

FUEL BREAK AND FOREST RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE FUEL BREAK AND FOREST RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP?

The Fuel break and Forest resilience Partnership is a coordinated effort to improve forest health and reduce fuels in strategic areas with very high or extreme wildfire risk. This program offers technical and financial assistance to landowners who want to reduce fuels, improve forest health, increase drought and disease resilience, or harvest on their property.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE PROJECT?

To work with private landowners to improve forest health and reduce severe wildfire risk on their property in coordination with adjoining landowners. The project prioritizes working with groups of landowners adjacent to critical public utility infrastructure where experts agree wildfire mitigation efforts will benefit the community, fire responders, and the environment. Over the next 5 years we hope to work on over 1500 acres of strategically placed fuels treatments, and to coordinate with adjacent public land managers to expand on our efforts.

I'M INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Please fill out the interest form at the homepage. Also, if you think your neighbors or other folks nearby may be interested, please encourage them to sign-up too!

IF I FILL OUT AN INTEREST FORM, WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT NEXT?

Cascadia CD will reach out to you within a week or two to setup an initial site visit. At the visit we will discuss your goals for the property and complete an assessment to determine if you are eligible for the program. If you are eligible, we will ask you to fill out a brief application. Once we have your application in, we will develop a forest management plan, landowner agreement, and contract for financial assistance.

WHAT DOES A FUEL BREAK LOOK LIKE? WILL I HAVE TO CUT ALL OR MOST OF MY TREES?

The short answer is no. This project aims to develop a specific type of fuel break called a shaded fuel break, where some degree of forest canopy remains and typically all the nicest and healthiest trees remain following treatment. We will work directly with each landowner to develop a custom plan for the fuel break based on your goals for the property and our recommendations for the forested stand.

HOW DOES THE WORK GET COMPLETED?

Cascadia CD or WA DNR foresters will work with the landowner to develop a forest management plan and “prescription” for the fuel reduction treatment. This is essentially a scope of work the landowner uses to hire a contractor. Landowners can also complete the work themselves and get reimbursed directly. When the work is complete, a forester will come to the property to verify completion, then issue a reimbursement check for the work completed by the contractor or landowner. At times, if a group of landowners is only participating in the shaded fuel break, Cascadia CD may hire and manage the contractor directly.

IS THIS PROGRAM FREE?

The partners have worked hard to make the program free to participants for the shaded fuel break within 200 feet of overhead powerlines. The rest of your property outside this buffer are eligible for 50-80% financial assistance toward the cost of the project. We will develop forest management plans for every participant’s whole property, and we encourage landowners to complete additional portions of their property as the most effective fuel breaks are combined with larger footprint treatments across the landscape.

HOW DO I GET THE MOST FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ON MY PROJECT?

The partnership has set thresholds where you are eligible to receive higher reimbursement rates if you have landowners cooperating or a larger project. The best way to make this happen is to coordinate with nearby neighbors (does not need to be directly adjacent), with a goal of bringing 5-10 neighbors together in an area. Not only will this type of project make for a more resilient landscape, but it will make you eligible for closer to then maximum 80% of the cost reimbursement.

HOW MUCH DOES THIS WORK COST?

Typically, we see this work cost between \$1000-\$2000 per acre. Costs vary depending on the type of equipment used, the method for treating the slash (burn piles vs. chipping) steepness of slopes, road infrastructure, etc. That means if a project cost \$1000 per acre you could be eligible for reimburse of between \$500-\$800 per acre.

WHO IS INVOLVED IN THE PARTNERSHIP?

This project began with brainstorming how the Conservation District could work with private landowners adjacent to areas where Chelan PUD is investing significantly in wildfire risk reduction efforts. Cascadia CD received a 5-year grant to initiate the partnership. Cascadia CD, WA DNR, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are all coordinating to provide technical and financial assistance for this program. The partners are also coordinating closely with local US Forest Service staff to develop cross-boundary projects where appropriate.

HOW DID YOU DECIDE WHAT AREAS ARE VERY HIGH OR EXTREME WILDFIRE RISK?

Local fire districts, WA Department of Natural Resources, Chelan PUD, and US Forest Service experts worked together to take state and federal wildfire risk assessments and customize them for our area based on local expertise. Two assessments are helping focus priority areas for this project.

The WA DNR Dual Benefit Analysis, which prioritizes areas of the landscape in which fuel reduction would provide a benefit for forest health and increase wildfire response capability.

https://www.dnr.wa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/rp_dual_benefit_prioritization_flyer.pdf

<https://deptofnaturalresources.app.box.com/s/ejg0hx8l9n6uj5bfeocwd9km0qwme4eg>

Chelan PUD worked with wildfire experts and local partners to assess risk to their infrastructure and prioritize areas for wildfire mitigation efforts.

[https://www.chelanpud.org/about-us/our-commissioners/commission-meeting-](https://www.chelanpud.org/about-us/our-commissioners/commission-meeting-news/2020/10/20/chelan-pud-partners-up-to-address-wildfire-threats)

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HOW DO I KNOW WHAT CONTRACTOR TO HIRE?

We have a list of local contractors who complete this type of work here:

https://cascadiacd.org/index.php?page_id=309

We do not make specific recommendations but can help guide you toward a list of contractors that might have specific equipment, crews, or expertise that fit your needs.