UNION COUNTY

COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

2026

Declaration of Agreement and Plan Adoption

The Union County Board of Commissioners hereby approves the 2026 Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan with agreement from local wildland firefighting agencies, Rural Fire Districts, and the County's structural fire protection services.

The Union County CWPP was originally completed and signed in 2005 and revised in 2017. Under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, the CWPP is approved by the applicable local government, the local fire departments, and the state entity responsible for forest management. It was developed in consultation with interested parties and federal land management agencies.

This plan is intended as a planning tool for fire and land managers and property owners to assess risks associated with wildland fire and identify strategies, opportunities, and recommendations for reducing those risks. It is not a regulatory document, as it does not create mandates or requirements on individual jurisdictions, property owners or management agencies.

This plan shall be reviewed and updated as described in the mitigation strategy section, with revisions redistributed to all signing parties. Any recipients of this CWPP are asked to advise Union County Emergency Management of any suggestions or changes that might result in its improvement or increase its usefulness.

R. Matthew Scarfo, Commissioner, Chair *Union County Board of Commissioners*	4/1/2026 *Date*
Paul Anderes, Commissioner *Union County Board of Commissioners*	4-1-26 *Date*
Jake Seavert, Commissioner *Union County Board of Commissioners*	4/1/2026 *Date*
Nick Vora, Emergency Manager *Union County Emergency Management*	3/27/2026 *Date*
James Sauer, Union County Fire Defense Board Chief *Imbler Rural Fire Protection District*	3/24/26 *Date*
Merle Laci, Fire Chief *City of La Grande Fire Department*	3/26/26 *Date*
Justin Lauer, Unit Forester *Oregon Department of Forestry*	3/27/26 *Date*

Union County, Oregon

Community Wildfire Protection Plan 2026

Executive Summary

Wildfire in Union County is not a distant threat — it is a present and growing reality. Longer fire seasons, faster-moving fires spreading into rangelands and agricultural lands, record-low snowpack, and expanding development in fire-prone areas have created a risk environment that demands more than “business as usual”. The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan of 2026 is the county's coordinated response — built on two years of engagement with agencies, fire districts, Firewise communities, and residents, and grounded in nationally recognized risk science.

Using two complementary risk assessment tools, the plan refines the Wildland Urban Interface Zone, identifies and ranks 57 Communities at Risk, and places Union County's wildfire risk to homes higher than 94% of counties in the nation.

Human life and safety is the plan's first priority. Everything else follows from that.

Protecting communities from wildfire requires action at every scale — from the vegetation around a single home to fuel treatments across thousands of acres. This plan establishes that multi-scale framework, organizing mitigation around three national goals: Safe and Effective Wildfire Response, Fire-Adapted Communities, and Resilient Landscapes.

It coordinates across the complex patchwork of county, state, federal, tribal, and private lands that defines Union County, and is aligned with concurrent planning efforts in Wallowa, Umatilla, and Baker Counties. The result is a practical, grant-ready roadmap — with clear priorities, identified funding sources, and the interagency partnerships needed to get work done on the ground at the scales to make a real difference.

This document is designed to be a living document, to be regularly and frequently used, reviewed, and updated as needed

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

Plan Overview and Objectives

The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan of 2026 (CWPP) Revision is a comprehensive plan to identify and reduce the threat and impact of wildfire to at-risk communities in Union County, Oregon.

This plan enables Union County and its cooperators to continue the work established in the 2016 Union County CWPP, which used a collaborative process to identify and evaluate at-risk communities, initiate fuels reduction treatments, and implement mitigation actions around homes and communities to reduce the risk and impact of uncontrolled wildfire.

Wildfire occurrence and severity in Oregon has changed significantly since 2016. This shift includes the increased rate and distance at which wildfires are spreading and the size and difficulty of controlling large wildfires. It also emphasizes the need to evaluate fuels beyond traditional forested areas to include all types of uncontrolled fires, such as those in rangelands, grasslands, flammable agricultural lands, and in some cases – the potential to spread from home to home.

Figure 1 - Jones Butte Fire July 2023 - Outside of Elgin OR

As wildfire behavior changes across Oregon with faster spread rates, greater intensities, and expansion into previously less-affected landscapes like rangeland and agricultural areas, the need for home hardening and creating fire-resistant properties has become increasingly important. The traditional focus on forest management and aggressive fire suppression is still critical, but alone is no longer sufficient. Systematically increasing home fire resistance is critical to protect communities. Increased awareness of wildfire events and safe community response, including planning for and initiating evacuations, are also key, acknowledging that wildfire occurrence and intensity will likely continue to increase. These considerations, as well as updated legislation and funding opportunities, are key to the development of this update.

The 2026 CWPP serves to refine the definition and delineation of the Communities at Risk (CAR) from wildfire within Union County, and evaluate these communities based on overall risk of wildfire impacting structures, natural resources, wildlife habitat, critical infrastructure, municipal watersheds, and human welfare, including loss of life.

Based on these refinements to Communities at Risk and the identification of Risk Reduction Zones around these communities, the 2026 Wildland-Urban Interface Zone (WUIZ) has been adjusted to include all identified Communities at Risk along with adjacent wildland areas that could be impacted by wildfire.

Purpose and Need for a Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) help communities assess local hazards and identify strategic investments to mitigate risk and promote preparedness. Assessments and discussions during the planning process can assist fire protection districts with fire operations in the event of a wildfire and help residents prioritize mitigation actions. These plans also assist with funding gaps for fuel mitigation projects since many grants require an approved CWPP.

Figure 2 - Combine fire spreads quickly through grass - Mt. Glenn Rd. Aug 2022

Complex interactions among wildland fuels, weather, and topography determine how wildfires behave and spread. Many aspects of wildfires are predictable based on known scientific research on the physical processes driving fire. Much of the work in this CWPP is based on scientific research and computer models of wildfire behavior. A basic understanding of fire behavior aids in interpreting the findings and recommendations reported herein.

Plan Endorsement and Development

This CWPP is one of several emergency planning tools operating under the Union County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), which provides the overarching framework for coordinated response to disasters and emergencies across the county. It is complementary to the Union County Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and adheres to guidelines established by the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (2003). The following legislation provided guidance for the development of a CWPP:

- **Healthy Forests Restoration Act** (2003).
- **National Association of State Foresters** – Guidance on identification and prioritizing of treatments between communities (2003).
- **The National Fire Plan:** A Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy Implementation Plan (2006).
- **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy** (2011), Cohesive Strategy Addendum (2023).
- **The Integrated Rangeland Fire Management Strategy** (2015).
- **The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 10 guidelines for Local Hazard Mitigation Plans**, as defined in 44 CFR Parts 201 and 206.
- **Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 477**, Fire Protection of Forests and Vegetation.
- Public Law 115-141 Sec. 210 "**Wildfire Hazard Severity Mapping For Communities**" March 2018.

- **Oregon Senate Bill 762** (SB 762) a wildfire preparedness and mitigation law passed in 2021.
- **The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs** Act (IIJA) of 2021, often referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), includes several provisions aimed at improving wildfire resilience, response, and prevention across the U.S.
- **Oregon Senate Bill 80** (SB 80), passed in 2023, updates and modernizes the state's approach to wildfire risk and resilience.
- **Oregon Senate Bill 83** (SB 83), passed in 2025, repealed the statewide Hazard Map while preserving risk reduction programs and returning authority to local jurisdictions.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003

The **Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003** (*HFRA*) established incentives for communities to develop comprehensive wildfire protection plans in collaboration with local governments, local firefighting authorities, and state, county, municipal, and federal agencies. Furthermore, this legislation gives direction to the Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture to address community priorities for fuel reduction treatments on federal and non-federal lands by defining the **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy** for wildland fire management.

National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy

Union County supports the principles of the **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy** (often referred to as the *Cohesive Strategy*) which establishes a national vision for wildland fire management, defines national goals, describes the wildland fire challenges, identifies opportunities to reduce wildfire risks, and establishes national priorities focused on achieving the national goals. In May 2023, the Wildland Fire Leadership Council (WFLC) released an Addendum Update to the original 2014 Cohesive Strategy. The updated vision is

> *"To safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and collectively, learn to live with wildland fire."*

This Addendum, together with the 2014 strategy, are now merged as the current Cohesive Strategy going forward.

The strategy focuses on three updated key goals:

- **Resilient Landscapes** – Landscapes, regardless of jurisdictional boundaries, are resilient to fire, insect, disease, invasive species and climate change disturbances, in accordance with management objectives.
- **Fire Adapted Communities** – Human populations and infrastructure are as prepared as possible to receive, respond to, and recover from wildland fire.
- **Safe, Effective, Risk-based Wildfire Response** – All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient risk-based wildfire management decisions.

The 2023 CWS Addendum addresses four critical emphasis areas that were not identified or addressed in depth in the 2014 framework:

1. The impacts of severe weather, including increasing frequency and intensity of storms, extreme heat and drought, and changing baseline risks across communities.
2. Workforce capacity, health and well-being across local, tribal, state and federal fire service and partner communities.
3. Diversity, equity and inclusion, and environmental justice.
4. The need for science, data, and technology to keep pace with wildland fire impacts and be fully integrated into decision-making.

The Cohesive Strategy encourages all stakeholders and partners to work collaboratively with agencies, tribes and local communities to address wildfire risk, guiding federal and non-federal entities to cooperate in managing wildland fire risks based on shared goals, science, and community engagement.

The Cohesive Strategy is a strategy to work collaboratively among all stakeholders and across all landscapes, using best science, to make meaningful progress toward the three goals of Fire Adapted Communities, Resilient Landscapes, and Safe, Effective Wildfire Response. "All Hands – All Lands"

Chapter 2 – Mission, Goals, and Objectives

Mission Statement

The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan is dedicated to protecting life, property, and natural resources from damage by wildfire by promoting cooperation to reduce the risk from, and facilitate effective responses to wildfire. The plan prioritizes risk assessment, preventative action, and community preparedness to create fire-resilient landscapes and communities.

Goals and Objectives

Union County's wildfire planning rests on three fundamental priorities — in this order: **Human Life and Safety · Property · Natural Resources**

The Union County CWPP provides:

- Identification of Areas at risk from wildfire
- Strategies for Risk Reduction
- Recommendations for reducing structural ignitability
- Recommendations to ensure public and firefighter safety during wildfire events

Goals for Risk Reduction

1. **Identify Risk —** Use current wildfire risk assessment information to identify high-risk areas within Union County.
2. **Hazardous Fuels Management —** Cut, thin, burn, or otherwise reduce flammable material.
3. **Response —** Cooperatively manage and fight wildfires to protect lives, communities, and resources.
4. **Ignition-Resistant Homes —** Use wildfire-resistant building materials and landscaping.
5. **Evacuation & Readiness —** Be ready for wildfires with community alerts, evacuation routes, and family plans.
6. **Vulnerable Populations —** Address the social and economic vulnerabilities of people in the community.
7. **Smoke Ready —** Prepare for the health impacts of wildfire smoke in the community.
8. **Prevent Ignitions —** Reduce ignitions from campfires, debris burning, vehicles, and other sources.
9. **Recovery and Rebuilding —** Restore the landscape and community following a wildfire.
10. **Funding —** Find and use grant funding to support community wildfire risk reduction.
11. **Outreach —** Promote community engagement and education.

