



## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

# AGENDA REQUEST & STAFF REPORT

**MEETING DATE:** March 19, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Application for a Community Wildfire Defense Grant from the U.S. Forest Service

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

Move approval of the application submitted for a Community Wildfire Defense Grant from the U.S. Forest Service, and further authorize the County Administrator to accept the grant if awarded.

**BACKGROUND AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS:**

The Natural Resources Department seeks authorization to apply for a five-year Community Wildfire Defense Grant for the La Pine Wildfire Mitigation Project.

The proposed project is a collaborative effort to reduce fire fuels, educate and increase wildfire preparedness among residents, and mitigate wildfire risk in the incorporated City of La Pine and surrounding unincorporated communities and neighborhoods. The proposed project area is defined by the La Pine Rural Fire District. Activities would focus on fuel reduction and fire prevention efforts in high wildfire risk, low-income neighborhoods throughout the greater La Pine community. In addition to the fuels mitigation work, education and outreach opportunities would also be undertaken to increase public understanding of living in a fire-adapted ecosystem and facilitate the community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire events.

In accordance with the deadline, staff submitted a grant application on March 14<sup>th</sup>. If the Board does not support the application, staff will withdraw it.

**Proposed Project Activities:**

- Treat up to 585 acres of County-owned property for fuels reduction in high density and high wildfire risk areas.
- Treat up to 100 miles of County-maintained right-of-way ingress and egress routes.
- Implement up to three sweat equity projects a year (15 total) in communities represented by Special Road Districts or Firewise groups.
- Implement up to two sweat equity projects a year (10 total) in unincorporated communities.
- Some funds would be passed through to the Upper Deschutes River Communities

nonprofit to support its Low-Income & Senior Defensible Space Program and its Defensible Space Reimbursement Program.

- Hire a full-time Fire Prevention Coordinator at the La Pine Rural Fire District to assist with project implementation, planning, technical assistance, and to offer training and workshops for the residents of the greater La Pine area.
- Purchase an air curtain burner and masticator head.
- Host two defensible space workshops every year with partnering organizations and agencies (10 total).
- Host "Home Assessment / Train the Trainer" events for community members.

Fuels reduction treatments would include thinning or removing identified trees, limbing trees that remain on site, and cutting, mowing or masticating various brush species and other ground fuels.

**Partnering organizations:**

Deschutes County Natural Resources Department, Deschutes County Property Management, Deschutes County Road Department, City of La Pine, La Pine Rural Fire District, Upper Deschutes River Communities, Oregon Department of Forestry, Newberry Regional Partnership, Deschutes Soil & Water Conservation District, Oregon State Fire Marshal

**BUDGET IMPACTS:**

The total estimated project cost is \$3,439,362. Most of the grant award (\$2,452,109) would be used for contracted services. The remaining would fund a full-time Fire Prevention Coordinator, equipment, personnel, and indirect costs used for administrative costs for administering the contracts.

The proposed project qualifies for a waiver of matching funds.

**ATTENDANCE:**

Kevin Moriarty, County Forester  
Lauren Street, Natural Resources Specialist