



## Oregon: East Face of Elkhorn Mountains

### The Partners

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The East Face project works with several partners. These include the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, NRCS, and US Forest Service. NRCS and ODF have entered into cooperative agreements to provide technical assistance (i.e., boots on the ground) to help non-industrial private forest (NIPF) land owners and operators on land treatment opportunities.



### The Project

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The East Face area contains high to very high wildfire potential on both public and private land. Improved watershed management will enhance water yield and improve water quality. Funding will be targeted on the landscape to augment and increase fuels reduction activities on adjoining federal and/or state lands.

The area includes three Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) zones - one designated and one proposed – and includes WUI along the perimeter of the headwater portions of the City of La Grande’s municipal watershed. The five watersheds rate as moderate to high departure under the Watershed Condition Framework due to fish passage concerns.

The project area contains habitat for federally threatened bulltrout, steelhead and Chinook salmon. Thinning and prescribed burning will also improve habitat for elk. A large portion of the project overlaps lands within the NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative focal area.



## The Benefits of Additional Resources

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A number of options exist for utilizing additional resources, based on partnership priorities. Examples include:

- Treat an additional 4,000-6,000 acres on NIPF thereby reducing fire hazards, benefiting wildlife, improving water quality and quantity, and supporting the health of the local economy;
- Implement fuels treatment practices like Pre-Commercial Thinning and Slash Treatment;
- Augment stewardship projects to focus on commercial removal in and adjacent to WUI areas, approximately 2-4,000 acres;
- Enhance limited resources for in-stream work to remove fish barriers and strengthen existing partnerships with the Confederate Tribes of the Umatilla and Bonneville Power Administration to further project implementation; and
- Utilize rural fire departments and state resources to implement burning and therefore further their training specific to wildland fire.

Vegetation treatments could increase the resilience of forests in La Grande's municipal watershed, resulting in improved water storage, regulation of flow and sustained water quality. By reducing the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire, restoration treatments could also avoid future costs related to fire, including loss of municipal infrastructure and impaired water quality due to erosion.

## The Measure of Success

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Fuel reduction activities will reduce the likelihood of fire spread onto private lands and reduce severity of fire impacts on water quality and elk forage in upland areas. These fuels reduction activities will protect infrastructure related to Anthony Lakes Recreation area, the access corridor, and investments by Baker County.

This project will also provide a diversity of key goods and services to local and regional communities and economies through employment, raw materials, fuel wood and recreation opportunities for eastern Oregon and Washington, as well as the Treasure Valley region of Idaho.

