



HARNEY COUNTY *Wildfire* COLLABORATIVE

Harney County Wildfire Collaborative is a diverse group of stakeholders working together to make sagebrush steppe landscapes more resistant and resilient to unexpected fire.

Stinkingwater Mountains Restoration & Fire Resilience Project

In 2014 five fires grew together forming the Buzzard Complex Fire. This megafire burned almost 400,000 acres which included more than 100,000 acres in the Stinkingwater Mountains area charring our sagebrush sea landscape, killing and injuring livestock and damaging property. Megafire, a word that didn't exist long ago, has become much more common as megafires like the Buzzard Complex have become more frequent and destructive.

Given the reality of the potential for megafires, High Desert Partnership's Harney County Wildfire Collaborative (HCWC) formed in 2014 to work together to help prevent wildfires whenever possible, suppress them when appropriate and restore the land when they do occur. To do this work, HCWC conducts habitat restoration and fire resilience projects and has agreed upon the Stinkingwater Mountains as the next project landscape to target.

This project area is vast encompassing 312,000 acres close to Burns and Crane, and includes a mix of private land and Bureau of Land Management acreage. On this vast landscape HCWC is working to coordinate actions among the Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resource Conservation Service and private landowners. Some of these actions include:

- controlling the invasive annual grass population;
- decreasing the number of Juniper trees;
- increasing the volume of large perennial bunchgrasses;
- creating fuel breaks; and
- making every effort to participate with landowners like you, the Crane RFPA and the Burns Paiute Tribe.

Through these actions and others, over the long term the collaborative is working toward:

- a landscape that is resilient to wildfire;
- a landscape that contains fuel load amounts, types and patterns that help suppression efforts and result in smaller, more frequent fires that help create a healthy fire tolerant landscape;
- a landscape that provides both livestock forage and wildlife habitat; and
- strong relationships that make this and future projects possible.

For questions and/or to learn more contact Josh Hanson, High Desert Partnership Forest & Range Ecological Coordinator, josh@highdesertpartnership or 541-573-7820.