

# Community Wildfire Protection Plan For Bly, Oregon *1/31/06*



(Photo of Gearhart Mountain taken from old mill site in Bly, Oregon)

(Includes Bly and the subdivisions of Bley-was, Fishhole and Pinecrest)



(Photo taken east of Bly 2004)



(Photo taken NE of Pinecrest 2004)

# Table of Contents – Bly CWPP

Introduction.....4

Goals and Objectives..... 5

Background..... 6

Existing Situation..... 6-14

    Collaborative Efforts..... 8-9

    Hazard Assessment.....11-14

Action Items to Achieve Desired Condition..... 14

Need for Action..... 15

Firewise Conditions..... 16

Methodology..... 16-17

    Structure Risk Elements.....16

    Wildfire Hazard Rating-Subdivision..... 17

Recommended Project Proposals and Priorities..... 18-19

Summary..... 19-20

Appendix A – Pinecrest Subdivision Hazard Rating and Treatment Priority

Appendix B – Bley-was Subdivision Hazard Rating and Treatment Priority

Appendix C – Fishhole Subdivision Hazard Rating and Treatment Priority

Attachment 1 – Bly RFPD Overview Map

Attachment 2 – Bly Wildland Urban Interface/Lands Adjacent to Bly RFPD

Attachment 3 – Fuel Hazard Rating Map

Compiled and prepared by:  
Bruce Nichols,  
Bly Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors  
District Fire Management Officer (Retired), USDA Forest Service

## **Introduction**

The idea for community-based forest planning and prioritization is neither novel nor new. However, the incentive for communities to engage in comprehensive forest planning and prioritization was given new and unprecedented impetus with the enactment of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) in 2003.

Even prior to the enactment of HFRA, the President of the United States directed the Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture and the Interior to increase federal investments in projects to reduce the risk of wildfire in the wildland-urban interface. To this end, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Fremont-Winema National Forests are currently working with Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) to plan fuels reduction treatments and other mitigation measures targeted at the wildland-urban interface in the vicinity of Federal lands. This partnership is indicative of a shared responsibility to reduce wildland fire risks to communities.

The HFRA landmark legislation includes the first meaningful statutory incentives for the USDA Forest Service (FS) and the USDI Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to give consideration to the priorities of local communities as they develop and implement forest management and hazardous fuel reduction projects.

In order for a community to take full advantage of this new opportunity, it must first prepare a Community Wildfire Protection Plan. Local wildfire protection plans can take a variety of forms, based on the needs of the people involved in their development. Community Wildfire Protection Plans may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, and structure protection.

The purpose of this Community Wildfire Protection Plan is to establish prioritized recommendations that protect at-risk communities within the Bly Rural Fire Protection District, their citizens, homes and essential infrastructure and resources from the destruction of catastrophic wildfire. At-risk communities in this plan include Bly and the subdivisions of Bley-was, Fishhole and Pinecrest. (Refer to attachments 1-3)

The wildland-urban interface (WUI) is commonly described as the zone where structure and other human development meet and intermingle with undeveloped wildland or vegetative fuels. This WUI zone poses tremendous risks to life, natural resources, property and infrastructure in associated communities and is one of the most dangerous and complicated situations firefighters face.

Both the National Fire Plan and the Ten-Year Comprehensive Strategy for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment place a priority on working collaboratively within communities in the WUI to reduce their risk from large-scale wildfire.

A community open house was held in October 2003 to facilitate sharing information on both current and future plans for fuel reduction projects within Bly WUI areas, and fire prevention strategies homeowners can use to reduce the risk of losing their homes to wildfire and/or reducing lower structure ignitability. Participants included representatives from ODF, Bly Rural Fire Protection District (Bly RFPD), USFS (both local and regional), BLM, Bly Community Action Team (CAT) members and local residents.

ODF utilized a National Fire Plan Grant to conduct assessments of the Wildland-Urban Interface areas throughout eastern Klamath County including the Bly area. Fuel surveys were conducted by categorizing vegetation, slope, and aspect of land within the Bly Community assessment area. The risk of wildland fire to homes, structures, and resources on private land was also evaluated according to building materials, the presence of defensible space, road access and other factors that may influence survivability from a wildland fire. Included in the assessment was the adequacy of the community's service infrastructure (including roads, water supplies and fire fighting capability).

