# » » » ATTENTION « « «

# Woodland owners affected by wildfires

**Did you have trees burn in a wildfire?** If so, the Oregon State University Extension Service is here to help you with information on many important topics related to caring for your land after a wildfire. These include:

- How to assess your land after a fire
- Assessing if your trees will live after a fire
- Sample contracts for hiring contractors
- Tax considerations for those impacted by wildfires
- How to identify hazard trees
- Mitigating erosion
- Salvage logging
- Reforesting your land
- Finding financial assistance opportunities to help with erosion, hazard tree removal, and reforesting your land after fire. Agencies providing this assistance include the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency, Oregon Department of Forestry, among others.

These resources are all available online (see below). We realize many people do not currently have good internet access. So, if you would like to receive information on any of these topics, please contact your local OSU Extension Forestry Agent (see the "contact sheet" in this packet). Your local Extension Forestry Agent will work with you to get you this information either via email or printed free of charge.

As an educational organization, we want to help you have all the tools necessary to make an informed decision on how to care for your land after a fire. Call us whether you have 1 acre or 1,000 acres.

A great place to start, if you have web access, is to view our **free online post-fire webinar series**. You can do that anytime, just visit the OSU Extension Fire Program Online Webinar Guide at <a href="https://beav.es/ozv">https://beav.es/ozv</a>.

In addition to the webinar series, we have a multitude of other helpful publications covering post-fire topics available to you. Visit <a href="https://beav.es/orv">https://beav.es/orv</a> to view/download.



Information provided in partnership with: OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension Program, Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), Oregon Forest Resources Institute (OFRI), Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA), Barnes & Associates Inc., Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA), & Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB).

After the Fire Checklist, IF YOUR PROPERTY HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY WILDFIRE, UTILIZE THIS CHECK-LIST TO CHART A COURSE FORWARD AND MODIFY TO SUIT YOUR NEEDS. On the way back to your home Check with law enforcement for an end to evacuation and the all-clear to Refer to TripCheck for road clearances Look for downed trees, shrubs, rocks loosened by the fire that could create road obstacles or fall on to the road/driveway Be aware of standing trees or utility poles by the side of the road that may or may not look burned, or partially burned - that can be loosened by the fire ☐ Watch out for downed powerlines. Once back on your property Wear proper personal protective equipment: thick boots (to prevent puncture wounds from sharp objects), heavy gloves, mask, eye pro tection, hard hat (protection from overhead hazards). ☐ Check around the house for hot embers in gutters, under decks, wood/debris piles, valleys of the roof, shrub/vegetation clumps wisps of smoke or smell of smoke - call 911 if any heat found. Check for structural damage to the house (foundation cracks, support beams charred)  $\square$  Check for gas (smell of gas) and water leaks. ☐ Check the main power meter (normally outside). If turned off or no power, call the utility service provider ☐ Make sure pump house/well is in good working order – make sure water is safe to drink ☐ Any damage to gas lines, phone lines, power lines – stay clear and call utility service provider Going in the house ☐ Before turning any lights on - have a flashlight (turn it on prior to entering the house) from your go-kit. Look for embers (in the dark) or heat throughout the house, especially in the attic (smell and look for smoke) Check for structural damage inside the house ☐ Check the main circuit box. If turned off, make sure all appliances are off before turning the main circuit breaker back on Discard all food that's been exposed to heat, smoke, fumes, soot or flood waters. If the power has been out, discard food that could be spoiling

For more information visit: extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program

Authors: Daniel Leavell, Stephen Fitzgerald, and Carrie Berger. Design: Tiffany Hopkins. All of Forestry & Natural Resources Extension Program, Oregon State University. Updated: October 1, 2020 Oregon State University
Extension Service
Fire Program

# Tips for using page 2 of the After the Fire Checklist

- Draw on a map to the best of your ability.
- Be sure to include photos when possible with the map.
- Percent of property area burned: delineate how much was burned and how much was not burned.
- **Identify slope of property**: separate between tractor ground (0-30%) and cable ground (>30%).
- Overall percent and location of vegetation burn severity: estimate area where plants have burned and died from the fire. Separate to the degree burned black, brown, singed (part green).
- Overall percent and location of soil burn severity: estimate area where soil was impacted by the
  fire. Separate by degree of soil scorch: high is all fuel burned off leaving bare, scorched ground;
  moderate is some litter and duff left; low is most litter, duff, and fuel left on the ground.
- How close did the water come to water courses: estimate how close the fire burned (in feet) and to what severity to water courses, ponds, seeps, meadows, etc.
- How steep are the slopes above and adjacent to water courses: estimate by percent slope adjacent to water courses. Tractor ground vs cable ground would be sufficient.
- Was there erosion on the property prior to the fire: yes or no. Estimate where and what type, if possible.
- **Forested area burn severity and tree mortality**: estimate percent of forest trees that died as a direct result of the fire or that will die with reasonable certainty within the first three years following the fire. Estimate acres affected. Separate into three classes less than 10%; 10 to 50%; >50%.
- **Location and number of hazardous trees**: locate on your map locations and numbers. These are trees that will be likely to fall over and cause damage.
- **Damage to property improvements**: any pipes, fences, bridges, any structures, improvements, stock structures, human structures, irrigation lines, etc., damaged as a direct result of the fire, or by the fire suppression efforts.
- **Damage to road surface, ditches, or culverts**: map out any immediate damage and damage incurred after the winter snows and spring rains as a direct or indirect result of the fire.
- **Identify natural draws, streams, and rivers**: map out to the best of your ability where these are located on your property.

# After the Fire Flowchart

IF YOUR PROPERTY HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY WILDFIRES, HERE IS A GUIDE TO FOLLOW. THIS WILL PROVIDE SOME ORGANIZATION TO THE PROCESS.