Objectives

The Union County CWPP, as a community-driven planning process, has been designed to achieve the following specific, measurable objectives:

1. Establish a comprehensive wildfire risk assessment framework that incorporates the latest fire science and local knowledge.
2. Identify and prioritize Communities at Risk within Union County based on current wildfire hazard data and community vulnerability factors.
3. Develop detailed mitigation action items that align with the three goals of the **National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy**: Resilient Landscapes, Fire-Adapted Communities, and Safe and Effective Wildfire Response.
4. Create a monitoring and evaluation process to track progress on CWPP implementation and adjust strategies as needed.
5. Foster coordination between fire protection agencies, land management organizations, and local communities.
6. Establish clear pathways for implementation of priority projects, including potential funding sources and responsible parties.
7. Promote the adoption of defensible space principles and fire-resistant building practices among Union County residents.
8. Develop strategies for sustainable vegetation management and hazardous fuels reduction that incorporate ecological considerations.
9. Support emergency management planning for wildfire events, including evacuation routes, communication protocols, and resource deployment.

This chapter establishes the mission, goals, and objectives that guide the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. These foundational elements provide direction for all subsequent chapters and will be used to evaluate the success of plan implementation over time.

Figure 3 – Mt. Harris Fire 2014

Chapter 3 – Union County, Oregon Profile

Physical Description

Union County is a diverse landscape located in northeastern Oregon, bordered by Wallowa County to the east, Umatilla and Grant Counties to the north and west, and Baker County to the south. The heart of the county is the expansive **Grande Ronde Valley**, an agriculturally rich basin surrounded by the **Blue Mountains** on the west and the **Wallowa Mountains** to the east. This valley is sometimes referred to as the "hub" of northeastern Oregon because of its centralized location between key regional destinations.

The county's terrain is highly varied. The **Blue Mountains** are characterized by forested ridges, canyons, and upland plateaus, while the **Wallowa foothills** give way to higher alpine and the **Eaglecap Wilderness**. The **Grande Ronde River**, originating in the Blue Mountains, flows northeast through the valley, carving through canyons and supporting riparian ecosystems before exiting into the Snake River. Other key watercourses include **Catherine Creek**, **Indian Creek**, **Ladd Creek, Lookingglass Creek**, and various smaller tributaries that are vital for agriculture, fish, and wildlife.

This combination of wide valley floors and rugged highlands creates diverse ecological zones, from arid sagebrush steppe to dense conifer forests dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, and grand fir species. Wildlife is abundant, with populations of elk, deer, black bear, cougar, and upland game birds such as wild turkey and grouse.

Union County is also home to parts of the **Wallowa-Whitman National Forest,** the **Umatilla National Forest**, as well as state parks and wilderness areas that provide critical habitat and recreation opportunities. Approximately 50% of Union County by area is publicly owned, with most of those lands being National Forest.

Weather and Climate

Union County's climate is transitional between **semi-arid** at lower elevations and **moist, temperate** conditions in the mountains. The Grande Ronde Valley and low elevations of southern Union County have characteristics of a **high desert climate**, while the surrounding mountains exhibit a **montane climate**.

- **Winters (November to March):**
  Cold and often snowy, with average low temperatures in La Grande dipping into the teens and low 20s °F. Snow accumulations vary but often range from 20 to 50 inches in the valley, with significantly more in the higher elevations of the Blue and Wallowa Mountains.

- **Springs (April to June):**
  Cool and wet initially, transitioning to warmer and drier conditions. Spring is often marked by intermittent rain showers and thunderstorms, critical for the region's agricultural growing season.
- **Summers (July to September):**
  Warm and dry with daytime highs averaging between 80°F and 90°F in the valley. Higher elevations experience cooler summer conditions, making the mountains popular destinations for recreation. Occasional heatwaves can push temperatures above 100°F, but the valley's elevation moderates extreme heat.
- **Autumn (October):**
  Mild and dry, with cooler nights and clear days. It's a relatively short season, often signaling the onset of early frosts.

The county receives approximately **15-20 inches of precipitation annually** in the Grande Ronde Valley, with much of this falling during the cooler months. Higher elevations, however, can see **35-50+ inches**, mostly as snow, contributing to spring runoff and irrigation for farms.

Demographics

*According to the certified Portland State University 2025 population estimate, Union County has a population of approximately **26,200 residents**. Demographic highlights include:*

- Age:
  The median age is slightly higher than the state average, reflecting both an aging population and the county's appeal to retirees. However, the presence of EOU also means a notable population of college-aged residents.
- Race and Ethnicity:
  The county is predominantly White (over 90%), with smaller populations of Hispanic/Latino (around 5-6%), Native American, and multi-racial individuals.
- Household Income:
  Median household income ranks 23rd of the 36 counties in Oregon, with approximately 41% of families in financial hardship, according to the 2025 Ford Family Foundation's "Oregon By the Numbers" publication.
- Housing:
  Housing stock is a mix of older single-family homes, rural properties, and newer developments, especially in and around La Grande. There is also a notable percentage of mobile and manufactured homes in rural parts of the county.

Population Centers

- **La Grande** (approx. 13,000): County seat and primary hub for commerce, education, and healthcare.

- **Island City** (approx. 1,100) A small residential city directly adjacent to La Grande, primarily residential and closely integrated with the La Grande urban area.
- **Elgin** (approx. 1,700): Known for its logging heritage, mill, and proximity to forest recreation areas, as well as the annual "Elgin Stampede" rodeo.
- **Union** (approx. 2,100): Historical town with Victorian architecture and a strong agricultural presence. Known for the annual Stock Show and Rodeo.
- **North Powder, Cove, Summerville, and Imbler** are smaller rural communities with populations ranging from a few hundred to just over a thousand.
- Unincorporated communities including Perry, Hilgard, Medical Springs, Pondosa, Starkey, and Camp Elkanah are small rural communities scattered across the county with no formally recorded Census populations.

Social Vulnerability Index (SVI)

Wildfire risk is not experienced equally across a community. Social vulnerability — the demographic and socioeconomic conditions that affect a community's ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters — varies significantly across Union County. Oregon Senate Bill 762 directed Oregon State University (OSU) to develop a Social Vulnerability Index (SVI) specifically for wildfire planning, adapted from the CDC/ATSDR (Center for Disease Control / Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry) methodology and calibrated to Oregon communities. That analysis places Union County's overall social vulnerability higher than **65.7% of counties in Oregon**. A national comparison using the CDC/ATSDR SVI places Union County higher than 71.9% of counties across the United States.

The table below summarizes Union County's SVI scores across the four vulnerability themes as reported by the CDC/ATSDR for 2022. Block group level analysis within the county reveals where vulnerability is most concentrated. Housing Type and Transportation is the most acute vulnerability theme — Union County scores at the 95th national percentile, with nearly 70% of block groups in the upper half of the vulnerability range. This reflects the significant proportion of mobile and manufactured homes (12.7%) and households without vehicle access (7.4%) — both directly relevant to wildfire evacuation capacity. Household Composition and Disability is also notable, with 50% of Union County's census block groups falling in the highest vulnerability quartile, driven by the county's aging population (20.9% age 65 or older) and high disability rates (17.1%). These patterns should guide prioritization of outreach, evacuation planning, and mitigation assistance toward communities where residents face the greatest barriers to self-protection.

SVI Theme	Union County	Oregon Percentile	National Percentile
Socioeconomic Status	0.58	51st	58th
Household Composition & Disability	0.53	37th	53rd
Minority Status & Language	0.37	9th	37th
Housing Type & Transportation	0.95	74th	95th
Overall Social Vulnerability	0.72	54th	71.9%

"SVI scores presented above are drawn from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/ Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry 2022 (national and state comparisons). Oregon SB 762 uses a similar but distinct methodology based on 2020 Census data; Union County's overall vulnerability score under that framework is 65.7th Oregon percentile, consistent with the elevated vulnerability identified here.

The Oregon Explorer CWPP Tool has an available SVI report. The following table is directly from that SVI report for Union County.

Table 1. Component indicators and SVI rankings for **Union County**. Component indicators show the raw US Census data (5 year American Community Survey data 2016-2020) used to calculate the scores for the four SVI themes and overall SVI. State averages for each indicator are also provided for comparison. Union county has a higher overall social vulnerability than **65.7%*** of other counties in Oregon.

Overall Social Vulnerability Score		
Overall Social Vulnerability Score Union County, Oregon	**65.7**	
	County	State
Socioeconomic Status Theme		
Poverty (%)	13.9%	12.4%
Unemployment (%)	5.4%	5.5%
Per Capita Income ($)	$27,748	$35,393
Less Than High School (%)	7.1%	8.9%
Socioeconomic Status Theme	**42.9**	
Household Composition & Disability Theme		
Over Age 65 (%)	20.6%	17.6%
Under Age 17 (%)	22.1%	20.8%
Single Parent Households (%)	9.7%	12.3%
Disable (%)	15.8%	14.3%
Household Composition & Disability Theme	**74.3**	
Minority Status & Language Theme		
Minority Populations (%)	11.6%	25.1%
Limited English Language (%)	0.5%	2.4%
Minority Status & Language Theme	**14.3**	
Transportation & Housing Theme		
Multi-unit structures (%)	5.9%	12.5%
Mobile Homes (%)	14.3%	7.7%
Household Crowding (%)	4.6%	3.2%
Group Quarters (%)	2.9%	2.1%
No Vehicle Access (%)	5.7%	7.2%
Transportation & Housing Theme	**82.9**	

**OSU Social Vulnerability Index for Wildfire Planning* (SB 762), *Oregon Wildfire Risk Explorer*, *2016-2020 ACS data*

Table 1 shows the data of the 15 component indicators, the four themes comprising overall social vulnerability, and the overall social vulnerability score for Union County. The theme percentiles and overall social vulnerability score in bold can be interpreted as follows: "Union County has higher social vulnerability than **65.7%** of counties in Oregon". Indicators are reported as percentages with the exception of per capita income which is reported in US dollars and should be interpreted as such (i.e. the percentage of Union County that is unemployed is **5.4**%.)

Union County Ownership

Union County's land ownership patterns directly influence wildfire management approaches, jurisdictional responsibilities, and coordination requirements for effective fire planning and response. The complex mosaic of federal, state, tribal, and private lands creates both challenges and opportunities for collaborative wildfire risk reduction efforts.

Ownership Distribution

Land ownership across Union County's approximately 2,038 square miles (1,304,320 acres) is distributed among several major categories, as illustrated in ***Figure 4 – Map of Ownership***. The federal/private split is almost exactly 48%/51%, with federal lands (mostly Wallowa-Whitman NF) dominating the mountains while private lands dominate the Grande Ronde Valley and lower elevations.

