan. The MOU formally establishes the Emergency Management Board and strives to fully implement the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan.

Accomplishments

One of the most significant accomplishments of the Emergency Management Board has been the coordination fostered between County Emergency Management, the local fire protection districts, and the state and federal land management agencies.

Local fire districts played a significant role in developing amendments to the County Wildfire Protection Code (Article 76), which was passed in Josephine County in July and went into effect October 18, 2005. Many meetings have been held with planners, fire personnel, contractors and the public to discuss its implementation.

Other accomplishments of the Emergency Management Board include:

- Completion of an interoperable communications plan.
- ICS/NIMS trainings for over 150 first responders and other county personnel.
- Completion and adoption of the County Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.
- Development of a transportation detour plan for Redwood Highway 199 (developed as a result of the 2004 Redwood Highway Fire).
- Participation in the review of the BLM Land Management Plan.
- Six public meetings to discuss fire service in the county's unprotected areas.
- Implementation of a phone-based emergency notification system.

Emergency Management Related Grants

Josephine County received over \$30,000 in funds for the FY2004 Citizen Corps program. These monies were used to train and equip members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), revise the Family Emergency Preparedness Handbook, and obtain and equip a secure storage container for Medical Reserve Corps.

A FY 2005 Citizen Corps grant provided over \$10,000 to help continue the current Citizen Corps program, including the Community Emergency Response Team. Funds were also awarded to purchase equipment for a Student Emergency Response Team.

A FY 2005 Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program provided over \$267,000 to purchase and update police Mobile Data Terminals. Grants Pass Police is currently in the process of updating their system. Emergency Management is working to purchase and install 25 units for the County Sheriff's Office.

Josephine and Jackson County Emergency Management received over \$8000 from the Health Care Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to equip a mobile GIS response trailer. This money will be paired with Homeland Security dollars and an existing trailer. The equipment will include a laptop loaded with all GIS data from both

counties and a 24" plotter. When completed, the trailer can be towed to any scene and produce maps on-demand during the initial attack period of an incident.

Jackson and Josephine Counties worked together on a FY 2005 Homeland Security that will provide a new Microwave Communications system. Southern Oregon Regional Communications (SORC) will be administering this grant. The project is currently out to bid, and the equipment should be purchased within the next year.

Josephine County Emergency Communications received grants from both the Health Care Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) and the Four Way Foundation to build a ham radio tower at the new Search & Rescue facility.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

Evacuation remains one of the most challenging issues to address; specifically, the complexity and liability of coordinating the public and many different agencies in an extreme event. The need for coordinated evacuation planning in Josephine County is underscored by the recent lessons learned from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Next Steps

The Emergency Management Board continues to play a vital role in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan. They are convening partners on a regular basis, providing leadership and acknowledging accomplishments, shortcomings, and next steps, and serving as a direct liaison to the agencies and organizations that are responsible for implementing the plan. These are critical roles and the partners involved must maintain their commitment to serving that function. The Memorandum of Understanding signed by key partners in 2005 underscores those responsibilities.

DEER CREEK FIRE

Accomplishments

From August 25 – August 28, 2005, the Deer Creek Fire burned over 1600 acres, destroyed 5 homes and a number of outbuildings, and threatened over 100 residences. Through the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan, partners' organized two post-fire forums to discuss lessons learned and needs for future wildfire events. The first event was a briefing for fire service and county agencies on Tuesday, September 22nd. Josephine County Emergency Management and the Josephine County Fire Defense Board led an agency debriefing to review operations, response, evacuation and other issues. Participants reflected on the fact that interagency communication has strengthened through the fire planning process and resulted in stronger coordination during the Deer Creek Fire than had existed during the Redwood Highway Fire in 2004.

On September 28th, 2005, the Illinois Valley Fire District hosted a community meeting to talk with residents about their experiences during the 2005 Deer Creek Fire. Over 85 people attended this meeting, including representatives from local, state, and federal agencies, and community organizations. The meeting provided an opportunity to gather information on the experiences of residents directly affected by the fire and to understand their concerns.