### ON THE WAY HOME

1

Look up, down, and around for road obstacles, loose or downed powerlines, rocks, road damage.

# **MAKE SPECIALIST CONTACTS**

5

Various local, non-profit, County, State, and Federal specialists and technical assistants can offer assistance for mapping, definitions, prioritizing, and planning.

### **BACK ON THE PROPERTY**

2

Make sure it's ok to return. Wear protective gear and do a walk-around. Check for smells or sights of embers. If power is off, call utility provider.

### **OBTAIN FUNDING**

6

Work with specialists and technical assistants to determine if your project needs qualify for funding, if funding is available, and if short- or long-term projects are best suited for post-fire work.

#### **ENTER THE HOUSE**

3

Leave lights off, enter house to check for heat, smells or sights of smoke. Check for gas or water leaks. Once safe, turn on main circuit box. Throw out food tainted with smoke or that has not been refrigerated.

#### **CONTACT CONTRACTORS**

7

Specialists and technical assistants can provide a list of professionals for you to choose. Set up contracts with specifications unique to your project needs. Develop an economy of scale by working with neighbors where possible.

#### **OUTSIDE ASSESSMENT**

4

Consult checklist and map out items checked for your property. This will set up for prioritizing, qualifying, and obtaining funding.

#### **GET THE WORK DONE**

8

Timing is important for certain projects like erosion control and timber salvage. Plan with short- and long-term management goals and objectives

For more information visit: extension.oregonstate.edu/fire-program

Authors: Daniel Leavell, Stephen Fitzgerald, and Carrie Berger. Design: Tiffany Hopkins. All of Forestry & Natural Resources Extension Program, Oregon State University.

Updated: October 1, 2020



Oregon State University
Extension Service
Fire Program

# AFTER THE FIRE - NOW WHAT? FIRE, WATER, EROSION, & MITIGATION TREATMENTS

# Fire and the Hydrologic Cycle

Intense heat can:

- Create hydrophobic soils
- Reduce water infiltration
- Cause a loss of organic layer
- Increase runoff, erosion, dry ravel
- Lead to localized debris flows
- Affect water quality, temperature, and sediment delivery

# **Burn Severity**

- Degree of fire effects on soils depend on severity and amount of the watershed affected.
- The potential for detrimental effects of wildfire are highest in areas of high burn severity and steep slopes in the first 1-3 years.

# What Mitigation Measures Can You Take?

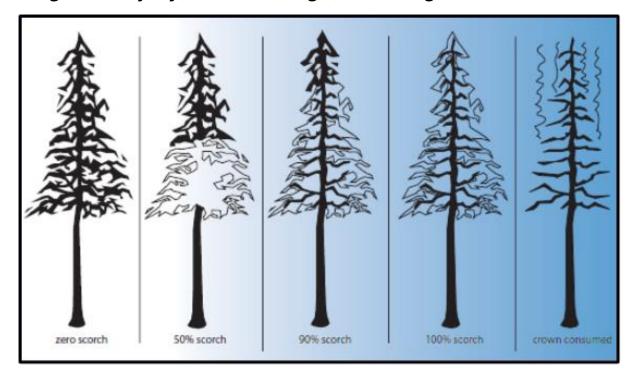
The following are some actions you can take to increase surface roughness to slow water movement, and improve infiltration to reduce erosion and sedimentation in targeted areas:

- Aerial and ground seeding of native grass/forbs
- Mulch only (weed free)
- Erosion control blankets/matting
- Contour wattles
- Contour logs placement
- Straw bales & silt fences
- Drainage maintenance & upgrades

# Mitigation measures include:

- Seeding
- Mulching (wood chips or straw)
- Erosion control matting
- Log erosion barriers
- Contour wattles
- Silt fences
- Straw bales
- Drainage upgrades (to accommodate increased stream flow post-fire)

# Assessing Fire Injury, Tree Damage, & Salvage Potential



#### Fire and heat injuries to look for

- Crown scorch (foliage & buds)
- Bole/trunk char
- Root collar char
- Other factors:
  - Species
  - o Pre-fire vigor
  - Bark beetles
  - o Drought

#### To Salvage or Not to Salvage?

- Do you have enough timber volume to harvest?
- What are current log prices?
- What are the logging costs?
- Can you salvage quickly before trees lose significant value through defect & decay?
- Is a logger available?
- Reforestation after salvage cutting

### **Summary/Resources**

My Forest Burned: Now What?: This publication provide initial guidance for restoring your land in a way that emphasizes the wildlife habitat a post-fire landscape can provide:

https://woodlandfishandwildlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/After-the-Fire-final-reduced.pdf

Jute Matting Installation: An excellent 4-minute video on how to properly install jute matting so it stays in place: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFgL60LV|Nc

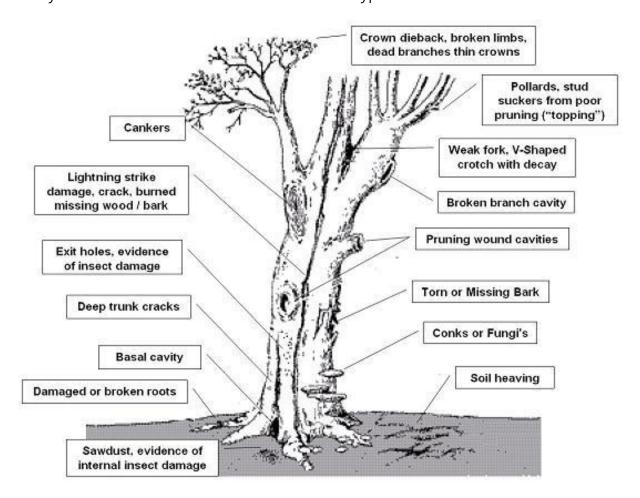
# POST-FIRE HAZARD TREE AWARENESS

#### What makes a tree hazardous?

A tree is considered hazardous if it has defects or structural weaknesses that may cause failure resulting in property damage, personal injury or death. The post-burn environment surrounding a hazardous tree can be equally if not more dangerous than the tree itself!