Ownership Category	Acres	Percentage
Federal Lands (Total)	**624,360**	**47.9%**
Wallowa-Whitman NF	(515,248)	(39.5%)
Umatilla NF	(102,192)	(7.8%)
Bureau of Land Management	6,363	0.5%
Other Federal Agencies	455	<0.1%
Private Lands	665,620	50.7%
State Lands	9,703	0.7%
Tribal Lands	5,180	0.4%
Union County	3,669	0.3%
TOTAL	1,304,320	100.0%
Wilderness Area	Acres	Percentage of County
Eagle Cap Wilderness	110,266	8.5%
North Fork Umatilla Wilderness	1,422	0.1%
Total Wilderness	111,688	8.6%

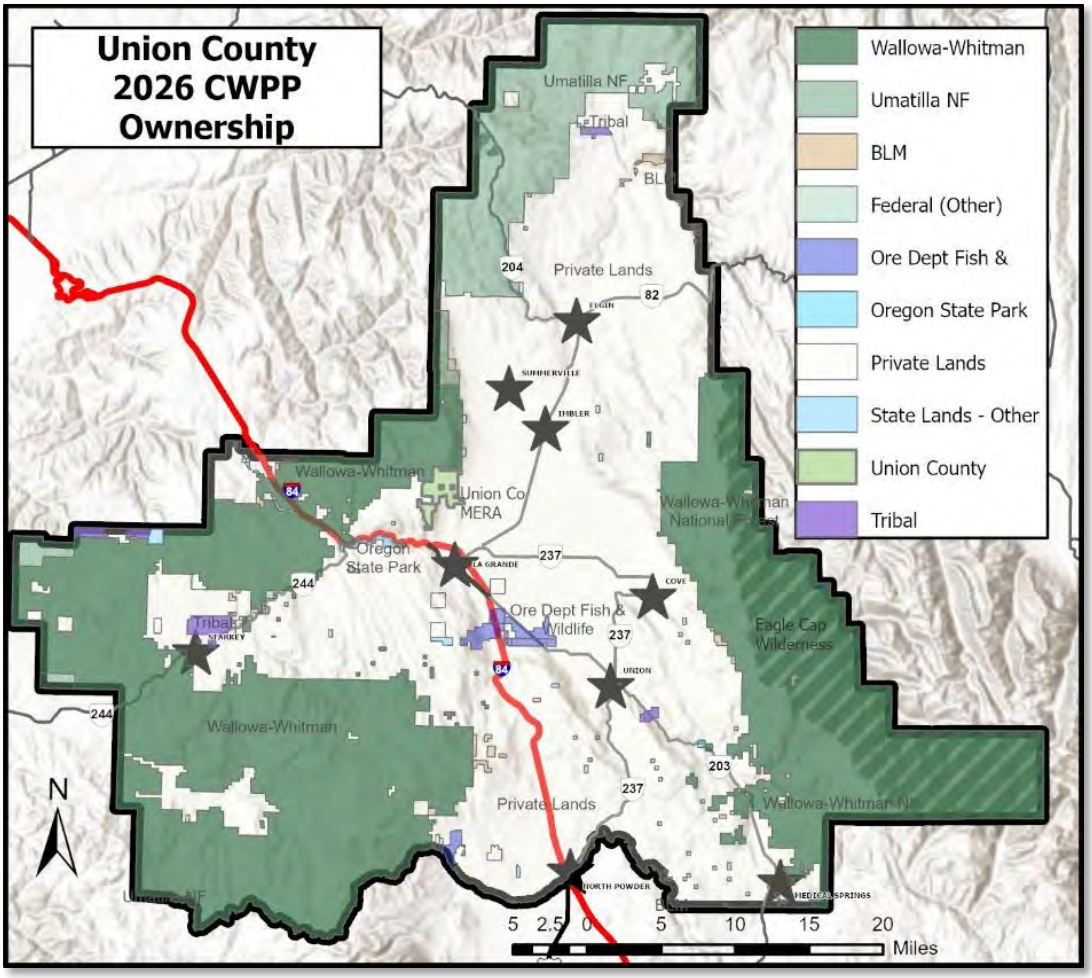


Figure 4 - Map of Ownership

Federal Lands

Federal agencies manage approximately 48% of Union County's land base, totaling 624,360 acres. Federal lands are concentrated primarily in the mountainous regions surrounding the Grande Ronde Valley, with the U.S. Forest Service holding the vast majority of federal ownership.

U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

The U.S. Forest Service manages 617,542 acres (47.3% of the county). These lands dominate the mountainous eastern, southern, and western portions of the county, encompassing rugged terrain, forested slopes, and high alpine areas. USFS management emphasizes multiple-use principles, balancing timber production, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, recreation, and fire management. The agency maintains direct fire suppression responsibility on National Forest System lands and coordinates closely with Oregon Department of Forestry and local fire protection districts during wildfire events. The Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center dispatches both agencies, and resources are dispatched on closest forces regardless of jurisdiction.

Designated Wilderness Areas

Union County contains portions of two federally designated wilderness areas within the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, totaling 111,688 acres (approximately 8.6% of the county, representing 18% of USFS lands in the county). These wilderness areas are managed under the Wilderness Act of 1964, which significantly affects wildfire management strategies and resource deployment options.

The Eagle Cap Wilderness encompasses 110,266 acres within Union County, representing a portion of the larger 359,991-acre wilderness area that extends into neighboring Wallowa County. This wilderness occupies the rugged eastern portions of Union County, including high alpine terrain, glacially carved valleys, and subalpine forests. The wilderness features dramatic topography with elevations ranging from approximately 4,000 feet in lower drainages to over 9,000 feet at high peaks.

The North Fork Umatilla Wilderness includes 1,422 acres within Union County, part of the larger 20,144-acre wilderness area that extends into Umatilla County. This wilderness occupies rugged terrain in the Blue Mountains along Union County's western boundary, featuring steep canyons, forested ridges, and the North Fork Umatilla River drainage.

Wilderness Fire Management Implications

Designated wilderness in Union County creates unique wildfire management challenges while preserving important ecological, recreational, and watershed values. The U.S. Forest Service often manages the Eagle Cap Wilderness using modified fire suppression strategies, allowing lightning-ignited fires to burn under monitoring for resource benefits rather than immediate suppression. While this approach requires careful oversight to protect adjacent private lands, it has proven successful by creating a mosaic of burn scars that reduce fuel loads. This patchwork of previous burns has moderated behavior of recent large wilderness fires, with existing burn scars serving as natural fuel breaks and demonstrating the effectiveness of allowing fire to fulfill its ecological role in wilderness settings.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The BLM administers 6,363 acres (0.5% of the county) in scattered parcels throughout Union County, typically smaller holdings that are often intermixed with private lands. These include historical checkerboard ownership patterns resulting from railroad land grants, isolated sections in agricultural areas, and rangeland parcels managed primarily for grazing. BLM lands are generally managed under the Vale District, which coordinates fire protection responsibilities with the Oregon Department of Forestry under cooperative agreements.

Other Federal Agencies

Other federal agencies manage minimal acreage in Union County (455 acres, <0.1%), primarily consisting of Bureau of Reclamation facilities associated with irrigation projects in the Grande Ronde Valley and minor Department of Energy holdings.

Private Lands

Private ownership represents the second-largest category at 665,620 acres (51.0% of the county). Private lands are diverse in both ownership type and land use patterns, creating a complex mosaic that significantly influences wildfire risk and management approaches.

Private Land Categories

Private lands in Union County encompass several distinct categories:

Industrial Forest Ownership: Commercial timber companies own forested acreage primarily in the Blue Mountains, managing lands for timber production with varying age classes and contributing to local forest products economy

Agricultural Lands: The majority of private lands, concentrated in the Grande Ronde Valley and lower elevations, including dryland wheat and barley production, irrigated crops, cattle ranches, and orchards

Small Woodlot Owners: Numerous family forestland parcels scattered throughout the county, particularly in wildland-urban interface areas, with diverse management objectives

Residential Properties: Development patterns ranging from urban centers (La Grande, Union, Elgin) to rural residential clusters on larger lots, often in forested settings adjacent to wildlands

Seasonal Recreational Properties: Cabins and vacation homes concentrated in forested areas near water features

State Lands

State-managed lands comprise only 9,703 acres (0.7% of the county), representing a much smaller ownership presence than federal or private holdings. Despite limited acreage, state lands serve important functions for wildlife management, recreation, and public access.

State lands are managed by several agencies:

- **Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)**: ~6,425 acres including portions of Elkhorn Wildlife Area and other wildlife management lands
- **Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)**: ~1,718 acres including Catherine Creek State Park, Hilgard Junction State Park, and other recreation sites
- **Department of State Lands (DSL)**: ~1,198 acres of scattered parcels
- **Oregon University System**: ~354 acres
- **Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT):** ~14 acres of rights-of-way

Beyond direct land management, the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) plays a critical fire protection role. Under Oregon's forest protection laws, ODF provides wildland fire protection on all private and state forestlands within the county through the La Grande Unit of the Northeast Oregon District, including fire prevention and detection services, initial attack wildfire suppression, coordination of resources during large fire events, and enforcement of industrial fire precaution levels during high fire danger periods.

Tribal Lands

Tribal lands constitute 5,180 acres (0.4% of the county), primarily consisting of lands held by or for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). While Union County does not contain tribal reservation lands, CTUIR maintains significant interests in the county including traditional use areas with cultural and spiritual significance, treaty-reserved hunting, fishing, and gathering rights, and archaeological and cultural sites protected under federal and state laws. The Tribes maintain collaborative relationships with land management agencies regarding resource management and fire protection.

Union County

Union County owns and manages the Mount Emily Recreation Area (MERA), approximately 3,670 acres of forest and rangeland on the slopes of Mount Emily in the Blue Mountains, roughly three miles north of La Grande. The area supports extensive multi-use recreation including motorized and non-motorized trails, mountain biking, hiking, and equestrian use. Union County has been actively conducting hazardous fuels treatments on MERA, including thinning, mastication, and prescribed fire, in coordination with the Oregon Department of Forestry to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health across the property.

Figure 5 - Fuels Break on top of ridge in MERA with Grande Ronde Valley in background

Industry and Employment in Union County

Union County has an economy deeply rooted in its natural resources, particularly agriculture and timber, and has diversified into healthcare, education, tourism, and the service industry:

1. Agriculture and Ranching:

The Grande Ronde Valley is one of the most productive agricultural areas in northeastern Oregon. The valley supports extensive wheat, barley, and grass seed farming, along with alfalfa hay and cattle ranching. Specialty crops include mint and potatoes, supported by the valley's fertile soils and irrigation systems.

2. Forestry and Wood Products:

Historically a timber-producing region, the county continues to have active logging and wood products industries, albeit on a smaller scale than during the 20th-century timber boom. Sawmills, log trucking, and forest thinning operations contribute to the local economy.