Information gathered from the fuel surveys, structural surveys, interviews, infrastructure assessments, and community profile is integrated into this report. The following action items were identified and some accomplishments have been completed to reduce the hazard of wildfire in the Bly assessment area.

- Develop a complete map of the assessment area, identifying the homes and structures and the rating of survivability.
- Conduct door to door fire prevention education program with all residents.
- Encourage residents, through monetary incentive (or free labor) to reduce fuels on their property.
- Work in partnership with BLM/FS to maximize community fuel breaks by reducing fuels on private lands adjacent to current or planned federal fuel projects.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of the Bly Community Wildfire Protection Plan include:

- ❖ Evaluate the hazards of wildland fire within the assessment area.
- ❖ Collaborate specific actions and priorities that could reduce the risks to life and property. *(Open and collaborative process includes Bly Fire Department, Bly Community Action Team, and ODF in consultation with local BLM and USFS representatives and other interested parties or persons)*
- ❖ Recommend measures that homeowners and communities can take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area.
- ❖ Decrease chance of wildfires spreading from private lands to federal lands or conversely from federal lands to private lands.
- ❖ Increase chances of obtaining National Fire Plan grants for future community protection projects by having an agreed upon Community Wildfire Protection Plan in place.

## **Background**

Wildland fire is an integral component of many forest and rangeland ecosystems. In the conterminous United States before European settlement, an estimated 145 million acres were annually consumed by wildfire. In comparison, only about 14 million acres are currently burned annually due to increased agriculture, urbanization, habitat fragmentation, and fire suppression programs. This change from the historical fire regime to the present day has caused a shift in the native vegetation composition and structure of the fire-prone ecosystems. Some forests and rangelands presently contain a dangerously high accumulation of fuels. As a result, when wildland fires do occur, they may burn larger and hotter than those in the past and pose an increased risk to communities, human welfare and ecological integrity. The hazard of wildland fires is compounded by the increasing occurrence of human structures and activities in fire-prone ecosystems. The wildland-urban interface occurs where human structures meet or intermix with wildland vegetation. In certain situations, specific actions such as fuels reduction around structures, communities, infrastructure improvements and public outreach may reduce the risk of catastrophic fire in the wildland-urban interface. This has led to programs throughout the United States to reduce the hazard of wildland fires to communities. The Bly area is just one of these projects with numerous others to come in the near future within Klamath County.

## **Existing Situation**

The Bly Area includes the community of Bly and the subdivisions of Bley-was, Fishhole and Pinecrest , located approximately 50 to 55 miles east of Klamath Falls, Oregon along Highway 140 East. The assessment area consists of approximately 4400 acres with about 250 homes and structures. Current population of the area is approximately 600 full time residents. Very little new construction is taking place at this point in time although there are approximately 250-300 vacant lots. The area for the wildfire hazard assessment consists of portions of townships T36S, R14E and T37S, R14E and lie within the Bly Rural Fire Protection District (see attachment 1).

The general elevations of the area range from 4350 to 4900 feet above mean sea level. The terrain is generally flat to gentle with the exception of Pinecrest, which is more mountainous and located on an east-northeast aspect. Access and escape routes are considered good due to the large number and current county maintenance of roads within the subdivisions.

The climate of the area is characterized by hot, dry summers with average daily high temperatures reaching 85° F in July and August and average daily summertime lows of 45° F degrees. Winter months are typically cold, with average daily temperatures from November to March ranging from the high 40's to the low 10's F. Precipitation is

typically low with a range of annual precipitation of 12-14 inches of rain equivalent. Most precipitation arrives during the months of November to March.

Bly Water District maintains two community water systems; one for Bly and Bley-was, the other for Pinecrest, both complete with hydrant systems. Fishhole residents depend on domestic wells for water supply, and fire responses by Bly RFPD include dispatching a 2500 gallon water tender to the area because of lack of hydrants.

Bly RFPD's Public Protection Classification is currently a 6 on a scale of 1 to 10 as rated by the Insurance Services Office (ISO), with 1 representing the best public protection. Bly RFPD maintains one fire station in Bly with an average roster of 10 to 12 volunteer firefighters. Bly RFPD relies totally on volunteers with no full-time or paid firefighters. District apparatus include one Type 6 Wildland Engine, one Type 4 Engine, two Type 1 Structure Engines and one Type 2 Water Tender.