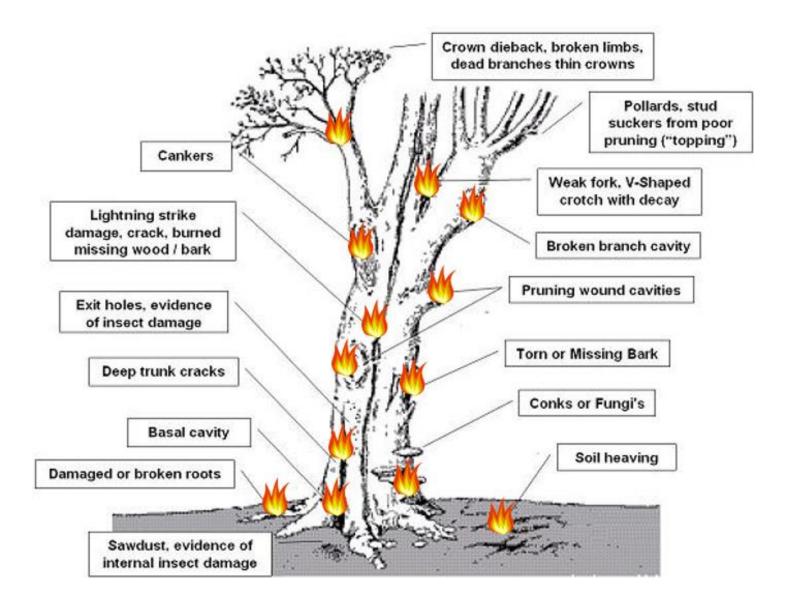
#### Common Pre-Fire Factors in Tree Failure

- Tree Species
- Tree Age
- Decay
- Wounds
- Cankers
- Seams
- Lean
- Branch Angle
- Branch Type
- Crown Vigor
- Crown Form/Shape
- Root Condition



#### Common Post-Fire Factors in Tree Failure

Live or dead	<ul> <li>Loose overhead limbs ("widowmakers")</li> </ul>			
<ul> <li>Burned out roots</li> </ul>	Species, resinous vs. non-resinous			
<ul> <li>Limb weight</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Broken or uprooted trees supported by other trees</li> </ul>			
<ul> <li>Hollowed boles</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Catfaces and other impacts to percentage of sound</li> </ul>			
	bole wood			
<ul> <li>Leaning and/or root sprung</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Incineration of other indicators of weakness (conks,</li> </ul>			
	mushrooms, etc.)			



# • Resinous vs. Non-Resinous Species

Species Group	Resinous (decay resistant)			
True-fir (Abies spp.)	No			
Hemlock	No			
Spruce	Partially			
Douglas-fir	Yes			
Larch	Yes			
Pine	Yes			
Cedar	Non-resinous but decay resistant			
Hardwoods	Non-resinous but some are more			
	decay resistant than others			

#### • Live vs. Dead

Dead trees should be considered to have a high potential for failure. Live trees should not automatically be considered to have a low potential for failure if they have been damaged by fire or present other failure indicators

#### Post-Fire Hazard Tree Assessments

Based upon *probabilities* as well as some assumptions about the future

- Is the tree *likely* to fail/fall?
- When is tree *likely* to fail/fall?
- Is target likely to be present when tree fails/falls?

#### **Inspection and Hazard Assessment**

- Check to ensure entry into and exit from areas surrounding the tree are safe
- Start at tree bottom or top depending on height, damage, and initial observations of potential failure
- Use binoculars
- Check from all angles
- Look for targets
- Document results
- Considering using a hazard assessment for decision-making

#### Steps in developing a Tree Risk Rating

- 1. Identify the possible target
- 2. Identify the tree part(s) that could strike the target
- 3. Evaluate the likelihood for each part to fail
  - Improbable, possible, probably, imminent
- 4. Evaluate the likelihood of tree/part impacting target
  - Very low, low, medium, high
- 5. For each failure mode, identify the likelihood for tree failure impacting a specified target
  - Very unlikely, unlikely, somewhat likely, likely, very likely
- 6. For each failure mode, estimate the consequences of failure
  - Negligible, minor, significant, severe
- 7. For each failure mode, designate the risk
  - Low, moderate, high, extreme

#### **Example of International Society of Arboricultural (ISA) Rating System**

Table 1: Matrix used to estimate the likelihood of a tree failure impacting a specified target

Likelihood of	Likelihood of Impacting Target					
Failure	Very low Low Medium High					
Imminent	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely	Very Likely		
Probable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Likely		
Possible	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Somewhat Likely		
Improbable	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely	Unlikely		

Table 2: Risk rating matrix showing the level of risk as the combination of likelihood of a tree falling and impacting a specified target, and the severity of associated consequences

Likelihood of	Consequences				
Failure & Impact	Negligible Minor Significant Sev				
Very Likely	Low	Moderate	High	Extreme	
Likely	Low	Moderate	High	High	
Somewhat Likely	Low	Low	Moderate	Moderate	
Unlikely	Low	Low	Low	Low	

#### **Awareness**

Ability to recognize hazard trees in the post-fire environment, understand their potential, and know who to call for further assistance!