Other communities are learning from the response to the Deer Creek Fire as well. Three JCIFP partners were asked to speak about the Deer Creek Fire at a Fire Plan meeting in neighboring Jackson County. They discussed how the JCIFP and Emergency Management Board contributed to coordination during the fire.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

There were a number of areas that agencies and community members identified as concerns during the Deer Creek Fire, primarily related to evacuation and community outreach and notification. Agencies identified challenges with evacuation in terms of limited communication, notifying many rural residents that live in rural, isolated areas, and the fact that the event was a quick moving fire with little time to notify residents. The agencies acknowledged that it is still a struggle to get information out to the public. JCIFP partners agreed to include this as a task for working groups to address. Finally, a suggestion was made that portable evacuation signs be made for first responders.

Next Steps

One of the primary outcomes from the meeting was the emphasis placed on community opportunities to volunteer with the fire district and the Illinois Valley Fire Safe Council. The Illinois Valley Fire District shared information about how residents can get involved by doing work around their home, partnering with agencies such as ODF and the BLM, and by becoming a local volunteer.

During the community meeting, researchers from the University of Oregon and the University of Memphis interviewed over 30 households about their experiences during the fire, their perception of wildfire risk, and their level of preparedness. The researchers are currently developing a report that will illustrate findings from the interviews, highlight concerns that arose during the public meeting, and identify strategies to increase community resilience to wildfire.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

JCIFP partners have continually acknowledged the essential role that education and outreach plays in building citizen, community, and agency involvement in reducing wildfire risk. Without understanding of individual or organizational needs, concerns, and values, along with the understanding of fire science and ecology, it will remain a challenge for partners to engage the diverse stakeholders that are at-risk to wildfire.

Early on, JCIFP partners discussed the opportunity to “Change the Culture” around wildfire. With that goal in mind, partners worked to develop a public campaign that would increase understanding about living in wildfire prone areas as well as citizen action and responsibility to reduce wildfire risk.

Accomplishments

The JCIFP Education and Outreach committee partnered with Jackson County and the Rogue Valley Fire Prevention Cooperative to implement the 2005 Spring Wildfire Campaign, “Wildfire: Are You Prepared?” Campaign activities included development of library displays, information provided during local events, community fire planning meetings, and the County fair, and coordination of a free, woody vegetation disposal day at the local composting facility.

In July 2005, JCIFP partners came together to assist the Wolf Creek Rural Fire Protection District host the second annual Wolf Creek Wildfire Fair. Over 80 citizens attended the event, talked with local fire service representatives, and learned about defensible space and home preparedness. The fire district hosted a barbeque as part of the event.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

There is a significant lack of funding for education and outreach. Most funds under the National Fire Plan and related programs are targeted to “on-the-ground” projects. Yet, there is simply not enough funding for hazardous fuels reduction to mitigate the threat of wildfire to communities at risk. If citizens take responsibility for creating defensible space around their homes, there is a greater chance of reducing losses. However, there must be education to help citizens understand why they should take certain steps and become active participants in reducing wildfire risk.

Next Steps

Josephine County has committed to supporting a small number of activities related to an ongoing spring wildfire campaign. The JCIFP Education and Outreach committee will continue to work with Jackson County and other partners on implementing campaign objectives. However, they recognize the need for a long-term strategy, increased funding, and a dedicated resource to understand effective education strategies and implement programs.

SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

In 2004, Josephine County began a process to bring residents who have special needs into emergency management planning. "Special Needs Citizens" are defined in the County as "those who can not take care of themselves during an emergency due to disability or health condition". This effort has resulted in the establishment of a Special Needs Committee for the County. The committee was created as a result of a question raised during the development of the County's Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) about how the county planned to help those that couldn't help themselves during a disaster situation.

Accomplishments

The JCIFP underscores the needs of Josephine County's population who may require additional assistance given financial or physical limitations (including low-income, elderly, disabled, minority, veteran, and other special needs populations).