The fire district maintains a cooperative fire agreement with Oregon Department of Forestry allowing both entities, along with USFS and BLM, under separate agreement with ODF, to assist each other with wildland fire incidents. Typically over the past five years, the following wildland resources have been staffed along with response time to Bly:

USFS – Bly	4 – Type 6 Engines	
	1 – Type 4 Engine	
	1 – Ten Person Hand Crew	
ODF – Camp Six	2 – Type 6 Engines	25 minute response time
	1 – Type 5 Engine	25 minute response time
ODF – Bly Mountain	1 – Type 5 Engine	30 minute response time
BLM – Gerber	2 – Type 6 Engines	40 minute response time
	1 – Type 4 Engine	40 minute response time

As a result of resources available, local preparedness and firefighting capability for the entire Bly area is considered to rate as moderate to high. However **multiple fire occurrence** typical of summer lightning storms in south central Oregon **may significantly reduce resource availability**.

As an example of collaborative efforts thus far, extensive fuel treatment has occurred on adjacent federal land (FS and BLM) south of Bly, Bley-was and Fishhole (Tub prescribed burn 1987, 1999 and 2004 for two total entries on each area and BLM handpiling/juniper girdling in 1999, juniper felling/piling in 2005).





(Compound/Whiskey Prescribed Burn area – approximately ½ mile west of Pinecrest. Photo taken 2003 after 2 entries 1988 and 1997 and previous stand improvement activities – 4,600 acres adjacent to assessment area)

Additional treatment has also occurred west of Pinecrest on FS land (Compound/Whiskey prescribed burns 1988 and 1997) but the effect to Pinecrest is limited due to a large timber company's in-holdings between (about ½ mile) federal land and the subdivision. (Refer to Attachments 1, 2 and 3)

Future proposed activities on Federal Lands include mechanical treatment of border lands from Pinecrest west to the base of Bly Mountain (approximately 1 mile wide by 15 miles long) to total approximately 14,000 acres. This proposed FS project, referred to as Bly WUI, will increase the defensibility of not only Pinecrest, but extend west along Highway 140 to Shady Rest (approximately 20 homes and structures) and the other rural areas southeast, south and southwest of Beatty which have areas of concentrated homes (approximately 40 residences and structures). (see attachment 2) Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones were identified by the presence of multiple homes/structures concentrated in specific areas surrounded by wildland vegetation.





(Tub Prescribed Burn area – approximately 1 mile south of Bly and west of Fishhole, Photo of northern portion taken in 2003 after 2 entries 1987 and 1999 and previous stand improvement activities – 15,000 acres. Second entry on south half was completed in 2004.)



(Typical UNTREATED Pinecrest stand)

In 2003, through a National Fire Plan grant, Reach, Inc. implemented mechanical treatment on approximately 50 acres within the Pinecrest subdivision. Oregon Department of Forestry contacted landowners for specific approvals and provided stand prescriptions for Reach, Inc. to accomplish. Thinning, chipping and piling of debris was completed by Reach, Inc. and the Bly Rural Fire Department burned the piles in December 2003 when adequate snow was on site to minimize fire spread.





(Pinecrest – thinned and chipped area.)



(Pinecrest – thinned and handpiled area – before burning)



(Pinecrest water tower after thinning and chipping – usable wood is stacked in background for first come, first serve. Grant money ran out by the time they reached the area below the water tower – notice overstocked stand in background on left side)

The area is classified as Fire Regime I, Condition Class 3 in untreated areas and Condition Class 2 in treated areas as described by the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station in the general technical report entitled “Development of Coarse-Scale Spatial Data for Wildland Fire and Fuel Management” dated April 2000.

The dominant hazardous fuels in the assessment area are overstocked ponderosa pine and/or juniper stands that occur throughout the assessment area. Although more specific information is available in the appendices, each area can be generally characterized as follows:

- |           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pinecrest | Primarily ponderosa pine stands with undergrowth that includes manzanita, snowbrush, and mountain mahogany at the higher elevations trending to an intermix of ponderosa pine, juniper and sagebrush at the lower elevations of the subdivision.<br>Approximately 50 out of 200 acres has been thinned and treated with a National Fire Plan Grant in 2003. |
| Bley-was  | An intermix of ponderosa pine and juniper stands with sagebrush and occasional mountain mahogany undergrowth. Approximately 99 acres.                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Fishhole  | Primarily juniper stands with sagebrush and mountain mahogany in the undergrowth, and occasional ponderosa pine.<br>Approximately 1000 acres.                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Bly       | The community mostly lies in a greenbelt and wildland fuels primarily exist just outside the community in the form of juniper, sagebrush and grass. Hazardous fuels within the community mainly consist of unkempt, vacant lots with tall grass.<br>Approximately 200 acres.                                                                                |

Oregon Department of Forestry completed Wildfire Hazard Rating Assessments for many areas in Klamath County using Secure Rural Schools Funding. Appendices A, B and C include detailed specific information on each subdivision including:

- Wildfire Hazard Rating Form Subdivision and Narrative
- Risk Assessment Example
- Rating for Vacant Lot Example
- Klamath County Assessment Maps
- Aerial Photos
- Fuel Model Maps
- Structure Location Map
- Hydrant/Water Source Location Map
- Fuel Treatment Priority Maps

The Bly CWWP Wildland Hazard Assessment is summarized as follows:

- **Slope:** 95% of the survey sites occurred on slopes that were less than 20 percent.
- **Aspect:** 80% of the sites had flat or slightly southern exposures while the remaining 20% had northeast or other exposures.
- **\*Vegetation Type:** 30% of the survey sites had a high hazard vegetation rating, 30% of the sites had a moderate hazard rating and the remaining 40% had a low hazard vegetation rating.
- **\*Fuel Type:** 50% of the fuel survey points had heavy fuels, 30% had moderate and the remaining 20% had light fuels.
- **\*Fuel Density:** 50% of the sites had a continuous fuel density and the remaining was a broken fuelbed.

\*(Fuel Hazard Map is Attachment 3)

Another component of the Hazard Assessment was to characterize the structure survivability, by assessing building materials, access, overhanging or close trees/shrubs, and susceptibility to fire brands. Approximately 98% of the homes are occupied year around and vacant lots are estimated at 40-50% of the total area. Assessments were only completed for Bley-was, Fishhole and Pinecrest because of Bly's greenbelt location. Break-down of each component by subdivision follows:

- **Type of structure:** (Wood built or mobile home)
  - Bley-was – 71% wood built, 29% mobile home.
  - Fishhole – 56% wood built, 44% mobile home.
  - Pinecrest – 22% wood built, 78% mobile home.
- **Access:** Considered good on all site assessments.
- **Driveway:** (Dead end – no adequate turnaround for apparatus)
  - Bley-was – less than one percent.
  - Fishhole – 40% have inadequate turnarounds.
  - Pinecrest – 73% percent have inadequate turnarounds.
- **Roof:** Bley-was – 38% metal, 57% composition, 5% shake (1 house)
  - Fishhole – 56% metal, 41% composition, 3% shake (1 house)
  - Pinecrest – 59% metal, 41% composition, water tower has shake roof
  - No composition roofs were found with accumulation of needles.
- **Trees:** (Overhanging structure)
  - Bley-was – 67% of the structures had at least one or more overhanging tree.
  - Fishhole – 62% with one or more overhanging tree.
  - Pinecrest – 54% with one or more overhanging tree.
- **Brush/trees/slash:** (Not thinned within 30 feet of structure)
  - Bley-was – 29% had vegetation too close to structure.
  - Fishhole – 18% had vegetation too close to structure.
  - Pinecrest – 19% had vegetation too close to structure.

- ❑ **Deck/stilt:** (Not enclosed underneath to ground)
  - Bley-was – 67%
  - Fishhole – 74%
  - Pinecrest – 70%
- ❑ **Other:** (Includes other hazards that pose risks to firefighter safety such as propane tanks, powerlines, or dogs)
  - Bley-was – 100%
  - Fishhole – 94%
  - Pinecrest – 89%

**Structure Rating or scoring:** Each assessed home received a total score based on all the above. Following are the results of all scores along with what the points mean to defensibility:

❖ 0-2 points	May Stand Alone	Bley-was	24%
		Fishhole	30%
		Pinecrest	23%
❖ 3-5 points	Defend Aggressively	Bly-was	71%
		Fishhole	67%
		Pinecrest	64%
❖ 6-7 points	Defend Cautiously	Bly-was	5%
		Fishhole	3%
		Pinecrest	10%
❖ 8+ points	Use Extreme Caution	Bley-was	0%
		Fishhole	0%
		Pinecrest	3% (water tower)