#### References

- Field Guide for Hazard-tree Identification and Mitigation On Developed Sites in Oregon and Washington Forests. Portland, Oregon: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Forest Health Protection, Pacific Northwest Region: Oregon Department of Forestry: Washington State Department of Natural Resources, 2014. https://permanent.fdlp.gov/gpo52152/stelprd3799993.pdf
- A Guide to Identifying, Assessing, and Managing Hazard Trees in Developed Recreational Sites of the Northern Rocky Mountains and the Intermountain West: US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, 2017. <a href="https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd571021.pdf">https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd571021.pdf</a>
- International Society of Arborists Tree Risk Assessment Manual, Second Edition, 2017. https://wwv.isa-arbor.com/store/product/442/

# MITIGATING SOIL EROSION AFTER A FIRE

Soil erosion following wildfire is a concern for many forest owners. In many instances the site will recover on its own with minimal erosion. In other places, where the fire burned more severely, some erosion-control treatments may be needed.

The potential for significant erosion is related to the severity of the burn, slope steepness, soil type, and the amount and duration of rainfall following the fire.

# Fire Severity Classes

Wildfires burn at different intensity and can have varying effects on trees, plants, and soil. Three fire-severity classes include:

**Low Severity**: Most trees survive with scorch evidence. Most organic matter on soil top is intact and little consumption or charring of twigs and down logs is evident.

**Moderate Severity**: Most trees have been killed or are severely scorched and retain most of their needles. Some organic matter on soil top is consumed. Twigs may be consumed and downed logs are deeply charred.

**High Severity**: Nearly all trees are killed and have no needles. Nearly all organic matter, twigs, and logs have been consumed and soil may be damaged or altered.

#### Soils after a fire

Forest soils are prone to erosion following severe wildfires. The tree canopy and protective organic layer covering the soil have been consumed, which help dampen and adsorb intense rainfall events. Severe heating can make the upper few inches of the soil "hydrophobic," reducing infiltration and ability to adsorb rainfall. Instead of infiltrating, water moves across the soil surface displacing and transporting soil. The steeper the slope and the more intense the rainfall event, the greater the potential for significant soil movement and debris flows.

# Mitigating erosion on your land

Survey your property and determine the amount of light, moderate, or high severity areas. Some areas may need some type of erosion control treatment, particularly if streams, roads, or buildings are directly down slope from the burned area. Potential erosion controls:

# **Seeding Grasses**

Seeding of exotic annual and perennial grasses has been used in the past, however seeding provides little erosion-control the first year. Effectiveness generally increases as the plants become established. Seeding for erosion-control is a marginal practice and is generally not recommended on forest sites.

Seeding of exotic grasses suppresses establishment of native plants, competes with planted tree seedlings, and can increase fire hazard as grasses cure and dry out. Avoid seeding with non-native grasses.

When seeding, be aware seed may often wash down slope after heavy rains before it has had a chance to germinate and establish. Protective cover, such as mulch or some type of biodegradable fabric, may be needed to hold seed in place. In high damage areas where there is little re-growth of native plants, seeding of native grasses and plants may be desirable.

Finding sufficient amounts of native grass seed from suppliers is difficult and the seed is expensive.

#### **Mulching Straw**

Mulch applied at 1 to 2 tons per acre across the soil surface can protect soil from raindrop impact and may significantly reduce erosion. Straw mulch may contain weed seeds, however, that can germinate and may require future control. Rice straw, free of weed seed, is preferred.

#### **Silt Fences**

They are constructed of landscape fabric held in place with wire and stakes. They need to be anchored and sealed to the ground to be effective.

Placed in small swales, ephemeral drainages, or along hill slopes they provide temporary sediment storage. They work best on gentle slopes and where runoff and sediment is less concentrated.

#### **Straw Bale Check Dams**

These are placed in small swales and drainages to reduce sediment in streams during the first winter or rainy season. Bales need to be in full contact with soil, curved up and keyed into the banks, and adequately staked. Their effectiveness decreases as they fill in after the first few storm events and usefulness is short lived. They can blow out in large storms. Bales can contain noxious weed seeds, so monitoring and weed control may be necessary.

#### **Contour Log Placement**

This involves cutting burned trees and placing them along the contour of the slope to create an area behind the log for soil to settle. Logs 6 to 10 inches in diameter and 10 to 30 feet in length are typically used.

Logs need to be in full contact with the slope so that water and sediment do not run out beneath the log. This treatment is expensive, so target areas most prone to erosion.

#### **Straw Wattles**

Straw wattles are long flexible tubes of straw, excelsior or other material held together with plastic netting. Apply in same manner as contour log placement.

For information and assistance with erosion control measures, contact your local Natural Resource Conservation Service or Soil and Water Conservation District.

# ASSESSING POST-FIRE SURVIVABILITY OF TREES

Extensive research on the fate of fire damaged trees provides guidance for assessing survival based on postfire observations of crown scorch, bark char, and root damage. Vulnerability to fire damage depends on tree species and size. Larger trees with thicker bark and larger amounts of foliage can generally withstand more damage than smaller trees.

Thick-barked species including Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, western larch, and incense cedar are resistant to fire damage. High levels of crown injury are typically required to kill thick-bark trees. Thin barked species such as western hemlock, western redcedar, spruce, and lodgepole pine are easily killed by fire, even with little crown damage.

It may take several years for trees to die from fire-related injury. Trees that survive direct injuries from fire often have increased vulnerability to secondary factors including insects and drought stress.

A general assessment to categorize damage across the range from light to heavy can help simplify the assessment. It is easy to judge the fate of trees on either the heavy or light end of the fire severity spectrum. The cases in the moderate damage category are less predictable.