JCIFP partners worked to develop a targeted brochure and campaign message to help citizens with special needs reduce their risk to wildfire, even with limited resources. Over 2000 of these brochures were distributed in 2004 and 2005 through county social service agencies and community organizations.

One major effort of the committee has been to bolster the Disaster Registry Program that was developed by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG) in the 90's. The Disaster Registry allows special needs people to self identify themselves to Emergency Services for use in emergency situations. This allows those responding to an emergency to know that people may need additional help in evacuating their home or the area where they live. The committee has revised the form and developed new strategies for distribution.

Finally, JCIFP partners wrote a grant to the Forest Service and BLM Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) to obtain funding for fuels reduction around the homes of low-income and elderly and disabled residents.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

Providing assistance to citizens with special needs and underserved communities requires an understanding of confidentiality requirements (e.g., HIPAA) and a commitment to working with a population that may lack capacity or expertise to engage in wildfire issues. Communication with the special needs population (to inform them about grant dollars and fuels reduction project opportunities) is also difficult, when agencies lack specific contact.

Next Steps

JCIFP Partners are currently implementing the RAC funded fuels reduction projects and are tracking the challenges of identifying and obtaining participation from special needs residents.

Josephine County GIS is also conducting a mapping process to illustrate the relationship between wildfire risk in the County and low-income areas.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk from wildfire in Josephine County is extreme. The acres that need to be treated for hazardous fuels reduction and fire safety significantly outweigh the availability of grant funding from the National Fire Plan. There is a key need to identify alternatives for sustaining hazardous fuels reduction projects (potentially through stewardship contracting and biomass utilization).

Accomplishments

A group of local, state, and federal agency representatives began meeting at the outset of the JCIFP planning process to develop a wildfire risk assessment. Guidance from the National Association of State Foresters provided a framework for the risk assessment methodology that included risk, hazard, values, protection capability and structural vulnerability.

The risk assessment provided a relative understanding of high risk areas throughout the county on public and private land. The risk assessment is being used by county fire plan partners to set priorities for hazardous fuels reduction on public and private land, and has helped to allocate resources from National Fire Plan grants and Title II and Title III funds.

The risk assessment process resulted in strong partnerships between the County, the Oregon Department of Forestry, Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest, the Bureau of Land Management, the Applegate Partnership and the Josephine County Fire Defense Board. This partnership has led to common standards and practices for utilizing Geographic Information System data, adoption of a common wildland urban interface boundary, and provides a foundation for future decisions about how hazardous fuels reduction projects are prioritized on public and private land.

In 2005, the risk assessment group began implementation of a National Fire Plan grant to obtain up-to-date plot data on vegetation and integrate over 150 field plots into the national LANDFIRE program. Josephine County took a leadership role in securing the National Fire Plan grant for both Jackson and Josephine County and is currently leading its implementation.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Identification of the wildland urban interface in Josephine County and other adjacent counties occurred through the Southwest Oregon Federal Fire Management Planning process. As projects are identified on public land for hazardous fuels reduction or stewardship, a review of the wildland urban interface designation with additional partners (such as county, community, and environmental organizations) may be valuable. Furthermore, local fire plans that identify a more specific wildland urban interface should be utilized in prioritizing hazardous fuels reduction projects.

Recommendations and Next Steps

1. Monitor and evaluate the data used in the risk assessment. As new data becomes available, integrate data, update the assessment, and re-evaluate priorities for hazardous fuels reduction. Josephine County is working closely with the state and

federal agencies to reflect new data as it becomes available. Furthermore, as neighboring Jackson County implements its risk assessment, Josephine County has an opportunity to update their risk assessment based on new ideas and lessons learned.