**Wildfire Hazard Rating – Subdivision:** Each subdivision was rated on:

*Subdivision Design*, including primary roads, width of roads, accessibility, Secondary roads, average lot size and street signs.  
*Vegetation*, including fuel types and defensible space.  
*Topography*, percentage of slope  
*Roofing Material*  
*Fire Protection – Water Source*  
*Existing Building Construction Materials*  
*Utilities*

All Subdivisions scored Moderate Wildfire Hazard Ratings, although some specific categories varied by wide differences. An example is water sources that range from 500 GPM hydrants within 1000' in Bly and Bley-was to no water hydrants in Fishhole.



**Critical human infrastructure includes escape routes, municipal water supply structures and power/communication lines.**

- ❑ Escape routes seem adequate by utilizing current county roads, however deadends or adequate turnarounds in private drives were lacking the most in Pinecrest (73%), followed by Fishhole (40%). Bley-was and Bly are less than 1%. **Public education stressing the need for adequate turnarounds in private drives needs to be addressed and emphasized during public contacts.**
- ❑ Municipal water supply structures include water towers in Bly, Bley-was and Pinecrest. The Bly and Bley-was water towers and sanitary facilities are at low risk to wildfire due to their location in sparse vegetation and construction materials, but the *water tower at Pinecrest is at high risk of wildfire* due to continuous fuelbed conditions and a wooden tower with a shake roof. ***This is the highest priority infrastructure needing surrounding fuel treatment***
- ❑ Power/communication lines utilize right-of-ways along current county road systems for distribution and have adequate clearances to rate as low risk. Most communication lines are buried along the same right-of-ways. There is a 130 KV wooden transmission powerline that runs generally east and west through the area (identified on attachment 1), but the vegetative right-of-way is well maintained annually by PP&L resulting in low risk from wildfire.

**Action Items to Achieve Desired Condition**

Based on input and interviews from property owners, fire district and department personnel, state and federal agency personnel associated with the assessment area, the following actions should be considered:

- ✓ Reduce the build-up of fuels within the assessment areas.
- ✓ Increase the knowledge and understanding of residents to proper firewise activities such as landscaping, pruning and thinning within defensible space area, use of fire resistant building materials, proper access roads and emergency evacuation procedures.
- ✓ Increase effectiveness of fuel breaks established by BLM/FS by reducing fuel loading on private lands that are adjacent to Federal lands.
- ✓ Develop a treatment area map for the assessment area.

## **Need for Action**

Wildfire occurrence in the Bly assessment area is common and results from both lightning and human causes (attachment 2 includes the last 20 years of fire occurrence). Within the assessment area about 50% of past fire occurrence are human starts and the other 50% are lightning caused. Human causes have included debris burning, children and equipment. The majority of all human caused fires within the assessment area were in the Pinecrest subdivision.

Predominant wind patterns are normally from the south – southwest, so treatment priority outside of the immediate WUI areas should be to the south and southwest. Historically, fires not caught by initial attack responses can travel two miles or more in one burning period. A good example of spread potential is the large fires of 1955 which included Bly Ridge, Dry Prairie, Round Butte and Deming Creek Fires. The Bly Ridge Fire burned into part of the area that is now Pinecrest. Residents from this era stated that Bly was engulfed by ash and embers during the multi-fire episode of 1955 and fires exhibited extreme fire behavior, including long range spotting. The 1985 Privy Fire burned within four miles southwest of Bly and exhibited extreme fire behavior prior to weather changes that facilitated containing the fire. This illustrates the need to treat from the WUI areas outward across jurisdictional boundaries.

The hazard of wildland fire is high on all areas south and southwest of the assessment area, with the exception of federal lands that have had fuel treatments conducted on them. Federal lands with former fuel treatment have a moderate to low hazard rating, depending on how extensive and recent past treatments have been. Most adjacent federal lands have received treatments within the last 10 years, and are planned for future fuel maintenance activities. Areas to the north and northeast of the assessment area lie within the Sprague River Valley, consisting primarily of a greenbelt, resulting in a low hazard rating. Areas to the east consist primarily of broken Juniper/Sagebrush ecotypes resulting in low to moderate hazard rating.