# Fire injury categories

	Heavy - Severe	Moderate – Significant	Light – Minor	
	Trees very likely to die	Trees may die, less predictable, more careful assessment, or "time will tell"	Trees not likely to die	
Crown	Little or no live crown	Varying levels of crown scorch	Most of the crown	
	remaining		intact	
Bole	Deep char	Varying levels of bole char	Very little bole char	
Base, Root	Deep basal char; all 4	Varying levels of basal char; 2-4	Very little basal char, 1	
crown	quarters - total	quarters	quarter or less	
	circumference			

For in-depth guidance on assessing fire damaged conifers, refer to *Post Fire Assessment of Tree Status and Marking Guidelines for Conifers in Oregon and Washington*, Hood et al 2020. https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd814664.pdf

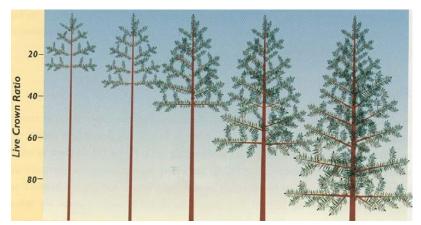
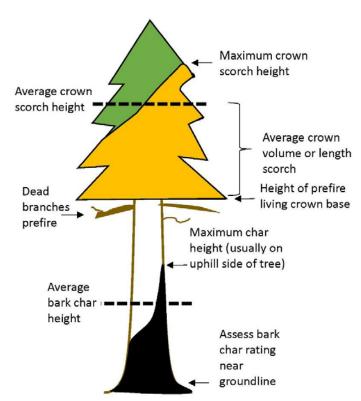


Figure 1: Live crown ration - a simple index of tree vigor.

#### Live crown ratio

Regardless of fire injury, the vigor and survivability of trees is related to the amount of live crown or crown ratio, expressed as a percentage of the total tree height. When considering survivability of trees, especially if they are to be left more exposed after removing their neighbors, it is best to have at least a 35% crown ratio.



#### **Crown injury rating**

When assessing fire damage, injury to the live crown is the first and most important consideration.

#### **Crown scorch**

An estimate of how much of pre-fire crown was killed. It is expressed as a percentage of pre-fire live crown that is damaged.

#### Assessing damage based on bark char

This involves examination of the bole, base, & roots. Bark char on thin-bark species is a reliable indicator of cambium death, but is not as reliable on species with thick bark. Cambium is the living tissue under the bark.

Figure 2: Example of how to assess crown scorch and bark char.

#### Guide for assessing damage based on bark char

Heavy - Severe	Moderate - Significant	Light - Minor
Bark burned into, not necessarily to	Bark is uniformly black except	Bark is not completely
the wood; species bark characteristics	some inner fissures; species bark	blackened; species bark
are lost; bark smoothed, all ridges are	characteristics still discernable .	characteristics obvious;
gone.		edges of bark plates charred.
	Some organic matter consumed in	
Considerable or deep duff and woody	the burned area.	Little duff or organic matter
debris consumption around base.		consumed.
	Some roots may be exposed and	
Many roots exposed and charred due	charred.	Roots not exposed or
to combustion of organic matter.		charred.

**Tolerance for risk** - Decisions about whether or not to remove injured trees depend upon your tolerance for risk. You may have a low tolerance for risk where it is important to avoid leaving trees that may die (for example where damaged trees could threaten safety or property). You may have a higher tolerance for risk of tree death in forest settings where your goal is to save any trees that may live.

**Longer-term outlook** - Damaged trees that do survive may recover their strength and have a long life ahead. But fire scars may allow wood decay to enter the main stem and increase risk of breakage over time. Trees must regain vigor enough to grow new wood around fire scars and keep up with wood rot. Also, fire scarred trees with partial decay make good wildlife trees.

**See the Tree Assessment Criteria** below for major conifer species in Oregon and Washington. For further assistance with assessment of fire injury on your trees, contact your local offices for OSU Extension and Oregon Department of Forestry.

**Tree Assessment Criteria** - The tree is likely to die (>50% chance) if damage exceeds the criteria for either crown scorch or bark char. From: *Post Fire Assessment of Tree Status and Marking Guidelines for Conifers in Oregon and Washington*, Hood et al 2020.

https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\_DOCUMENTS/fseprd814664.pdf

	2000	Diameter Class				
Species	Criteria	5 – 11.9"	12 – 20.9"	21"+		
ABAM: Pacific silver	Crown scorch	> 30% volume > 40% volume				
fir	Bark char	≥ 50% any char				
ABCO: white fir or	Crown scorch		≥ 70% volume			
hybrids	Bark char		$\geq 75\%$ deep char			
ABGR: grand fir	Crown scorch		≥ 60% volume			
	Bark char	≥ 50% any char	≥ 75% moderate	or deep char		
ABLA: subalpine fir	Crown scorch	> 30%	volume	> 40% volume		
A5	Bark char		> 50% any char	*		
ABMA: red fir	Crown scorch		≥ 70% volume			
	Bark char		> 75% deep char			
CADE: Incense cedar	Crown scorch		≥ 85% volume			
	Bark char		> 75% deep char			
LAOC: Western larch	Crown scorch	If ne	edles on: ≥ 80% crown len	gth		
		If needles off: avera	ge char height over entire			
	Bark char	> 75% deep char	Bole char not a predict	tive injury indicator		
PIEN: Engelmann	Crown scorch		≥ 75% volume			
spruce	Bark char		> 75% any char			
PISI: Sitka spruce	Crown scorch		≥ 75% volume			
	Bark char		> 75% any char			
PICO: Lodgepole pine	Crown scorch		≥ 40% volume			
	Bark char		$\geq 75\%$ any char			
PIAL: Whitebark pine	Crown scorch		≥ 40% volume			
	Bark char		$\geq 75\%$ any char			
PILA: Sugar pine	Crown scorch		≥ 70% volume			
	Bark char	> !	90% moderate or deep cha	r		
PIMO: Western white	Crown scorch		> 30% volume			
pine	Bark char		$\geq 90\%$ any char			
PIPO: Ponderosa pine	Crown scorch		Pre-bud break (volume):			
		• ≥ 85% need	lles scorched if < 10% blac	kened needles OR		
		The second secon	edles scorched if > 10% bl	CONTROL WAY IN THE PROPERTY OF		
		Post-bud break (volume	e): > 70% crown volume k	illed (no new growth)		
10 000	Bark char		> 90% deep char			
PSME: Douglas-fir	Crown scorch	0 4==20	> 65% crown volume			
	Bark char	> 50% deep char > 75% deep char				
THPL: Western red cedar	Crown scorch	> 20% crown volume	> 40% crown volume	> 60% crown volume		
Coddi	Bark char	> 50% any char > 75% an				
TSHE: Western	Crown scorch	3070	≥ 20% crown volume	, and a wary warms		
hemlock	Bark char		$\geq 90\%$ any char			
TSME: Mountain	Crown scorch		≥ 20% crown volume			
hemlock	Bark char		$\geq 90\%$ any char			
To the state of th						

