



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED FOR FIGHTING FIRE WITH COMMUNITY ACTION AND PREPAREDNESS

*Eugene, OR* – A consortium of Western-based non-governmental organizations announces the release of publications to address the critical need for protection of communities at risk to wildfire. These resources—produced by Resource Innovations (Eugene, Oregon), Sustainable Northwest (Portland, Oregon), the Forest Guild (Santa Fe, New Mexico), and the Watershed Research and Training Center (Hayfork, California)—will help communities reduce fire risk through planning and implementing collaborative forest restoration and fuels reduction projects on public and private lands in the wildland urban interface.



Deer Creek Fire, Josephine County, Oregon (2005).  
Photo courtesy of Medford BLM.

One important feature of these publications is that they address the wildfire protection needs of low-income and under-served communities, which have historically fallen between the cracks in most past planning efforts.

“Communities with sparse resources are often overshadowed by wildfire impacts to wealthier communities. We want to ensure that the under-served are better able to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire events,” said Kathy Lynn, Associate Director of Resource Innovations in Eugene, Oregon.

Recent catastrophic wildfires in the United States have highlighted the increasing threat these fires pose to urban and rural communities. While the 2008 fire season is far from over, over 4.5 million acres have burned and there have already been at least 12 firefighter fatalities. With costs this year exceeding \$1.2 billion so far and predicted to reach \$1.6 billion, the federal government has run out of money to fight fires, and money is now being “transferred” from the very hazardous fuels reduction and community assistance programs aimed to reduce wildfire risk. While spending over a billion dollars to suppress fires, federal agencies are spending only \$80 million this year helping communities with fire prevention tactics.

“Common sense dictates we invest more in preparing for fires and preventing them before they start, which will pay for itself in the long run,” said Michael DeBonis, Southwest Region Director of the Forest Guild in New Mexico. “It’s like that old saying—an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

As money to prepare for and reduce the impacts from catastrophic wildfires falls short, there is a critical need to provide communities with up-to-date guidance in addressing wildfire risks through strategic and collaborative fire planning, reducing structural ignitability, conducting fuels reduction projects, and monitoring progress. The following newly released publications are designed to be useful resources to parties engaging in these collaborative activities.

**Engaging Socially Vulnerable Populations in Community Wildfire Protection Plans** -This publication addresses the wildfire protection needs of low-income and under-served communities. It focuses on physical and social risks of wildfire in such communities—loss of jobs, resources and other economic opportunities.

**Community Wildfire Protection Plan Evaluation Guide** - This hands-on guide helps communities to be accountable for fire safety. It provides a step-by-step process to assist communities in monitoring, evaluating, and updating their fire plans.

**Beyond Planning: Stewardship Contracting as a Management Tool for Implementing Community Wildfire Protection Plans** – Stewardship contracts are often used to implement fuels reduction projects on public and private land. The paper presents information on the stewardship contracting authorities and case studies detailing how two community fire planning efforts resulted in successful stewardship efforts.

**Stewardship Contracting and Collaboration: Best Practices Guidebook** (*December 2007*) - This guide provides information to Forest Service and non-agency participants in stewardship contracting collaborative groups. It includes opportunities for collaboration throughout the stewardship contracting process, suggestions of best practices for each step, and links to a wealth of additional resources.

All of these publications are now available on a newly established U.S. Forest Service Partnership Resource Center page dedicated to CWPP resources ([www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/cwpp](http://www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/cwpp)). These publications complement the information being provided to communities through the newly completed *Community Guide to Preparing and Implementing Community Wildfire Protection Plans* (*August 2008*), which is a supplemental resource guide to *Preparing a Community Wildfire Protection Plan: A Handbook for Wildland-Urban Interface Communities* (*March 2004*). These national resources are available at: [www.forestsandrangelands.gov/communities/index.shtml](http://www.forestsandrangelands.gov/communities/index.shtml).

Sustainable Northwest ([www.sustainablenorthwest.org](http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org)), Resource Innovations ([ri.uoregon.edu](http://ri.uoregon.edu)), Forest Guild ([www.forestguild.org](http://www.forestguild.org)), and Watershed Research and Training Center ([www.thewatershedcenter.com](http://www.thewatershedcenter.com)) are all part of the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC). The RVCC is comprised of western rural and local, regional, and national organizations that have joined together to promote balanced conservation-based approaches to the ecological and economic problems facing the West. For more information, visit, [www.sustainablenorthwest.org/rvcc](http://www.sustainablenorthwest.org/rvcc).

## INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

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