## **Firewise Conditions**

General action includes the adherence to firewise practices within the assessment areas. The vegetation growing around structures needs to be maintained at an acceptable level. The firewise recommended distance for survivable space is a 30 foot area around the home or structure that is properly landscaped with fire-resistant vegetation and has little slope. Preferred methods include mechanical treatment with some low risk prescribed fire treatment such as handpiling and burning.

Mechanical removal (thinning and piling/chipping) is one way to keep vegetation in suggested firewise condition and preferred method of removal includes utilization of small diameter wood products. Any market opportunities that could utilize excess wood products would help to offset costs associated with fuel treatment. Thinning and piling (for later burning) OR thinning and chipping both result in reducing the hazard from a high to low rating. (Utilization of wood products through removal is the preferred treatment, whether for firewood or commercial opportunities.)

There are numerous instances where large ponderosa pine or juniper trees are growing close to structures. A professional arborist should carefully remove these trees or remove limbs that hang over structures or that are within 30 feet of the ground. Secondly, some areas need clean up of brush and debris that occur around structures. Adequate pruning (suggested to 8 feet), thinning and fuel removal beyond the 30 foot survivable space is essential in increasing defensible space. Improved firewise practices are general but long-term in nature because they require continual adherence to reduce the hazard of wildfire.

## **Methodology**

The majority of information presented in this report was gathered between 2003 and 2005. The fire-hazard assessment area surrounding the Bly area was defined by ODF with assistance from Bly RFD. On the ground structure risk assessments and wildfire hazard assessments were completed by ODF employees. Digital photographs and GPS readings were gathered for mapping and tracking purposes. This data is on file with ODF and Bly RFPD.

The ODF risk assessments rated the characteristics of the land features, fuel sources, wildfire hazard rating for subdivisions, and structure elements.

### **Structure Elements**

The structure rating elements included type of structure, access, driveway, roof, brush/trees/slash, slope, attachments to the structure such as decks and other hazards that may be present such as powerlines, animals, propane tanks, etc.

### **Wildfire Hazard Rating - Subdivisions**

Wildfire Hazard Rating for Subdivisions included rating elements for subdivision design, vegetation, topography, roofing material, fire protection – water source, existing building construction materials, and utilities. All of these combined give an overall rating score ranging from Low to Extreme Hazard. Scores with points of 40 to 59 rated as moderate hazard. All of the Bly CWPP area rated as moderate hazard, but had different scores.

Pinecrest rated the highest in the moderate hazard category with 50.

Bly and Bley-was rated in the moderate hazard category with 44.

Fishhole rated in the moderate hazard category with 48.

The most influencing factor in establishing priorities are the fuel and topography conditions. Using information from the hazard ratings combined with the fuel hazard mapping, topography and historical weather patterns the following priorities were established between subdivisions:

- Priority 1: Pinecrest
- Priority 2: Bly/Bley-was
- Priority 3: Fishhole

GIS mapping with treatment proposal locations was completed by the Forest Service, Bly Ranger District, Fremont-Winema National Forest and ODF, Klamath-Lake Unit. (Attachments 1, 2 and 3) between 2003 and 2005.

Appendices A, B, and C were completed by ODF, Klamath-Lake Unit with review by Bly RFD.

## Recommended Project Proposals and Priorities

The proposed projects and their priority are based on information obtained from the fuel and structure surveys, community meetings, and interviews. Priorities are based on combined risk assessment of fuel hazard, wildfire occurrence, and structure/infrastructure vulnerability. Priority one equates to a high risk, priority two a moderate risk and priority three a low risk. The top three priorities identify needs immediate to the at risk communities while priority 4 moves beyond the developed areas into the wildland adjacent to the communities.

**The following specific action items in order of priority or risk were identified to reduce the hazard of wildfire in the Bly assessment area and are directly related to the protection of the community and essential infrastructure:**

- **Reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels in communities at-risk areas of:**
  1. **Pinecrest** (highest priority is area in vicinity of water tower)
  2. **Bly/Bley-was** (highest priority is Bley-was Canyon)
  3. **Fishhole**  
(Refer to Appendices A, B, and C for specific priority maps)
  
- **Adjacent Private Land Fuel Treatment**

Prioritize private lands adjacent and outside at-risk communities and encourage private landowners to conduct fuel treatments on high hazard areas.