Note: If a species is host to bark beetles or wood borers and there is boring dust and attack signs that are not RTB around  $\geq 50\%$  of the bole circumference, the tree will die regardless of fire injury.

RTB = Red turpentine beetle, a large bark beetle attacking the base of pine species.

# ASSESSING THE POTENTIAL FOR SALVAGE HARVESTING AFTER WILDFIRE

# What is salvage harvesting?

Primary purpose of salvage harvesting is to recover the economic value of trees killed or damaged by unforeseen and uncontrollable events (insects, wildfire, wind, ice & snow, volcanoes, etc.)

#### Other objectives of salvage harvest:

- Reduce heavy fuels
- Create strategic fuel breaks
- Improve safety around homes, roads and other infrastructure
- Prepare the site for reforestation
- Reduce the potential for insects to increase

# What Are Your Management Objectives?

#### **Management Spectrum**

# Natural (passive management) -Nature -Aesthetics -Wildlife -Wildlife -Wildlife -Fire/fuel reduction -Investment -Investment

The need for and the role of salvage harvesting will be different depending on where you are on this management spectrum. Other factors that could influence where you are on the spectrum after a fire include the location of your property, acreage burned, proximity of your property to other burned properties, and your economic situation.

# Wildfire, Succession, & Wildlife Habitat

Early seral stage is important for wildlife, include the snags (dead trees)



Figure 1: This area was salvage logged, leaving large snags for wildlife and abundant early seral vegetation (shrubs, grasses). It was also planted with native tree seedlings.

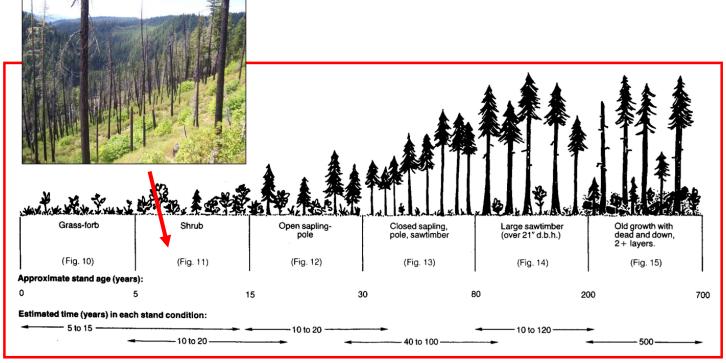


Figure 2: Forest successional stages. The shrub stage, or early seral stage, is shown in the photograph.

#### Some Definitions/Units of Measure/Costs

- Board foot a board that is 12" x 12" x 1"
- MBF Thousand Board Feet
- Logs are bought and sold based on a thousand board feet (MBF) delivered to the mill (or by the ton).
   Example: \$700/MBF
- A log truck contains anywhere from 5,200 to 6,800 board feet (5.2 MBF and 6.8 MBF, respectively)
- Logging costs and hauling costs are quoted on a per MBF basis.
  - Logging costs \$150/MBF
     Trucking costs \$50/MBF

# Measurement of Logs ("scaling")

- Measure the small end diameter inside bark (dib) in inches two directions
- Measure the length of the log in feet
- Look-up volume tables (gross scale)
- Deduct for decay & defect
- Calculate net scale for payment

# To Salvage or Not to Salvage?

- Do you have enough timber volume to harvest?
  - o Two weeks of work?
  - o Average volume per acre to be removed?
    - 5 mbf, 10 mbf, 15 mbf, or more per acre?
    - You may need to hire a consulting forester to estimate volume
- Can you salvage quickly before trees lose significant value through defect & decay?
  - 44 logging sides (equipment) lost in the Labor Day wildfires in Oregon



- Demand for operators will be high
- o How far out will you be able to secure a logging contractor?
- o Insects, decay, and checking will become a reality the longer you wait to salvage

#### **Decay and Defect**

- Insects bark beetles and wood borers
- StainDecay
- Weather checking
- Breakage

Table 4. Percent wood volume affected by stain, cracks, and decay in fire-killed Douglas-firs by years since death.

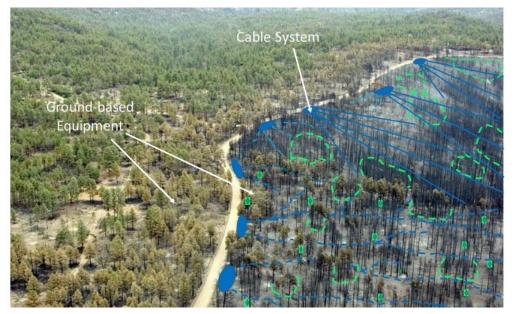
Wood Change	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Stain	3.1	9.0	22.4	NC*	NC*
Cracks	6.5	19.0	28.8	30.9	40.3
Decay	0.0	1.1	3.3	6.4	16.4

<sup>\*</sup> Not Calculable due to decay.