2. As better fuels data becomes available, evaluate opportunities to run models and identify landscape scale fuels projects.
3. Foster coordination among public agencies and neighboring counties to identify and use standard data sets and methods for fuels, fire occurrence and response times.
4. The Oregon Department of Forestry has recently completed a statewide assessment of communities at risk. They are actively seeking input from local jurisdictions to ground truth and improve this assessment. Josephine County has an opportunity to coordinate with ODF to ensure that the state assessment reflects the county assessment findings.
5. Foster Congressional and Agency support for local assessment and data collection that will enhance the use of national programs such as LANDFIRE and fuel modeling programs such as FLAMMAP or FARSITE. Increased investment in better fuels data and interagency collaboration will result in more comprehensive assessments and more accurate fire behavior models. Establish a system that can be updated by agencies on work that has been done of fuels reduction and latest information on fires.
6. The risk assessment committee should agree on a regular, potentially annually, schedule to review the WUI boundary. Committee representatives can present the background on the initial WUI designation to a broader stakeholder group to discuss issues and this could include environmental or community organizations not involved with the initial assessment.

IDENTIFYING AND PRIORITIZING HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS

Accomplishments

Josephine County convened the JCIFP Fuels and Risk Committee to identify high-hazard areas at risk to wildfire and prioritize projects on private land. The committee has been working together for over two years to develop and implement the JCIFP and includes representatives from Forest Service, BLM, ODF, Josephine County, local fire districts, and community organizations. The main focus of the group in 2005 has been on implementing fuels reduction projects on private land through National Fire Plan grants and Title II and Title III funds. The JCIFP Fuels/Risk committee coordinated on four successful applications for fuels reduction and risk assessment in Josephine County:

- 2005 National Fire Plan Grant - \$500,000 for hazardous fuels reduction
- 2005 National Fire Plan Grant - \$250,000 for risk mapping coordinated with the National LANDFIRE project
- 2005 BLM and Forest Service RAC projects - \$175,000 for hazardous fuels reduction for low-income and elderly or disabled citizens

Community organizations and local fire districts have been active in coordinating local fuels reduction efforts. The Illinois Valley Community Development Organization is coordinating the 2005 National Fire Plan grants for fuels reduction in North Selma, Wolf Creek, and the Cathedral Hills area and is working with homeowners to complete defensible space and fuels reduction on roads and driveways. The Lomakatsi Restoration Project is currently treating over 200 acres of hazardous fuels with funding from the National Fire Plan in the Illinois Valley and the Williams Valley. Lomakatsi is also implementing one of the first stewardship contracts in the county in Williams. The Applegate Fire District continues to implement hazardous fuels reduction treatment around homes and along roadways throughout the district. The Applegate River Watershed Council is currently completing 50 acres of hazardous fuels reduction in Josephine County.

The JCIFP Fuels/Risk committee is currently developing a monitoring protocol for agencies, organizations, and fire districts implementing fuels projects on public and private land. Finally, the group helped Resource Innovations at the University of Oregon develop a guide on coordinating a neighborhood fuels project, and a case study of the Thompson Creek Neighborhood Fuels Reduction Project.

The Medford BLM Grants Pass unit has adopted the JCIFP risk assessment and is using the priorities for hazardous fuels treatment identified in the JCIFP for the BLM 5-year Resource Management Plan.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

While the JCIFP risk assessment identifies strategic planning units that are at high risk to wildfire on both public and private land, the priorities for fuels reduction are primarily at a neighborhood scale and on private land within local fire district boundaries. The plan does not identify specific priorities for fuels reduction on public land.

Next Steps:

- Currently, the BLM is working on a revision to the Western Oregon Resource Management Plan. This process is providing an opportunity for JCIFP partners to renew the discussion of fuels management on public land and comment on issues and priorities in the Resource Management Plan.
- Continue to prioritize and implement hazardous fuels reduction projects on the basis of best available risk data on both public and private lands.
- Share lessons learned with other communities on successes and challenges of implementing fuels reduction projects.