*Prioritize private in-holdings between;*

  - 1) *Pinecrest and USFS lands to the west (west ¼ of section 30)*
  - 2) *private lands south of Pinecrest and west of Bly/Bley-was (sections 31, 32, 33 - approx 3500 acres total)*  
(Refer to Attachments 1 and 3 for priorities)
  
- **Adjacent Federal Land Fuel Treatment**

Continue aggressive fuel treatment on both BLM and USFS lands including maintenance of past treatments and areas of high hazard in need of treatment.

  1. **Conduct fuel treatment on USFS land west of Pinecrest.**  
(Sections 25 and 36 and west along Highway 140 – refer to Attachments 1 and 2) **This area, known as Bly WUI West, should continue beyond the USFS planning table to the implementation phase.**
  2. **Continue fuel treatment maintenance on both BLM and USFS lands south of the Bly assessment area.**  
(Refer to Attachment 2 for overview of past treatment)



- **Encourage firewise practices through active education and outreach programs throughout the assessment area. *Homeowners should:***

*1) recognize and deal with issues such as:*

- a. overhanging limbs,*
- b. non-enclosed decks,*
- c. dead-end driveways.*

*2) Maintain vegetation around structures at acceptable firewise levels (at least 30 feet).*

All agencies share a responsibility to the public to provide the best fire prevention and fire safety information possible. Continued efforts of both the wildland and structure fire communities are essential in encouraging firewise practices.

## **Summary**

The fuel survey and visual examination of the assessment area demonstrated the widespread occurrence of overstocked ponderosa pine, brush and juniper stands. Most of the residents who were contacted or attended public meetings were in favor of reducing the buildup of hazardous fuels in the assessment area and the construction of fuel breaks.

Currently the BLM, FS and ODF are cooperating to reduce the buildup of hazardous fuels on adjacent lands through prescribed fire, thinning, brush disposal and the construction of fuel breaks between federal and private land. *These efforts should continue on projects like the USFS Bly WUI, Compound/Whiskey, Tub and BLM lands south and west of Bly/Bley-was. Continued maintenance of past projects is critical to sustain desired fuel conditions.*

The surveys showed a lack of firewise practices in some areas, but the **most significant ones were in nonresident ownership and vacant lots. These will continue to make the community vulnerable if landowners are not willing to participate in hazard reduction strategies.**

*The most significant issues for resident ownerships were:*

- *Overhanging trees/limbs,*
- *non-enclosed decks susceptible to fire-brands, and*
- *dead-end driveways.*

*Continued funding or initiative is needed to create or improve defensible space in all subdivisions, including 30 foot defensible space around structures, and pruning, thinning and fuel removal beyond 30 feet to further increase defensibility*

**Take advantage of any opportunities to improve the Fire District’s ISO Public Protection Classification, such as grants or excess property programs for upgrading fire apparatus, and safety equipment.**

Public education and outreach programs to inform and encourage specific actions that will reduce the chances of wildfire damaging structures and property is an important priority. A big challenge will be contacting and working on site with nonresident owners.

**Annual “Clean-up Days” are one tool that is recommended to encourage residents to create defensible/survivable space around their residences, and common areas such as road right-of-ways.** These are most effective in the spring to remind people to prepare their properties for the coming fire season.

Citizen involvement in wildfire mitigation in and around communities is a necessary element for success. Public education and outreach is an effective means of engaging the public in the process of reducing risks to a community, can help identify problems and solutions for both federal and private landowners, and offer opportunities for partnerships and agreements. Such education and outreach has been shown to motivate homeowners to take measures around their individual property, thereby contributing to the reduction of wildfire hazards in a community.

Collaboration between all parties should continue, as should **monitoring and tracking** the progress of recommended proposals and projects. Follow up is essential for tracking progress and identifying needs for re-entry or maintenance treatments to sustain acceptable fuel conditions, and eventually change the vegetation state in the general area to a Condition Class 1. **Annual or bi-annual meetings between all parties could assist in keeping this plan up-to-date and track progress toward the action items.**

ODF should be commended for their efforts in site and hazard assessments, application and implementation of grants thus far, and overall coordination with private landowners, federal agencies and Bly RFPD. Although available funding has been limited to date, we hope future opportunities and funding for wildfire protection will be greatly increased through the collaborative efforts of the Bly Community Wildfire Protection Plan.