3. Outdoor Recreation and Tourism:

Union County's proximity to premier outdoor destinations draws visitors year-round, including the Eagle Cap Wilderness, Anthony Lakes Ski Area, the Mount Emily Recreation Area (MERA), and the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Refuge. The region is widely recognized as a hunting destination, with Union County serving as the primary gateway to some of northeastern Oregon's most sought-after hunting experiences. Access to world-class fishing, skiing, snowmobiling, off-road access, hiking, and wildlife watching opportunities contributes significantly to the local hospitality and service sectors.

Popular camping options in Union County range from developed facilities at three state parks — Catherine Creek, Hilgard Junction, and Red Bridge — a campground at MERA, and camping on national forest lands including Moss Springs, Spool Cart, and West Eagle Meadow. Located on the Umatilla National Forest, Jubilee Lake is the forest's most heavily used recreational facility. The Grande Hot Springs RV Resort offers 100 year-round sites with mineral hot spring amenities adjacent to the historic Hot Lake Springs. There are several more primitive and dispersed campgrounds on the National Forests. In the eastern portion of Union County, multiple trailheads serve as gateways for backpacking, horseback, and hunting adventures into the Eagle Cap Wilderness. Several reservoirs also offer fishing and camping opportunities.

4. Transportation and Logistics:

Union County serves as a regional transportation hub, with Interstate 84 connecting Portland to Boise passing through La Grande, along with OR-82 to Wallowa County and OR-203 to Baker County. The Union Pacific rail corridor also runs through the valley, supporting freight movement for agricultural and wood products industries. Local trucking, grain elevators, and logistics businesses tied to these corridors provide stable employment.

Union County Regional Airport in La Grande provides freight, passenger, and recreational aviation services for the region. The airport hosts an airtanker base that supports aerial firefighting operations,

serving as a critical refueling and reloading facility for retardant planes and jets during fire season. The airport also supports a Life Flight base, providing both fixed-wing and helicopter emergency medical transport for Union County and the surrounding region.

5. Retail and Service Sector:

La Grande serves as the regional service center for northeastern Oregon, supporting a broad range of retail, hospitality, and service businesses. Several hotels, restaurants, fast food establishments, and gas stations serve both local residents and travelers along the I-84 corridor. A full-service truck stop supports the significant freight traffic passing through the region. These businesses collectively represent a substantial portion of local employment and tax base, and are particularly sensitive to disruptions in visitor traffic and regional mobility during wildfire season.

6. Healthcare and Education:

Eastern Oregon University (EOU) in La Grande is a major employer, offering undergraduate and graduate programs that attract students from around the region. Grande Ronde Hospital, a full-service medical center, also anchors the healthcare sector.

7. Public Sector and Government:

Union County benefits from stable employment through county and city governments, public schools, and state and federal agencies. La Grande hosts the Union County Sheriff's Office, the Oregon State Police, the Oregon Department of Transportation, La Grande City Police, and La Grande Fire Department — a staffed career fire department. It also hosts many government agencies including the U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Oregon Department of Forestry.

In recent years, there has been growth in remote work and small business development, particularly in outdoor recreation services, artisan food production, and eco-tourism.

Wildfire Risk to Union County Industry

1. Agriculture and Ranching

Why it's at risk:

The Grande Ronde Valley is a significant agricultural hub in northeastern Oregon, supporting cattle ranching, hay, wheat, and specialty crops. Many farms are located near wildland-urban interface zones where rangeland meets forested slopes.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **Loss of grazing lands:** Rangeland fires can destroy forage for cattle, forcing ranchers to buy supplemental feed or lease distant grazing land.
- **Crop destruction:** Crops like hay, barley, and wheat can be damaged or destroyed by fast-moving grass fires, especially in late summer when fields are dry.
- **Soil degradation:** Post-fire erosion, wind-blown ash, and runoff can reduce soil productivity and impact future planting cycles.

- **Disrupted irrigation:** Fires may damage critical irrigation infrastructure, such as pumps, pipes, and diversion structures, affecting water delivery during growing seasons.
- **Smoke management:** Agricultural producers rely on cultural burning practices for crop management, but must limit burning on days with excessive wildfire smoke to not further degrade air quality.

2. Forestry and Wood Products

Why it's at risk:

Forestry is one of the county's foundational industries, with substantial tracts of public and private timberland throughout the Blue and Wallowa Mountains. The presence of both commercial forests and smaller private woodlots makes this sector highly susceptible to wildfire.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **Loss of merchantable timber:** Wildfires can destroy valuable timber stands, leading to long-term supply chain disruptions for sawmills and wood products manufacturers.
- **Post-fire erosion and degraded water quality:** Increased sedimentation following fires can impact stream systems, further affecting the health of forests and fisheries.
- **Increased operational costs:** Fire prevention measures, such as fuel reduction treatments, and post-fire salvage logging operations can strain local logging companies.
- **Temporary shutdowns:** During extreme fire seasons, logging operations, mill work, and transportation can be suspended due to hazardous air quality, closed forest roads, or fire-related evacuations.

3. Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Why it's at risk:

Union County relies on tourism tied to outdoor recreation, including hunting, fishing, camping, skiing, hiking, and wildlife viewing. The Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, Anthony Lakes Ski Area, the Eagle Cap Wilderness, and the Mount Emily Recreation Area are major destinations.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **Immediate safety of recreationalists:** Wildfires can move quickly, and recreationalists may have limited information, and could potentially become trapped or otherwise put in danger.
- **Trail and campground closures:** Wildfires often force temporary or seasonal closures of recreational trails, campgrounds, and wilderness areas. Campgrounds can be damaged and made unsafe from fire-damaged trees – this danger can last for years.
- **Lost revenue for guides and outfitters:** Hunting guides, fishing outfitters, and wilderness tour operators may experience significant losses during fire season or in the aftermath due to damaged landscapes or limited wildlife availability.
- **Ski industry concerns:** Wildfires and post-fire conditions can damage ski area infrastructure, though Anthony Lakes' alpine setting also benefits from moisture retention from heavy snowpack.
- **Long-term tourism impacts:** Diminished scenic value, decreased visitor satisfaction, and reduced use of trails or recreation areas due to downed trees, erosion, damaged facilities, or lingering smoke effects can persist for months or even years following a major fire event.

4. Transportation and Logistics

Why it's at risk:

Union County is a regional transportation hub for northeastern Oregon, with Interstate 84 passing through La Grande connecting Boise to Portland. The Union Pacific rail corridor and key secondary highways serve agricultural and industrial freight needs.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **Highway and road closures:** Wildfires near I-84 or secondary roads have historically forced freeway closures, cutting off through-traffic and restricting movement of goods including logging trucks, farm-to-market deliveries, and freight moving through La Grande.
- **Disrupted supply chains:** Closure of transportation routes impacts local businesses reliant on trucking, including lumber mills, grain elevators, and retail distributors.
- **Emergency response delays:** Fire-related road closures can slow evacuation, emergency medical response, and fire suppression logistics.
- **Airport operations:** The Union County Regional Airport supports civilian aviation, a critical airtanker base for aerial firefighting, and a Life Flight base providing emergency medical transport by both fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter. Wildfire smoke, airspace restrictions, and fire-related operational demands can simultaneously disrupt normal airport functions, strain aerial firefighting resources, and compromise time-sensitive medical transport for patients requiring emergency care.

Figure 6 – Weigh Station Fire 2016 closed I-84 and prompted evacuations of nearby homes

5. Retail and Service Sector

Why it's at risk:

La Grande's retail and service businesses depend heavily on steady traffic from local residents, regional visitors, and I-84 corridor travelers. Wildfire events have historically disrupted this flow through highway closures, hazardous air quality, and regional evacuations.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **I-84 corridor closures:** Wildfires near the freeway have historically forced closure of I-84, cutting off through-traffic that supports hotels, restaurants, truck stops, and fuel stations, resulting in lost revenue during what is typically the peak summer season.
- **Reduced visitor traffic:** Smoke, fire activity, and emergency declarations discourage discretionary travel, directly impacting hospitality businesses and reducing the workforce availability needed to keep them operating.
- **Supply chain interruptions:** Highway closures affect delivery schedules for retail and food service businesses dependent on regular restocking from regional distribution centers.

6. Healthcare and Education

Why it's at risk:

Grande Ronde Hospital and Eastern Oregon University are among the county's largest employers and most essential institutions. Both are vulnerable to the indirect effects of wildfire.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **Smoke-related health issues:** Wildfire smoke can exacerbate respiratory conditions in vulnerable populations, increasing hospital visits and placing stress on healthcare providers.
- **Campus disruptions:** EOU and local school districts may face closures or reduced activities during periods of hazardous air quality, especially during wildfire season, disrupting academic calendars and campus operations.

7. Public Sector and Government

Why it's at risk:

Union County's public sector includes county and city government, public schools, and state and federal agencies. The most direct wildfire risk to this sector is to the safety of first responders, including law enforcement, emergency medical services, and fire suppression personnel who operate in or near active fire environments.

Potential wildfire impacts:

- **First responder safety:** Law enforcement, EMS, and fire personnel face direct exposure to rapidly changing fire conditions during suppression, evacuation enforcement, and emergency response operations. Volunteer fire departments in rural communities face particular strain during extended fire seasons.
- **Government continuity:** Evacuations or facility damage can disrupt county and city operations, including permitting, public records, and essential services.
- **School disruptions:** Hazardous air quality and evacuation orders can force school closures, placing additional burden on working families during already stressful fire events.

County-wide Concerns Across Sectors

- **Air Quality:** All sectors — especially those reliant on outdoor labor like agriculture, construction, and forestry — are impacted by prolonged wildfire smoke events. Union County has a current Community Response Plan for smoke from prescribed and natural fires.
- **Economic Stability:** Smaller businesses such as local hotels, restaurants, and supply stores experience ripple effects when recreational visitors or seasonal workers avoid the area during fire season.

Chapter 4 – The Fire Environment: History, Protection, and Response

Fire History

The Anthony Creek Fire (1960): A Tragedy That Shaped Regional Firefighting

Long before modern wildfire data systems, the Blue Mountains experienced what regional officials called "the worst blaze in the Pacific Northwest"—the Anthony Creek Fire of 1960. On July 19, one of the most severe dry lightning storms ever recorded on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest ignited at least 80 fires in a single event. Two fires in the Anthony Creek drainage quickly merged into a conflagration that would burn approximately 15,000-20,000 acres and consume an estimated 20 million board-feet of timber over two weeks. Up to 3,900 firefighters mobilized to battle the blaze in rugged terrain north of what would later become Anthony Lakes ski area.

What makes the Anthony Creek Fire unforgettable is not its size, but its human cost. Three aircraft accidents occurred during suppression operations—an unprecedented toll that still stands as a stark reminder of the dangers firefighters face:

July 22, 1960: A B-25 bomber converted to an air tanker crashed near Webfoot Meadow while dropping retardant, killing both crew members.

July 25, 1960: A helicopter carrying nine passengers crashed during fire operations. Remarkably, all nine survived with only minor injuries.

