



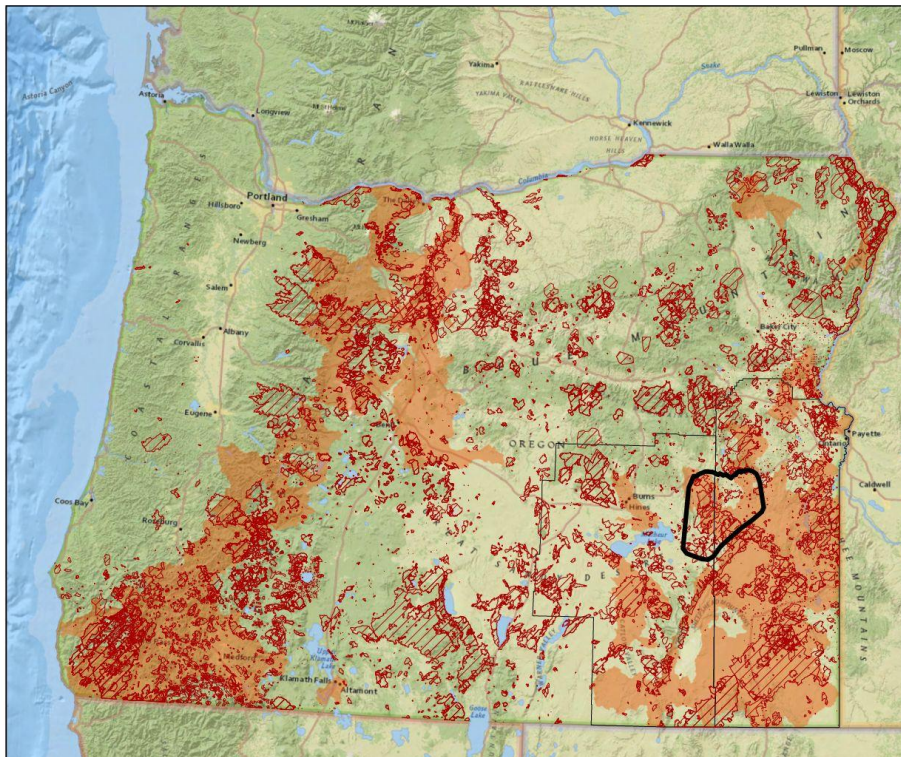
# Southeast Oregon Wildfire Resiliency Project Infused with \$5 Million

This funding will be used to address fire suppression, prevention and restoration of Southeast Oregon sagebrush sea landscape.

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High Desert Partnership has been awarded just over \$5 million from the [Oregon Department of Forestry](#), to implement the Southeast Oregon Wildfire Resiliency (SOWR) Project of critical fuel treatments to enhance wildfire resiliency across sagebrush steppe landscapes in Southeast Oregon. This funding comes out of Senate Bill 762 which is providing "more than \$220 million to help Oregon modernize and improve wildfire preparedness through three key strategies: creating fire-adapted communities, developing safe and effective response, and increasing the resiliency of Oregon's landscapes."

*Pictured: Outlined in black is the proposed project area for the Southeast Oregon Wildfire Resiliency Project.*



HDP is serving as the lead applicant in a partnership that, in addition to Harney, reaches Malheur County. "More than 20 individuals and organizations came together to envision, define and find common ground around this project. We're excited to get to work because of the benefit this will have on the landscape," Josh Hanson, HDP Forest & Range Ecological Coordinator. The SOWR Project region includes Stinkingwater Mountains, Beaver Tables and landscapes near Juntura and Jonesboro of Southeast Oregon. Wildfires know no boundaries and

through this funding on a project area that encompasses federal, state, private, and tribal lands impacted by wildfire in the past, partners of the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative, will address fire suppression, prevention, and restoration of this sagebrush sea landscape. "This grant provides us a tremendous opportunity to complement previous, and current vegetation and fuels management projects in these areas and have an impact on a landscape basis," shared Jeff Rose, BLM District Manager.

One of the most imperiled ecosystems in the United States, the sagebrush steppe, covers 23 million acres in Oregon. Catastrophic wildfire creates a sense of urgency as these lands provide the foundation of rural communities that support ranching, recreation, and critical habitat for a variety of species including big game, songbirds, sage-grouse and other sagebrush dependent species. Sarah Mundy with the Harney Soil Water and Conservation District (SWCD) about what this funding means for private landowners: "Ranches in southeastern Oregon face many ongoing challenges, including wildfire, drought, invasive weeds and juniper encroachment. This funding opportunity helps the Harney SWCD and the Cooperative Weed Management Area provide added resources to tackle multiple large scale treatments that will not only restore resiliency to sensitive ecosystems, but also help protect existing healthy rangelands that support local families and the economy." This project is of key importance because it addresses these challenges that come with the scope and scale of resilient landscapes in this region caused by invasive annual grasses and western juniper. In addition to increasing the wildfire resiliency of the landscape, when wildfires do occur, this funding is making it possible to create fuel breaks so firefighters can more safely and effectively fight wildfires when they do occur. Autumn Muir who coordinates a subcommittee of the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative shared: "This funding increases the scale of work that can happen to help the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative partners reach a goal of building a wildfire resilient landscape. Just as wildfire knows no boundaries this work will impact public, private and tribal lands while feeding the economies of small frontier communities in southeast Oregon."

For questions about this news contact Josh Hanson, High Desert Partnership Forest & Range Ecological Coordinator at [josh@highdesertpartnership.org](mailto:josh@highdesertpartnership.org) and 541 573 7820.

*This article is provided by High Desert Partnership; a Harney County nonprofit convening and supporting six collaboratives including the Harney County Wildlife Collaborative.*

