

A-1. Community at Risk: City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services

Gresham Fire and Emergency Services (GFES) has been identified as a Community at Risk (CAR) by Oregon Department of Forestry. Gresham Fire & Emergency Services provides structural fire protection and emergency medical services for areas within Gresham, Wood Village, Fairview, and Troutdale, as well as the unincorporated area of Multnomah County Fire Protection District #10. GFES has participated in the Multnomah County Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) planning process to evaluate capabilities to prevent, prepare for and respond to potential wildfire events in the areas for which they provide fire services.

Gresham Wildfire Hazards

The Multnomah CWPP wildfire hazard assessment assisted the GFES in identifying areas that may be at higher risk to potential wildfires. Map # 11 illustrates the overall wildfire hazard risk in the Gresham area and will be used to help target areas for wildfire prevention activities.

Local Communities at Risk

Gresham Fire & Emergency Services also recognizes that there are smaller-scale Communities at Risk that have unique wildfire hazards to be addressed at a more local scale. Communities that have been identified as being particularly vulnerable to wildfires are illustrated in Map #11 and listed in Table A-1.1. Gresham Fire Staff considered the following factors to determine the local CARs including:

- Need for defensible space
- Access limitations (narrow driveways, lack of address signage, one way in/one way out)
- Steep slopes that can hinder access and accelerate the spread of wildfire
- Lack of water available for wildland fire fighting
- Heavy fuels on adjacent public lands
- Potential ignition sources from recreationists and transients
- Agricultural and backyard burning
- Lack of community outreach programs to promote wildfire awareness
- Communications difficulties

Gresham Fire& Emergency Services Action Plan

Gresham Fire Emergency Services has developed a list of actions to build capacity at the Department level and has identified actions that can help to make the local CARS more resilient to potential wildfires. The action plan for GFES and the local CARs therein is provided in Table A-1.2.

Gresham Fire & Emergency Services CWPP Community Involvement

Multnomah County initiated community involvement and public outreach events for the highest priority Communities at Risk in each Fire Department/District in Multnomah County. The community meeting in Gresham was held for the Gresham Butte/Walters Hill Community and had two primary objectives: to gather information from the public about their wildfire concerns and to share information about the fire plan and living with wildfire.

Gresham Butte/Walters Hill Community Wildfire Meeting

Date: April 11th, 2011 from 7:00pm-9:00pm

Location: Gresham City Hall

Attendance: 25 residents

Facilitators:

- **Gresham Fire & Emergency Services Department:** Chief Scott Lewis, Senior Deputy Fire Marshal Kim Coxen
- **ODF:** Chris Paul, Cindy Kolomechuk
- **City of Gresham Emergency Management:** Kelle Landavazo

Meeting Description

This event was conducted in the form of an evening meeting and hosted by the Gresham Butte Neighborhood Association, during their monthly meeting time. Chief Scott Lewis opened the meeting and provided introductions. Cindy Kolomechuk provided an overview of the Multnomah County Fire Planning process. Sr. Deputy Fire Marshal Kim Coxen discussed wildfire hazards in the Gresham Butte/Walters Hill Neighborhood and introduced the measures that landowners have to be more prepared for wildfires.

Chris Paul then gave a more in depth description regarding the types of fire-resistive building materials to use, how to effectively create defensible space, and how to provide adequate access. Kelle Landavazo then discussed tips for being prepared for wildfires as well as other potential hazards in this area.



Information Gleaned from Community

Community members were asked to provide input regarding their perceptions of wildfire risk and rank the highest priority issues in their neighborhood (Table A.3 Wildfire Concerns in the Gresham

Butte/Walters Hill CAR). GFES has developed a series of action items (Table A.2 Gresham Action Plan) to address these and other potential wildfire hazards in the Communities at Risk in their service area.

The highest priority issue was concern about the transient population along Johnson Creek. This presents a potential ignition source for wildfires, as the transients frequently have camp fires, smoke cigarettes, and light fireworks. The community believes the transient population presents an additional public safety issue, as many children use the pathway along transient camps to get to school.

Residents are also concerned about the steep, narrow driveways that characterize their neighborhood. Kim Coxen mentioned how difficult evacuation can be on these roads if people are trying to leave while emergency vehicle are trying to respond.

The other major issue identified was a concern about fuels loading on adjacent public lands. The majority of public land in this area is owned and managed either by the City of Gresham Parks Department or Metro. Both agencies participated in this CWPP planning process and have identified fuels reduction projects that will be accomplished when time and resources are available.