August 2, 1960: On the day the fire was declared controlled, Baker District Ranger Wilson C. Holroyd and his pilot were conducting a helicopter survey to assess fire damage and plan restoration when their aircraft went down near High Mountain. Holroyd, who had been working in Baker for just one year, died six days later from severe head injuries. The pilot survived.

Figure 7 – Memorial Bench overlooking area of the 1960 Anthony Creek Fire

Three aircraft crashes on a single fire—two fatal—was extraordinary even by 1960s standards when aerial firefighting was newer and riskier. Today, a memorial bench overlooking the Anthony Creek burn area honors the firefighters who lost their lives. The Holroyd Road in the fire area bears the ranger's name, a lasting tribute to those who gave their lives protecting the forest.

The 1973 Rooster Peak Fire

The 1973 Rooster Peak Fire remains the defining event in Union County's fire history—the largest and most destructive wildfire in the county's modern record. Ignited by lightning in August 1973, this fire burned approximately 6,400 acres and destroyed six structures near La Grande's southwest city limits.

The fire initially smoldered for several days before strong west winds on August 16 drove it rapidly eastward toward the city. The flames traveled over Table Mountain and came within a quarter mile of Grande Ronde Hospital—then as now, the county's only medical center. More than 1,500 firefighters from state and federal agencies, augmented by community volunteers, fought to keep the flames from penetrating the city limits. The firefighting effort included helicopters and World War II-era bombers dropping flame retardant at tree-top and roof-top levels through smoke so thick that "the sun could be observed directly, as though looking through a beer bottle."

Figure 8 – Rooster Peak Fire 1973 burning near homes in La Grande

The fire ultimately stopped approximately 150 yards west of where the Sunny Hill Acres subdivision stands today. The burn scar remains visible from the valley, a lasting reminder of La Grande's wildfire vulnerability.

Other Significant Historical Fires (1981-1989)

The 1989 Tanner Gulch Fire (3,984 acres) burned north of Anthony Lakes ski area during the late July dry lightning outbreak that sparked dozens of fires across the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest, including the 20,000-acre Dooley Mountain Fire in Baker County. This event demonstrated the regional challenge of multiple simultaneous ignitions overwhelming available resources.

The 1981 Mount Harris Fire (850 acres, human-caused) resulted in high timber losses with burn scars still visible 40+ years later from La Grande, Summerville, Imbler, and Cove.

The 1986 Frizzel Fire (250 acres, lightning) in the Mount Emily WUI demonstrated interface fire potential despite quick containment.

Modern Fire Record (1992-2024)

Overview

Between 1992 and 2024, Union County experienced 1,540 wildfire starts that burned a total of 18,256 acres—an average of 47 fires per year burning approximately 554 acres annually. The fire record reveals distinct patterns in ignition causes, temporal trends, and fire behavior that inform current wildfire risk management strategies.

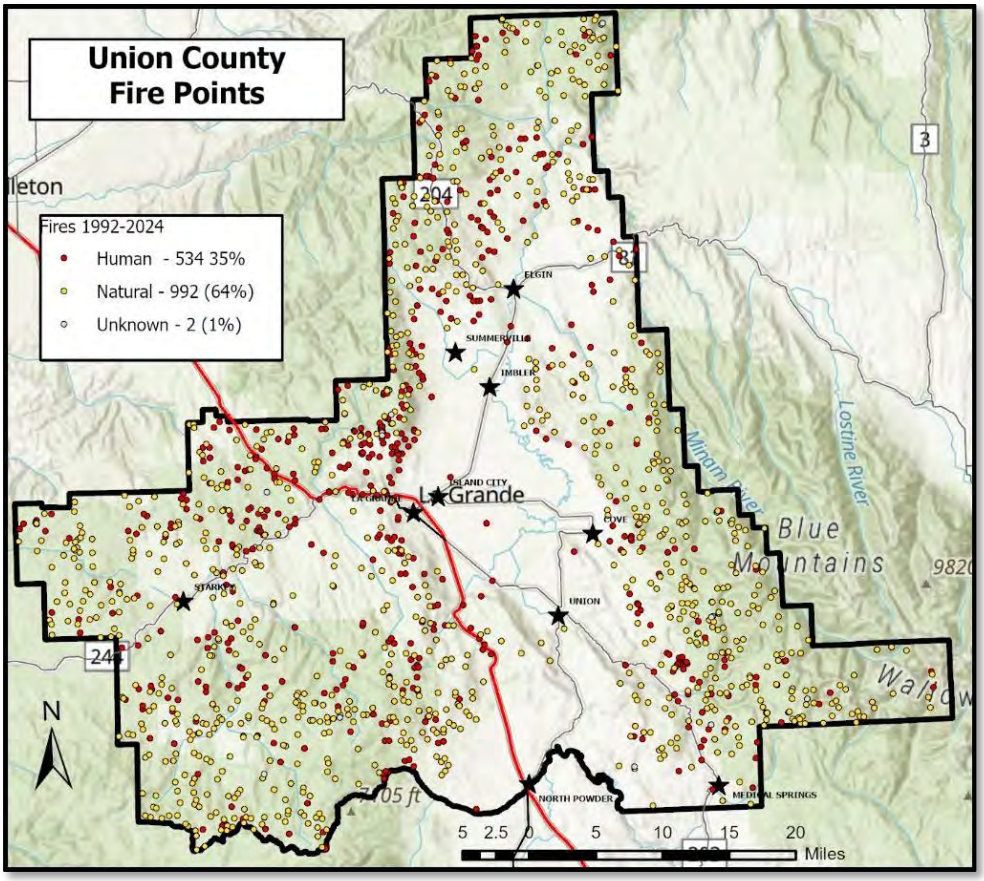


Figure 9- Map of Fire Start Locations

Major Fires in the Modern Record

Phillips Creek Fire (2015): The largest fire in the modern record at 2,601 acres, this human-caused fire occurred during the August 2015 lightning outbreak that sparked numerous large, destructive fires across the Blue Mountains and northeast Oregon. The fire burned west of Elgin, requiring a Type II overhead team and 736 fire personnel. Several residences were threatened, forcing Level I evacuation notices and extensive road closures.

Merry-Go-Round Fire (2015): Also ignited during the August 2015 lightning outbreak, this 77-acre natural fire in the Catherine Creek area off Hess Cabin Road represented a successful initial attack story. Despite challenging conditions with fires burning region-wide, coordinated response from Forest Service and local fire department resources contained the fire before it could grow to destructive size—demonstrating the value of rapid response and mutual aid agreements.

Mount Harris Fire (2014): This October fire, highly visible to local communities, occurred when adequate resources were available due to recent moisture. Had it started just two to three weeks earlier when Oregon had nine active large fires, the outcome could have been far more costly—highlighting the critical importance of timing and resource availability.

Mount Emily Recreation Area Fires (Recent):

Two fires in the Mount Emily Recreation Area demonstrated both the effectiveness of coordinated response and of fuels treatment. An ATV caught fire in July 2023, and in October 2024 an abandoned campfire spread into nearby timber. Quick action from responding resources controlled both fires before they could threaten communities.

Figure 10 – ATV fire 2023 started in fuel treatment zone

Significantly, both fires occurred in areas treated for fuels in recent years, demonstrating the value of proactive fuel management in the wildland-urban interface.

Both fires were also excellent examples of well-coordinated mutual aid response between Rural Fire Protection Districts and the Oregon Dept. of Forestry.

Figure 11 – Abandoned campfire starts fire in MERA

Craig Loop Fire (2003): Though only 43 acres, this human-caused fire in the Mount Emily WUI had high potential for property damage given its location in one of Union County's most populated interface areas.

Boulevard Fire (2001): This 150-acre lightning fire threatened the La Grande watershed, with limited access making suppression difficult in the rugged, roadless terrain.

Other Notable Modern Fires

- Mule Peak (2005): 1,400 acres, natural
- Trout Creek (2007): 1,386 acres, natural
- Spring Creek (2005): 1,156 acres, human-caused
- Fly (2005): 1,066 acres, natural
- Dennis Creek (2015): 157 acres, natural

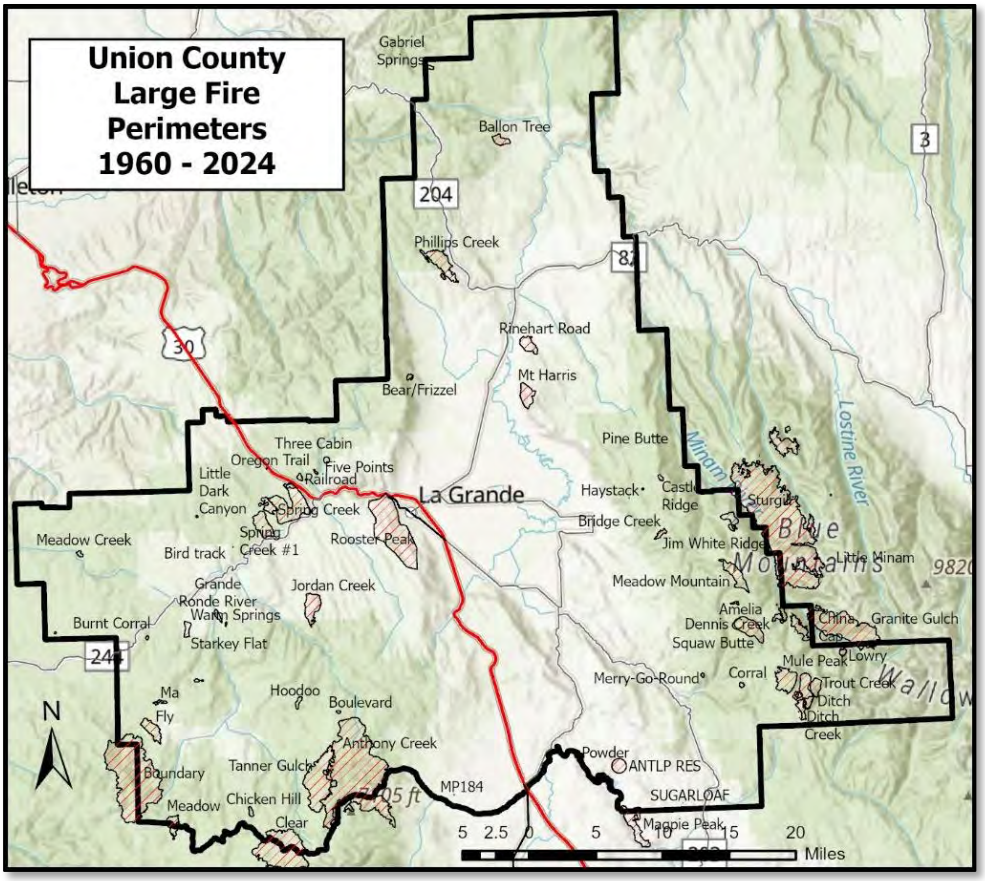


Figure 12 - Map of Large Fire Perimeters

Fire Patterns and Trends

Ignition Patterns

Natural ignitions dominated with 992 fires (64.4%), but human-caused fires (537 fires, 34.9%) averaged 36% larger at 14.4 acres versus 10.6 acres for lightning fires. This larger average size justifies continued prevention emphasis.

