



Ashland Forest All-Lands Restoration Initiative

A Controlled Burn in Action. Carefully managed burns help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire and maintain ecological health.



Partnership Overview

The Ashland Forest All-lands Restoration Initiative envisions a healthy forest landscape, including open habitats, old-growth habitats, oak woodlands and prairies. This diversity in the landscape imparts resiliency in the face of accelerating climate change and increasing size and intensity of wildfires. Partners work to engage landowners and the entire community in forest stewardship that enhances and protects multiple ecological values and community assets.

In January 2016, the Ashland Forest All-lands Restoration Initiative was awarded funding for implementation through the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board's (OWEB) Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) grant program. The partnership also uses federal funds and expands a stewardship agreement to include some private lands. The initiative will treat 14,500 acres, or about 28% of a 52,000 acre footprint. A FIP is an OWEB investment that addresses a board-identified priority of significance to the state, achieves clear and measurable ecological outcomes, uses integrated and results-oriented approaches as identified through a strategic action plan, and is implemented by a high-performing partnership.

Initiatives are eligible for up to 6 years of OWEB funding. For the 2017-2019 biennium, OWEB has awarded the Ashland Forest All-lands Restoration Initiative \$2,340,500 for conservation projects that restores forest habitats while protecting against catastrophic wildfires. When combined with investments from 2015 – 2021, the anticipated total investment is approximately \$6 million.

Core Implementing Partners

- City of Ashland
- Lomakatsi Restoration Project
- The Nature Conservancy
- USDA Forest Service
- Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Oregon Department of Forestry



Tree thinning, before (above) and after (below)



Ecological Outcomes

The Ashland Forest All-lands Restoration Initiative has identified specific strategies to engage the community in forest management that will enhance habitat and protect against wildfire. Specific ecological outcomes and indicators will be assessed throughout the 6-year time frame, while some desired ecological outcomes will only become evident over a longer period of time.

Strategies and anticipated results in the Ashland Forest All-lands Restoration Initiative include:

Strategy

Implement an All-Lands approach towards forest management to promote habitat and reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire

Conservation Action

- Prioritize areas on the landscape to implement conservation actions
- Mechanical thinning, fuels reduction, and subsequent application of prescribed burns

Intermediate Ecological Outcome

- Remove vegetation that impedes oak woodlands and prairies
- Reduce density of small trees in forest habitats
- Maintain forest understory with prescribed fire

Long-Term Ecological Outcome

- Increase overall proportion of open canopy at the landscape scale
- Increase resilience of forest ecosystems to drought, extreme fire, insects and disease
- Support oak and late successional forest dependent wildlife

Strategy

Engage private landowners in conservation actions and engage with the local community to build awareness of the goals of the Initiative

Conservation Action

Partners organize guided tours, deliver youth programs, host workshops, and coordinate media coverage of their restoration efforts

Intermediate Ecological Outcome

Increased awareness, understanding and engagement among landowners and the local community

Long-Term Ecological Outcome

- Community support and participation in the Initiative
- Increased acceptance to using prescribed fire as a management tool