Table A-1.3 Wildfire Concerns in the Gresham Butte/Walters Hill CAR

Topic	Gresham Butte/ Walters Hill
1. Local Ingress and Egress	High
2. Transients/ Recreation	High
3. Concerns about Adjacent Public Lands	High
4. Evacuation, Emergency Preparedness	Medium
5. Backyard Burning	Medium
6. Protection Capabilities	Low
7. Water Availability	Low
8. Concerns about Neighboring Private Property	Low

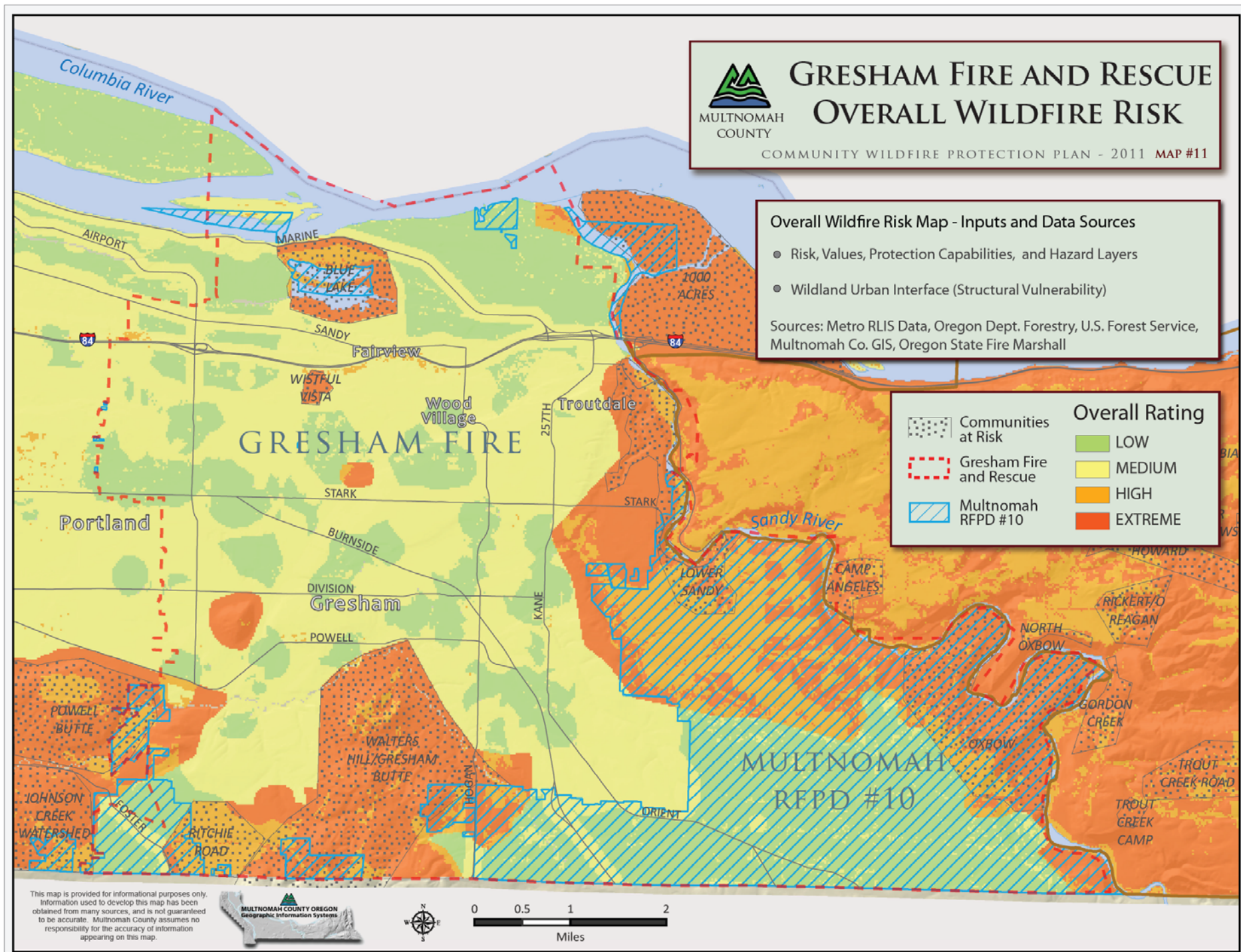


Table A-1.1 Gresham Fire and Emergency Services Communities at Risk

Community At Risk	CAR Priority	Defensible Space	Access	Water	Public Lands	Recreators/ Transients	Agricultural/ Backyard Burning	Community Outreach	Communications	Steep Slopes	Description
City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services											
Walters Hill/ Gresham Butte	High	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	The Walters Hill area extends from Telford Road southwest, crossing the Multnomah /Clackamas County border. This is a high priority area for wildfire prevention activities because it is characterized by heavy fuels and steep slopes that restrict access. Some roads are one way in-one way out. High-end development is intermixed throughout the area and there is limited water supply for fighting a potential wildfire. Ambleside Road is particularly at risk because there is a bridge here that cannot support emergency service vehicles, water supply is very limited, and it is adjacent to Metro's green space. The residents are likely not aware of the high wildfire risk in their community. This level of hazard coupled with exposure makes this CAR an excellent place to target for community outreach and other prevention efforts.
Oxbow Parkway	High	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	This area is a high priority area for prevention efforts because it is difficult to access, there are heavy fuels and steep slopes, and the homes are in a canyon that presents communications issues. In addition, it is a high use recreation area that increases potential wildfire ignition sources. In 2001, Gresham Fire completed a Structural Protection Plan that articulates water supply needs, response tactics and resources needed for each of the following neighborhoods: Homan Road, Oxbow Parkway, Hosner Terrace, Francis Street, Camp Collins and Oxbow Park. Structural triage was also completed for this area in 2001. The community has neighborhood associations that meet regularly and are well-organized.
Lower Sandy River Bend	High	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	This Community is a heavily vegetated residential area adjacent to the Sandy River. It is characterized by steep slopes, heavy fuels, poor access and limited water supply. The area includes Jackson Park Road, Sandy Dell and Wilson Road, which all provide only one way in and one way out for residents. Sandy Dell is a gravel road, presenting additional difficulties for emergency service vehicles and Wilson road is extremely steep. There is no organized community structure and likely, not much awareness of potential wildfire hazards.
Wistful Vista	Medium	X	X					X			This community is characterized by heavy fuels and restricted access. Wistful Vista Road is the only way in and out. Although the surrounding areas are highly urbanized, this area has a great deal of vegetation surrounding the community. Due to the adjacent urban areas, the homeowners probably have a false sense of security regarding wildfire hazards.
Ritchie Road	Low						X				This is a unique community at risk, as it is characterized by agricultural lands with residential properties intermixed. The nurseries in the area have special provisions to burn large quantities of woody debris, and many homeowners are concerned about the potential of embers reach their homes, escaped fires, and smoke abatement.