Fire Size Distribution

The overwhelming majority of fires (83.1%) remained under one acre, accounting for only 1% of total acreage. In stark contrast, just 29 fires over 100 acres (1.9% of starts) accounted for 85% of all acres burned. This underscores the critical importance of initial attack and fuel treatments.

Temporal Trends

Fire frequency, based on fires responded to by the USFS and ODF, has declined from 49-52 fires/year in the 1990s-2000s to just 17 fires/year in the 2020s. However, the 2000s saw the most acreage burned (9,368 acres), with 2005 being the most destructive single year (36 fires, 4,407 acres). The years 2005, 2007, and 2015 produced the largest fires, corresponding to documented drought and extreme fire weather.

Seasonal Pattern

July and August account for 65% of all fires, with September adding another 13%—meaning 78% of fires occur in a three-month period.

Cause Trends Over Time

The natural-to-human fire ratio has varied: 2:1 in the 1990s (336 vs. 156), closer ratios in the 2000s-2010s, returning to 2:1 in the 2020s (108 vs. 51).

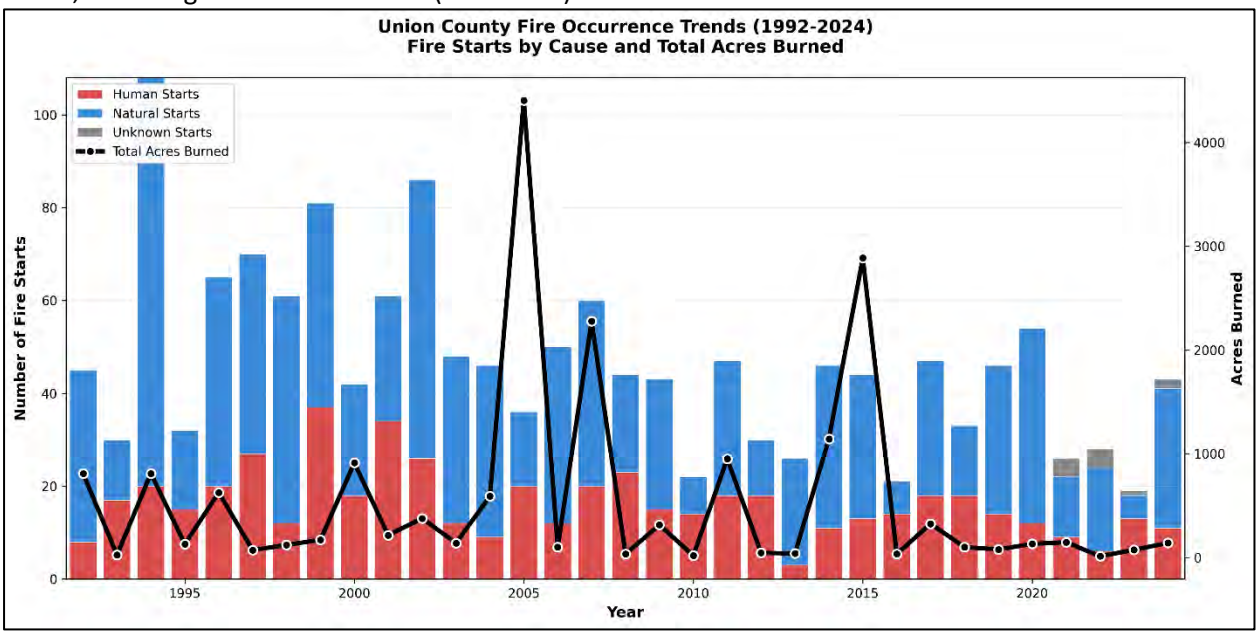


Figure 13 - Chart of Annual Fire Cause and Acres

Looking Forward: Increasing Fire Season Length and Current Conditions

Fire seasons in Union County and across Oregon have lengthened over the last decade, with increased fire activity extending both earlier into spring and later into fall. This trend mirrors regional and national patterns of longer fire seasons driven by warming temperatures and changing precipitation patterns.

The 2026 water year presents particularly concerning conditions. As of early February 2026, Oregon is experiencing its lowest snowpack on record—worse even than the severe 2015 drought year. Statewide snow water equivalent averages around 30% of normal, with the Blue Mountains and Ochoco Mountains (which store much of Union County's water supply) reporting similarly dire conditions. Federal hydrologists warn that without significant snowpack recovery, the region faces heightened wildfire risk this summer, as the normal moisture reservoir provided by mountain snowmelt will be severely depleted.

These conditions underscore that historical fire patterns—including major events like the 1960 Anthony Creek Fire and 1973 Rooster Peak Fire—remain relevant to current planning. The landscape retains its capacity to produce large, destructive fires, and declining recent fire frequency should not diminish preparedness.

Fire History Informs the Future

The fire history of Union County reveals several critical considerations for community wildfire protection:

Firefighter Safety and Community Responsibility: The Anthony Creek Fire's three aircraft accidents remind us that wildfire suppression carries inherent risks. Community preparedness through fuel treatments, defensible space, and evacuation planning reduces the burden on firefighters and helps ensure they can do their jobs more safely.

Interface Vulnerability: The Rooster Peak Fire (1973) and Anthony Creek Fire (1960) demonstrated threats to communities and critical infrastructure. Modern development has expanded into areas threatened by these historical fires, increasing exposure.

Lightning Storm Preparedness: The 1960 storm that ignited 80+ fires, the 1989 outbreak, and the 2015 inferno in Northeast Oregon all producing multiple large fires show the challenge of simultaneous ignitions overwhelming resources—a scenario that could recur.

Value of Mutual Aid: Recent successes in the Mount Emily Recreation Area demonstrate that coordinated response between rural fire protection districts and agency resources is key to controlling fires threatening communities and infrastructure. Maintaining and strengthening these relationships is essential.

Fuel Treatments Work: The successful containment of recent Mount Emily fires in previously treated areas provides tangible evidence that proactive fuel management reduces fire intensity and improves suppression effectiveness in the wildland-urban interface.

Prevention Priority: Human-caused fires' 36% larger average size justifies continued education and fire restriction enforcement, especially during periods when resources are committed to lightning-caused fires.

Initial Attack Critical: Less than 2% of fires cause 85% of damage. Rapid response capability, strategic fuel treatments, and adequate staffing during peak season are essential investments.

Resource Flexibility and Timing: The 2014 Mount Harris Fire highlighted how timing affects outcomes. Variable seasons require flexible planning, adequate mutual aid agreements, and sufficient resources during extended fire seasons.

Large Fire Potential Persists: Historical fires demonstrate the landscape can produce events far larger than recent decades have seen. Just because it hasn't happened recently doesn't mean it can't happen in the near future—particularly given current drought conditions and lengthening fire seasons.

Community Engagement Remains Essential: The 1973 Rooster Peak defense relied on community volunteers. All rural fire protection districts in the county are made of very well trained and experienced dedicated volunteer firefighters. Local loggers and equipment operators are quick to mobilize to assist. Modern planning must maintain strong community engagement, public education, and coordination capabilities.

Fire Protection Responsibilities and Coverage

Understanding which agency has fire protection responsibility for different areas is critical for effective planning, resource coordination, and emergency response. Union County's fire protection system involves multiple agencies with distinct but sometimes overlapping jurisdictions.

Wildfire Dispatch and Interagency Coordination

Wildfire response in Union County is coordinated through the Blue Mountain Interagency Dispatch Center (BMIDC) in La Grande, which serves as the primary interagency dispatch hub for wildland fire across Northeast Oregon, operating under the *closest forces concept* to ensure the fastest possible initial attack response regardless of jurisdictional boundaries.

When public fire reports are received by the Union County 911 Center, if the location and jurisdiction is determined within RFPD protection, they will dispatch appropriate county resources. If the report is determined to be in BMIDC's jurisdiction, the call is transferred to BMIDC, which then manages all wildland fire dispatching and resource coordination from that point. When fires exceed initial attack capability, BMIDC provides seamless escalation to regional, state, and national resources, integrating local RFPD capacity with federal and state wildland fire expertise to provide comprehensive wildfire protection throughout Union County.

Structural Fire Protection: Rural Fire Protection Districts

Rural Fire Protection Districts (RFPDs) provide fire protection to most of Union County's inhabited unincorporated areas and the small municipalities within them (Cove, Elgin, Imbler, Island City, North Powder, and Union). These districts respond to structure fires, vehicle accidents, medical emergencies, and provide initial attack on wildland fires within their boundaries. Union County is served by eight rural fire protection districts covering approximately 317,539 acres (24.3% of the county).

Dual and Overlapping Protection

An important characteristic of Union County's fire protection system is the presence of areas with dual or overlapping protection responsibilities. This occurs primarily in wildland-urban interface zones where private forestlands (protected by ODF for wildland fire) fall within RFPD boundaries (providing structural protection and emergent responses for initial attack of wildland fires).

Figure 14 -La Grande Rural Fire Protection District responding to Jones Butte Fire 2023

Mutual Aid and Resource Sharing

Union County's fire protection system operates within a comprehensive network of mutual aid agreements that enable rapid resource sharing during wildfire events and other emergencies. These agreements function at multiple levels—local, regional, state, and national—ensuring that fire protection agencies can access additional personnel, equipment, and expertise when incidents exceed local capacity.