BIOMASS UTILIZATION AND STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING

One of the most important objectives of any Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is to reduce hazardous fuels that could potentially lead to a catastrophic wildfire. The JCIFP calls for such mitigation through coordinated thinning and restoration in the most susceptible areas of the wildland-urban interface. These operations, however, do not come without a considerable price. Agencies and communities are faced with a dilemma: How do you pay for needed hazardous fuels reduction, especially in light of constrained budgets and limited staff? Biomass utilization is one potential means to offset some of the costs of thinning.

Accomplishments

In 2005, Resource Innovations conducted an inventory of biomass utilization efforts in Southern Oregon. The purpose of the effort was to illustrate local efforts as well as present case studies of other biomass utilization efforts around the country. The inventory and report is intended to assist JCIFP partners make informed decisions about the types of uses to pursue with woody biomass, potential groups to partner with, and other strategies for biomass utilization.

Challenges/Lessons Learned

The inventory conducted in 2005 focused on interviews and additional research on biomass utilization efforts in southwestern Oregon. Findings are highlighted below

Goals	Integrated environmental, economic, and social perspectives are driving many biomass utilization efforts.
	Groups want sound ecological research, not economic interests, to drive forest management decisions.
	Most groups have focused on the market side of biomass utilization; few groups are actively working on the supply side.
Activities	Groups are involved in a range of activities, including collaboration, assessing technical and financial feasibility, and creating educational resources.
	There are a limited number of feasibility studies related to biomass utilization facilities currently underway.
Uses/Scales Emphasized	Groups are researching a variety of potential uses for biomass
	Groups are primarily interested in local, small-scale businesses rather than larger "corporate" businesses.
Partners	Groups are still working to create collaborative processes by involving a diverse mix of community groups, public agencies, businesses, and environmental groups.
	There are other organizations and businesses that could be more actively engaged in collaborative efforts.
Accomplishments	There are numerous reports in the region related to biomass utilization.
	Some groups are finding profit in saw logs and potentially the use of an Economizer.
Barriers/Challenges	Without guarantees of supply, businesses are less likely to invest start-up capital.
	Transportation costs make biomass utilization very costly.
	Groups have found that chips are worth very little.

Recommendations

1. Explore options, such as the Coordinated Resource Offering Protocol, to quantify the potential amount of hazardous fuels that will be available for future utilization in Southwestern Oregon.
2. Continue to engage in efforts to secure a guaranteed supply of biomass materials from local forests.
3. Consider the timeframe and scale of stewardship contracts that will provide the greatest opportunity for profit and investment.
4. Continue reaching out to environmental and community groups in an effort to forge greater consensus regarding the need for hazardous fuels reduction projects and the mechanisms by which to finance and implement them.
5. Continue to engage in efforts to create/bolster markets and business opportunities in the region.
6. Create a clearinghouse of information related to the benefits from and opportunities for fuels reduction and biomass utilization.
7. Pursue or support funding for feasibility studies of possible operations in the region.
8. Identify ways to support a Fuels For Schools program.
9. Include the perspectives and assistance of organizations that have not yet been actively engaged in local discussions regarding biomass utilization.
10. Sponsor or support forums that will bring the various groups interested in biomass utilization together.

Next Steps related to Stewardship Contracting

The JCIFP Fuels and Risk Committee convened a broader group in the summer of 2005 to begin discussing opportunities for stewardship contracting. In fall 2005, the group decided to develop a stewardship contracting strategy on public land that addresses the high priority fuel risk areas identified in the CWPP.

Stewardship contracting authorities provide an opportunity for public and private partners in Josephine County to work together in identifying projects that meet restoration objectives and goals set forth in the Josephine County Integrated Fire Plan. Stewardship contracting provides an opportunity for public agencies to engage in collaboration with local partners to identify, develop, and monitor work on public land.

The committee is at the first phase of a collaborative process engaging diverse stakeholders to develop a strategy using stewardship contracting for fuel reduction, community benefit, and forest restoration. We are in the process of inviting other stakeholders (such as environmental organizations, business, industry, and contractors) so that we can expand the partnership and involvement on work that may happen through a stewardship contract on public land.