Blue Lake	Low	X	X		X		X	X			Blue Lake is a recreational areas that is managed by Metro. The residential area around Blue Lake is concentrated along Interlachen Road which provides only one way in and one way out. Many of the homes along Interlachen Road are high-end and have cedar shake roves. The residential area is adjacent to grassland that dries out significantly in summer months and provides ample fuel to start a wildfire. The dry grasslands coupled with exposure and potential ignition sources from residential development and the recreationists that use Blue Lake make it a Community at Risk.

Table A-1.2 Gresham Fire and Rescue Communities At Risk Action Plan

Action Item	Timeframe	Partners	CAR
City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services Overall Action Plan			
Work with Oregon Department of Forestry to acquire funding to enroll structural firefighters in wildland training to support initial attack activities.	Short Term	ODF	City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services
Work with the City of Troutdale to adopt Gresham Fire & Emergency Services standards for backyard burning.	Short Term	City of Troutdale, DEQ	City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services
Address communications and interoperability issues that could reduce efficiency and effectiveness of wildfire response efforts.	Ongoing	Gresham Emergency Management, Portland Bureau of Emergency Communications	City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services
Maintain and/or restore staffing levels for fire suppression and training.	Ongoing	City of Gresham Administration and City Council	City of Gresham Fire & Emergency Services
Gresham Local Communities At Risk Action Plan			
Conduct a Community Meeting to educate community on defensible space, and measures that can be taken to reduce structural ignitability. Solicit feedback on wildfire prevention projects the community would support.	Spring 2011/ Spring 2012	ODF, CWPP Outreach Subcommittee	Walters Hill/Gresham Butte Oxbow Parkway
Develop a local wildfire prevention campaign to promote defensible space and reduce structural ignitability within the Home Ignition Zone	Annually	ODF, CWPP Outreach Subcommittee	All
Obtain structural ignitability data by conducting structural triage assessment data collection (including GPS points) for homes in strategic planning areas.	Short Term	ODF, Wildfire Technical Committee	All
Develop a community-driven pre-disaster plan including evacuation routes, telephone call down trees, and other strategies for strengthening community response.	Short Term	Gresham Emergency Management	All
Map all roads, bridges and driveways and prioritize homes that have dead-ends, and cannot support emergency service vehicles (grade, length, vegetation, turn-arounds) for defensible space and fuels reduction projects.	Long Term	City of Gresham	All
Implement road addressing (including length of driveways) and other signage for emergency response.	Short Term	Gresham Police, Gresham Emergency Management	All
Partner with managers of forested areas to reduce hazardous fuels in natural areas surrounding strategic planning areas.	Ongoing	Metro, City of Gresham Department of Environmental Services	All
Seek grant funding to support fuels reduction and creation of defensible space around homes. Consider developing a cost-share program to support these activities.	Ongoing	ODF, Wildfire Technical Committee	All
Identify opportunities for community debris disposal collection sites that recycle or compost vegetative material vs. burning.	Ongoing	ODF, Wildfire Technical Committee	All
Work with Sheriff's Office to patrol the area to reduce transient camps.	Ongoing	Gresham Police, Gresham Emergency Management	All
Update the 2001 Oxbow Parkway Structural Protection Plan.	Short Term	ODF, Gresham Emergency Management	Oxbow Parkway