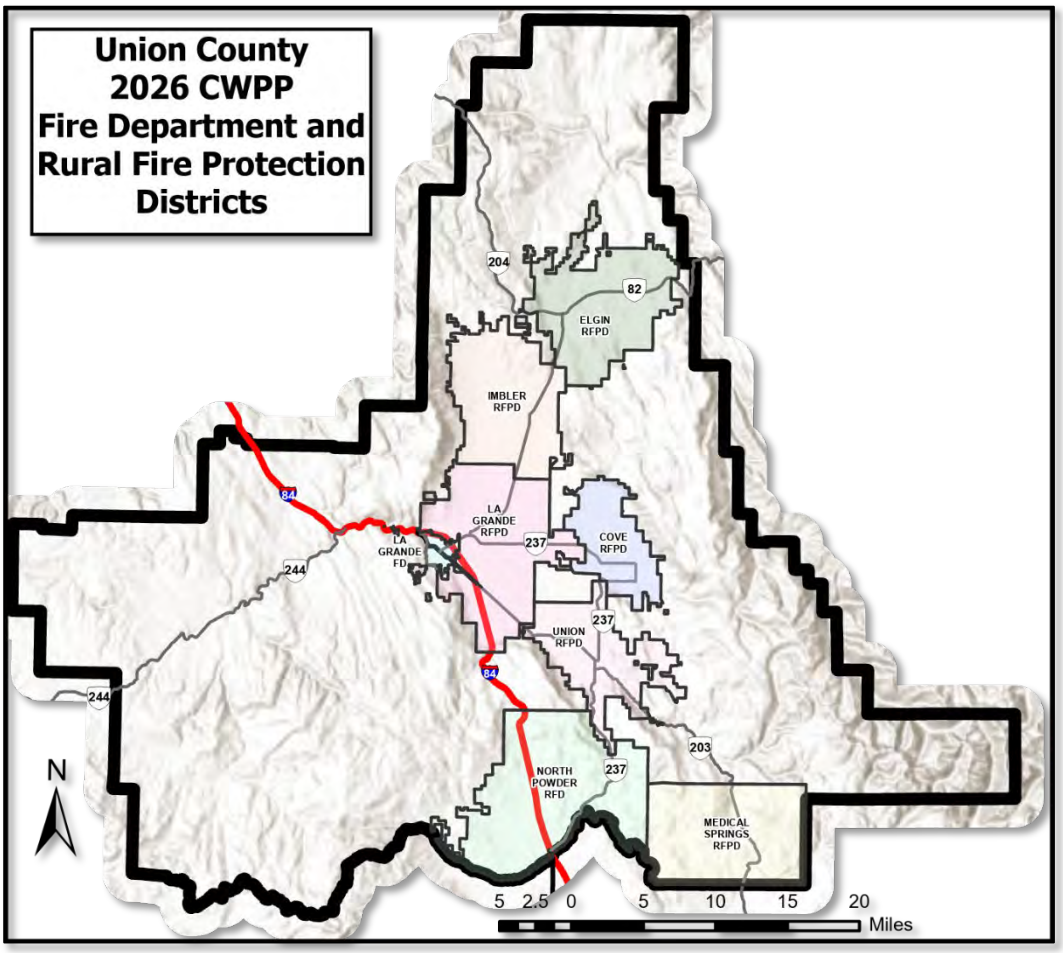


Figure 15 – Fire Protection District Boundaries

Statutory Mutual Aid Framework

Under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS 402.010–402.255), all Oregon jurisdictions, including Union County and its rural fire protection districts, are party to statutory mutual assistance compact. This statewide framework allows local governments to request and provide emergency aid across jurisdictional boundaries for prevention, response, mitigation, and recovery efforts. The compact covers all emergency forces including fire-rescue, hazardous materials teams, emergency medical services, and emergency management personnel.

Local Mutual Aid Agreements

Union County's rural fire protection districts maintain mutual aid agreements with one another, enabling resource sharing during structure fires, wildland fires, vehicle accidents, and medical emergencies. These local agreements facilitate first-arriving agency response regardless of jurisdictional boundaries and allow for unified command on incidents requiring multiple agencies.

Fire protection districts also coordinate closely with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF), which provides wildland fire protection on private and state forestlands throughout the county, creating a collaborative response framework in the wildland-urban interface.

State Fire Mobilization

The Oregon Fire Service Mobilization Plan, administered by the Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM), provides a statewide system for mobilizing fire resources during large-scale incidents. When local and regional resources are exhausted, the Governor can activate the Conflagration Act (ORS 476.510–476.610), mobilizing fire agencies from across Oregon to respond to major wildfire events. Resources mobilized through this system are provided at no cost to the requesting jurisdiction, with the state covering deployment expenses.

Regional and Interstate Coordination

Union County also benefits from broader mutual aid frameworks that extend beyond Oregon's borders:

- Oregon Resource Coordination Assistance Agreement (ORCAA): Facilitates resource sharing among member jurisdictions for emergency response, recovery, and training exercises
- Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC): A national interstate mutual aid system enabling states to share resources during disasters
- Pacific Northwest Emergency Management Arrangement (PNEMA): A cross-border agreement allowing resource sharing among Pacific Northwest states and Canadian provinces

Federal Agency Coordination

While not formal mutual aid agreements, Union County fire agencies coordinate closely with federal land management agencies operating in the county. The U.S. Forest Service maintains fire suppression responsibility on National Forest System lands, and cooperative relationships enable resource sharing during wildfire events. Similarly, coordination occurs with the Bureau of Land Management for fires on BLM-administered lands.

Chapter 5 – Wildland Urban Interface Planning

Introduction

This chapter establishes the foundation for identifying and classifying areas where human development intersects with wildland vegetation, creating zones of elevated wildfire risk called the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI). The chapter defines the WUI planning framework used in Union County, explains the methodology for delineating WUI zones, and establishes the spatial tiers that guide wildfire risk reduction strategies from individual properties to landscape-scale planning.

Strategic Importance of WUI Planning

Effective WUI planning that addresses individual, middle ground, and landscape scales provides multiple benefits for wildfire risk reduction in Union County:

- **Focused Resource Allocation:** Directing limited mitigation resources to areas of highest risk and greatest potential benefit.
- **Cross-Boundary Coordination:** Creating a common framework for collaboration between jurisdictions, agencies, and landowners.
- **Public Awareness:** Helping residents understand their relative wildfire risk and encouraging proactive risk reduction.
- **Funding Eligibility:** Supporting grant applications by clearly defining areas of concern consistent with state and federal funding requirements.
- **Long-Term Planning:** Providing a stable framework for ongoing mitigation efforts while allowing for periodic updates to reflect changing conditions.
- **Integration with Other Planning Efforts:** Aligning wildfire planning with comprehensive plans, natural hazard mitigation plans, and emergency operations plans.

The multi-scale WUI framework established in this chapter provides the foundation for the detailed risk assessment, community analysis, and mitigation strategies presented in subsequent chapters of this CWPP.

Defining the Wildland Urban Interface

The Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) represents areas where human development meets or intermingles with undeveloped wildland vegetation. These areas are of particular concern for wildfire planning because they combine ignition sources, human values at risk, and wildland fuels capable of sustaining high-intensity fire.

The Federal Register (66 FR 751, January 4, 2001) defines WUI as "the area where houses meet or intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation." This definition has been further refined through

scientific research and operational experience to recognize two primary conditions: Interface and Intermix.

Interface Condition

The Interface condition exists where development is clearly separated from wildland fuels by a distinct boundary. Key characteristics include:

- A clear line of demarcation between structures and wildland fuels
- Development density of at least 3 structures per acre
- Shared municipal services such as water systems and fire departments
- Distinct boundaries with wildland vegetation, typically with less than 50% vegetative cover

In Union County, Interface conditions are limited, and primarily found around the edges of incorporated communities such as La Grande, Elgin, and Union, where development abruptly transitions to wildland or agricultural areas.

Intermix Condition

The Intermix condition exists where structures are scattered throughout wildland areas with no clear line of demarcation. Key characteristics include:

- Widely spaced or dispersed structures interspersed among wildland vegetation
- Development density between 1 structure per 40 acres and 3 structures per acre
- Limited municipal services, often relying on individual water systems and volunteer fire protection
- Vegetative fuel loading of more than 50% of the area

In Union County, Intermix conditions are common across the landscape in rural residential areas, particularly in forested settings in the Blue Mountains, along Catherine Creek, and in the foothills surrounding the Grande Ronde Valley.

Union County's Four-Tier WUI Framework

Union County's wildfire risk reduction strategy will employ a nested approach extending outward from structures to the landscape. This framework integrates individual defensible space with strategic landscape treatments, creating a comprehensive system that addresses wildfire risk at multiple scales. The framework is defined in four spatial tiers, moving from the structure outward to the broader landscape.

Tier 1: Defensible Space (Immediate Zone)

The area immediately surrounding structures (typically 0-100+ feet, with specific distances varying by jurisdiction and vegetation type) where property owners reduce wildfire threats through vegetation management, fuel reduction, and building hardening. This zone is the primary responsibility of individual property owners and represents the most critical area for structure protection.

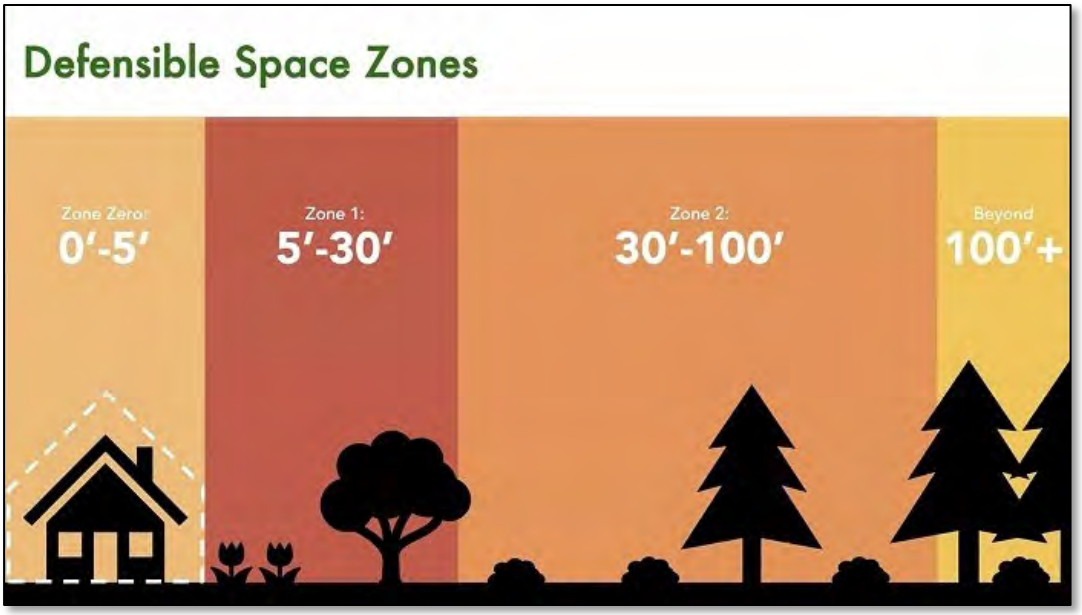


Figure 16- Defensible Space Zones

Tier 2: Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone (CWiRRZ)

A 1.5-mile buffer around structures and identified housing units at risk, representing the area where wildfire directly and indirectly threatens communities through flame contact, radiant heat, and ember transport. This distance is grounded in research showing that:

- Embers can travel 1-2 miles ahead of a fire front under moderate wind conditions
- Radiant heat effects extend 200-300 feet from active flame fronts
- Fire behavior in this zone directly influences structure ignition probability

The CWiRRZ corresponds to the Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 risk calculation area, which encompasses direct exposure, indirect exposure, and wildfire transmission zones around housing units.