#### **Economics of salvage**

- What are current/future log prices?
  - Current prices are decent (as of fall 2020)
  - Flood of salvage wood going to market in the coming months and years
- What are the logging costs?
  - o Ground-based harvesting \$110-200/MBF
  - o Cable harvesting \$185-\$300+ /MBF
  - Complexity of the terrain, access, and volume removed





The figure to the left shows both ground-based (with skid trails and landings) and cable logging in the steeper terrain. Leave areas (no harvest) of dead and dying trees are left (green dashed areas) for wildlife.

#### Wildlife considerations

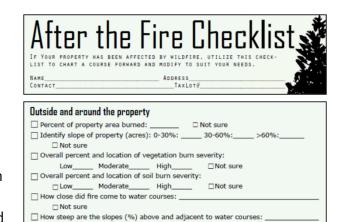
- Early seral habitat is often created after a fire
- Snag habitat is created after a fire
- Other special habitats that may be worth protecting: seeps, springs, riparian areas, old trees, etc.

#### Reforestation after salvage harvesting

- Natural recovery (enough seed from seed trees?)
- Planting tree seedlings
- Vegetation control necessary to ensure successful seedling establishment

#### Checklist

- Go back to the check list that you filled out
- Refine the amount and burn severity of vegetation and trees.
  - Fill in the percent area of low, medium, and high vegetation burn severity
  - This will provide roughly the amount of area and potential tree volume for salvage harvesting.



 $\hfill\square$  Was there erosion on the property prior to the fire? (gully, rill, sheet)

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

□Not sure

# POST-FIRE REVEGETATION OVERVIEW

# How does vegetation recover after wildfires?

- Little mortality and rapid recovery after low severity fire
- Grasses, forbs, shrubs, hardwood trees generally return on their own, even after severe fire that kills most
  of the trees. Hardwood trees and shrubs are typically top-killed and re-sprout; some perennial grasses and
  forbs regenerate from underground parts; other vegetation comes in from seed. Also some from seed
  stored in the soil.
- Conifers regeneration tends to be variable from none to abundant.
- Longer timeframes for conifer tree establishment compared to planting
- This image shows a burned area 10 years after fire. Lots of hardwoods and grass, few conifers.



# What about natural regeneration of conifers?

Depends on proximity of seed trees – most seed falls within 1-2 tree heights of seed tree. Also depends on timing of good seed crops, receptive seed bed (post fire mineral soil seedbed is good for most conifers), freedom from excessive brush and other vegetative composition. All these factors must align for good natural regeneration. In practice, can be spotty – from abundant to none.

# What are basic options for post-fire reforestation?

#### Let nature take its course - no active management.

- Vegetation will come back...but maybe not the vegetation you want
- Habitat, diversity objectives
- Good for remote sites, poor access
- No reforestation requirement, but possible property tax implications

#### **Encourage natural regeneration/interplanting**

- Good for mixed or multiple objectives, e.g., habitat, timber
- Suitable for moderate severity, smaller high severity patches
- Not a "do nothing" option must manage seedbed & competing vegetation
- Longer timeframes for conifer establishment, less reliable
- Interplant where regeneration is inadequate
- Alternate reforestation plan required if salvaging

#### Replant with or without salvage

- Can plant without salvage (may require site prep) or after salvage
- · Good for mixed or multiple objectives, e.g., habitat, timber
- Reforestation legally required after salvage
- Moderate to high severity burns
- Compared to passive or natural regeneration, this option has shorter timeframes for conifer establishment, more control over composition, genetics, more reliable, also higher costs

# KEYS TO REFORESTATION SUCCESS AFTER FIRE

Anyone faced with the need to plant forest trees (after fire or otherwise) should become familiar the basic steps for successful reforestation, covered in the following Extension publications:

- Successful Reforestation: An Overview: <a href="https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1498">https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1498</a>
- Selecting and Buying Quality Tree Seedlings: <a href="https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1196">https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1196</a>
- Sources of Forest Tree Nursery Seedlings: https://www.oregon.gov/odf/Documents/workingforests/seedling-catalog.pdf

If you don't have access to these on the internet, contact your local OSU Extension office to order paper copies of these publications.

#### Plan ahead?!

Planning ahead is key to success, so with the unexpected event of wildfire, it is important to start as soon as possible. The first step is to assess the fire damage across your property, identify specific areas where you wish to plant trees, and estimate the acreage of those areas. The basic steps are:

- Assess reforestation need in burned areas
- Seek Disaster-related assistance where needed
- Match species & seedling type to site conditions
- Order seedlings as soon as you know what you need anticipate delays due to availability
- Prepare the site anticipate timing and delays
- Handle and plant seedlings properly
- Control competing vegetation
- Monitor animal damage

# Know your land

Getting to know your land is key to evaluating your planting environment and selecting suitable tree species and genetic types within species. This involves looking at:

- Soils and soil maps (available from the NRCS)
- Topographic features and microsites
- Vegetation types and clues species indicate soil & site conditions
- Full sun or shady
- Known areas of disease and insect hazards
- Wildlife damage hazards

# Use an appropriate seed source

Note that for a given tree species, it is essential to use an appropriate *seed source* to ensure that seedlings are from parent trees adapted to local conditions. For this, refer to geographic and elevational *seed zones* for Oregon. For more on matching species, seed zones, and seedling types to your planting environment, refer to the publication *Selecting and Buying Quality Tree Seedlings* <a href="https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1196">https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/ec1196</a>

A further consideration in selecting the seed source is the risk of climate change. Forest genetics researchers have concluded that current populations (of trees) are expected to be poorly adapted to future climates. Trees adapted to future climate may be found at lower elevations or further south than current seed zones. People may consider using mixtures of seed sources to account for uncertainty and climate change over the

life of a stand (assisted migration). However, there is no clear guidance for this yet. Look for "climate-based seed zones" to be developed over the next few years.

### Avoid common problems

Proper attention to planning and implementing all key steps will help you avoid the most common causes of reforestation failure, including:

- Poor site preparation
- Unsuitable or poor quality planting stock
- Improper storage, handling, and planting
- Competition for water and light by surrounding vegetation
- Animal damage

For many landowners, the timeframe for active reforestation is likely to be delayed beyond the normal 1-2 year period for planting after timber harvest. Due to the large area burned in Oregon, we expect that the demand for tree seedlings and planting contractors will be much higher than available supply. Unless you already have contractors and seedlings secured, it could be 2-5 years before you will be able to get seedlings and tree planters. You can use the extra time to: seek assistance, assess your situation, observe natural recovery/regeneration, and plan your actions.

For further assistance with any of the key steps, contact your local offices for OSU Extension and Oregon Department of Forestry.

# Tax Considerations for Natural Disasters

#### What kinds of events qualify for casualty loss treatment?

 Must be identifiable event that is results in sudden loss and is both unusual and unexpected (hurricanes, ice storms, tornados, fire all qualify).

#### • Is the damaged/destroyed property personal use (home, household goods, personal vehicle)?

- o If yes, in order to be able to deduct must be a federally declared disaster area.
- o If no declaration, there is no deduction for any loss.

#### How is the loss determined?

- Lesser of the decrease in fair market value or the adjusted basis
- For personal property in federally declared disaster area, take the above amount, subtract \$100 and then reduce it by 10% of adjusted gross income
- Loss is calculated on record-keeping unit (for many that is by stand or by tract/property)
- Normally taken in year of loss but may go back one year in federal disaster areas
- Must take into account any amount received for salvage or from insurance (these will reduce the loss)

#### • What if I harvest timber and sell it for salvage?

- May result in a gain (if receive more than adjusted basis)
- o Gain may be deferred for two years by purchasing appropriate replacement property
- Any revenue from salvage of timber will be reported as timber sale income

#### • If I receive cost share money to help with reforestation do I report that?

- Cost share funds may be available through NRCS or FSA
- Taxpayers may be able to exclude all or part of cost share funds from income (see cost share exclusion or section 126 exclusion for the formula)

#### • Once I have harvested or cleaned up I'll spend money on reforestation

- Funds spent on site preparation or planting up to \$10,000 in a tax year on a unit may be deducted in the year of expense (section 194)
- Amounts above \$10,000 may be deducted in the following 7 tax years resulting in a complete deduction of reforestation expenses by year 8
- This is an election and must be made on the tax return for the year of expense

#### How will this impact my OR property taxes?

- If you are in the Small Tract Forestland Option, any harvest of timber will trigger the severance tax. If you don't know if you are in Small Tract, ask your assessor.
- OR Forest Practices Act requires reforestation (and a minimum stocking level). If you
  harvest, you are required to reforest. Any questions should be directed to local
  stewardship forester. Failure to stay in compliance with reforestation/stocking
  requirements may result in penalties and removal from the forestland property tax
  program.

#### **Clackamas County**

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503-655-3144

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Vacant

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#### **Jackson County**

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list of contractors, site visits, and more

Mike Thompson

22965 No. Fork Rd SE, Lyons, Or 97358

503-510-1213

File notice of operations at: https://ferns.odf.oregon.gov/E-Notification/

#### **Oregon State University, Forestry Extension Agent**

site visit, educational webinars and resources

Glenn Ahrens

200 Warner Milne Rd, Oregon City, Or 97045

503-655-8631

#### Oregon State University, Regional Fire Extension Specialist

site visits, educational webinars, resources

Vacant

#### **Oregon State University, Fire Program**

webinars and resources

https://extension.oregonstate.edu/forests/fire/after-wildfire

#### **Soil and Water Conservation District**

technical assistance

Jane Keppinger

338 Hawthorne Ave SE, Salem or 97301

503-391-9927

#### **County Tax Assessor**

Tom Rohlfing

555 Court Street NE, Salem, Or 97301

503-588-5144

#### **Partnership for Forestry Education**

free webinars and resources

#### **Washington County**

#### **Farm Services Agency**

funding for reforestation

1080 SW Baseline Suite B2, Hillsboro, Or 97123

503-648-3174

#### **Natural Resources Conservation Service**

funding for erosion control, hazard tree removal, and more

Jessica Wells

1080 SW Baseline Rd suite B-2, Hillsboro, Or 97123

503-648-3174

#### **Oregon Department of Forestry, Stewardship Forester**

list of contractors, site visits, and more

Jason McCoy

801 Gales Creek Rd Forest Grove, Or 97116

503-357-2191

File notice of operations at: https://ferns.odf.oregon.gov/E-Notification/

#### Oregon State University, Forestry Extension Agent

site visit, educational webinars, resources

Brad Withrow-Robinson (Interim for Washington Co.)

4077 SW Research Way, Corvallis, OR 97333

541-766-3554

#### Oregon State University, Regional Fire Extension Specialist

site visits, educational webinars, resources

Vacant

#### **Oregon State University, Fire Program**

webinars and resources

https://extension.oregonstate.edu/forests/fire/after-wildfire

#### **Soil and Water Conservation District**

technical assistance

Lacy Townsend

7175 NE Evergreen #400, Hillsboro, Or 97124

503-334-2288

#### **County Tax Assessor**

155 N First Ave., Hillsboro, Or 97124

503-846-8741

#### **Partnership for Forestry Education**

free webinars and resources