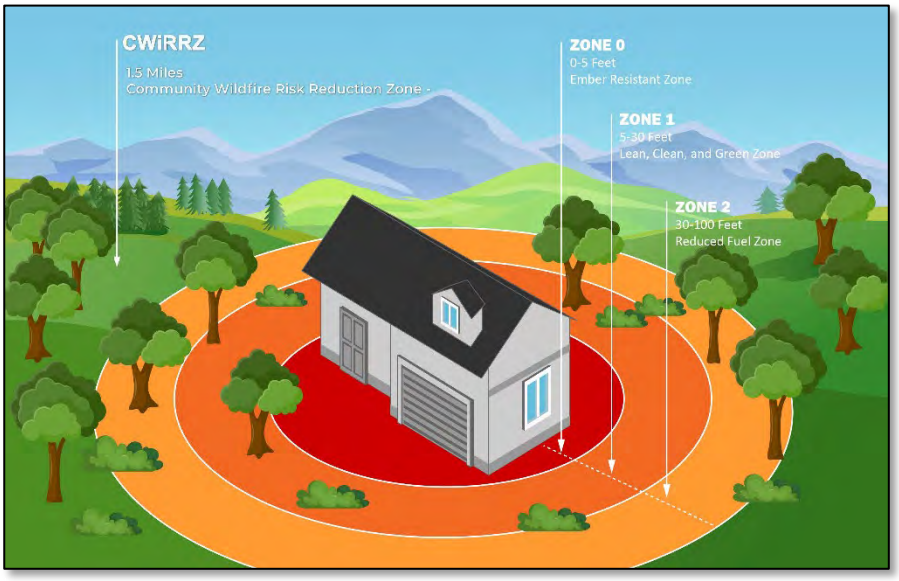


Figure 17 – Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone

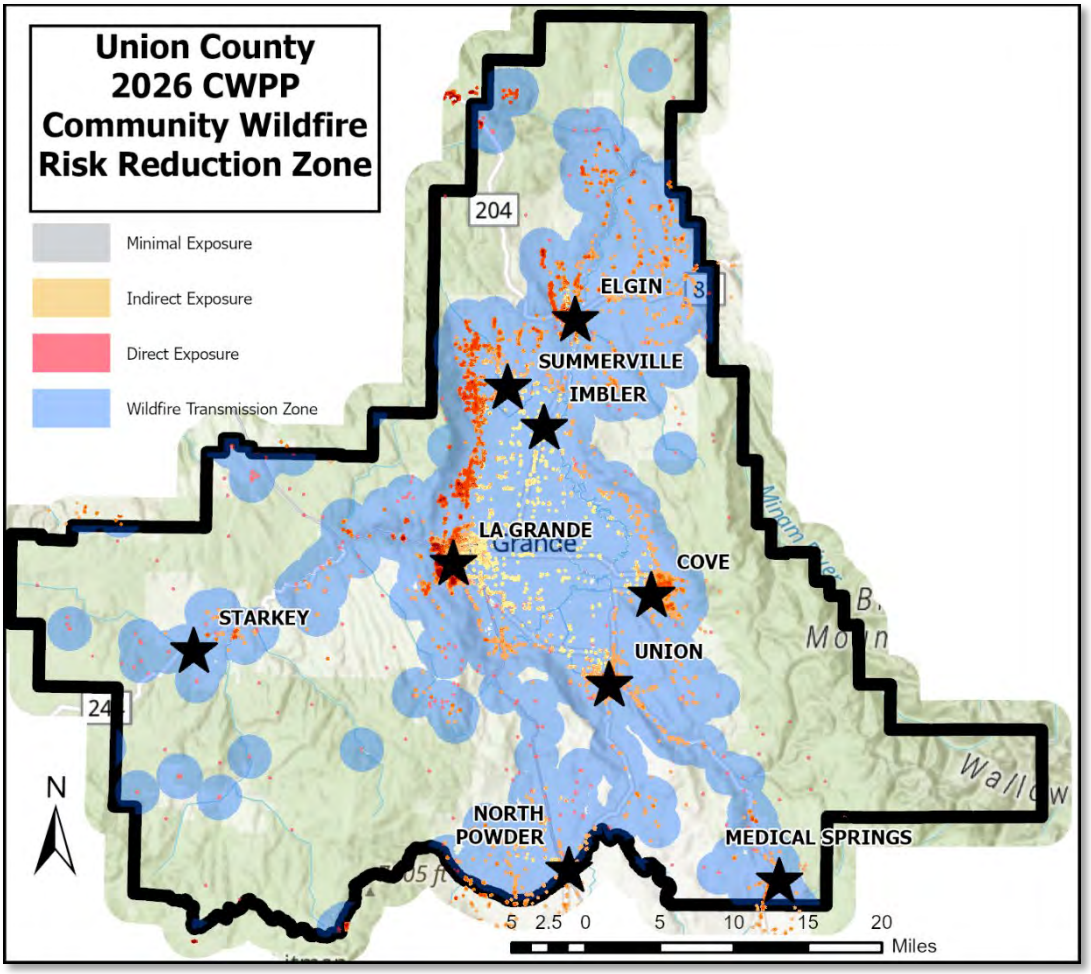


Figure 18- CWiRRZ in Union County as identified in Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 - wildfirerisk.org

Tier 3: Community Protection Zone (CPZ)

The Community Protection Zone – CPZ- extends from the CWiRRZ boundary to the outer WUIZ boundary. This intermediate landscape—previously termed "middle ground" in the 2016 Union County CWPP—provides strategic opportunities for landscape-scale fuel treatments that reduce fire behavior before it reaches communities. While individual property owners can effectively create defensible space around structures, and land management agencies can implement landscape-scale treatments across thousands of acres, the CPZ represents the critical transition zone where coordinated action between property owners, communities, and agencies creates the most significant risk reduction benefits.

Treatment Continuity. The effectiveness of CPZ treatments depends on their strategic connection to both individual defensible space and broader landscape treatments. This continuity creates a layered defense system through: progressively increasing protection moving from individual structures to community zones to landscape-scale treatments; strategic placement using topographic features, natural firebreaks, and existing roads to maximize effectiveness of limited treatment resources; and cross-boundary coordination requiring collaboration between individual landowners, community organizations, and government agencies.

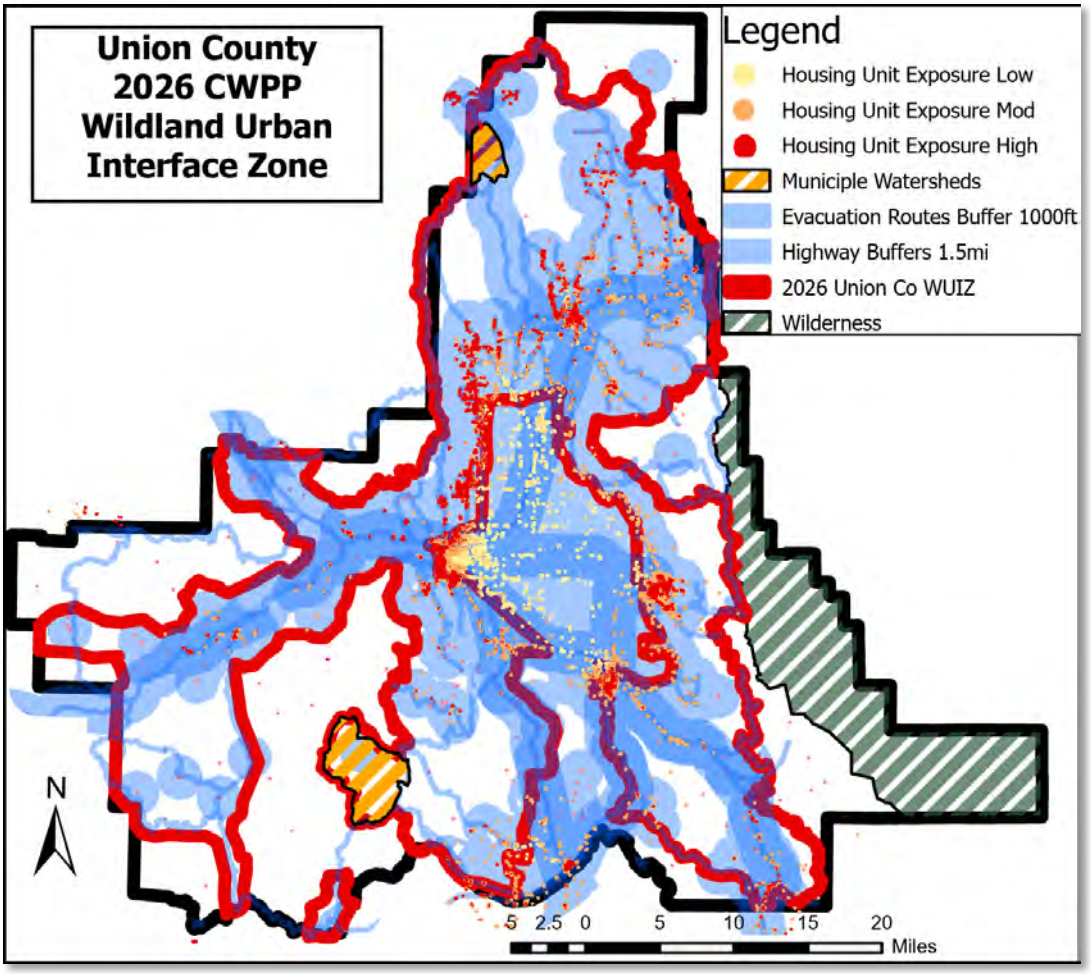


Figure 19 – Union County WUIZ Boundary

Strategic Treatment Focus Areas. Treatments in the CPZ focus on areas that provide maximum risk reduction benefit:

- **Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones:** Extended protection areas 1.5 miles beyond defensible space around homes and Communities at Risk.
- **Evacuation Corridor Treatments:** Fuel reduction along primary and secondary evacuation routes, minimum width of four times predicted flame length (typically 100-1,000 feet)
- **Highway Corridors —** A 1.5-mile buffer along the interstate and primary state highways.
- **Fuel Break Networks:** Connected managed areas with reduced flammability up to 1,000 feet wide, designed for fire control and suppression support
- **Municipal Watershed Protection:** Strategic treatments within and surrounding municipal watersheds
- **Infrastructure Buffer Zones:** Treatment areas surrounding critical utilities, communications sites, and community assets
- **High Risk Fuels:** Priority treatment in areas with potential extreme fire behavior (<8’ flames)

Implementation Approaches. CPZ treatments in Union County are implemented through partnerships including the Northern Blues Restoration Partnership and Northern Blues Cohesive Partnership; NE Oregon Firewise Communities supporting local treatment initiatives; shared stewardship agreements between landowners, agencies, and local government; strategic fuel breaks designed to modify fire behavior at community and landscape scales; and coordinated project implementation aligning individual property treatments to create contiguous treated areas.

Tier 4: Wildland-Urban Interface Zone (WUIZ) Boundary

The WUIZ is the overall planning boundary encompassing all areas where development meets or intermingles with wildland vegetation and where wildfire poses significant threat to communities, infrastructure, and values at risk. The WUIZ incorporates all three inner tiers plus additional strategic planning areas.

WUIZ outer boundaries are defined by strategic fuel treatment zones (FTZ) along forest roads and Potential Operational Delineations (described further in this chapter) where applicable. Treatment buffers of approximately 1,000 feet extend along forest roads to create strategic fuel breaks and anchor points for fire suppression operations.

WUIZ boundaries were developed using recommended buffers around housing units at risk from the Wildland Fire Risk V2.0 from the US Forest Service, the US Forest Service road networks that contribute to Fire Break Networks, and local knowledge of fire behavior, evacuation routes, critical infrastructure, and community values requiring protection.

Evolution from 2016 CWPP Framework

The 2016 Union County CWPP established the initial WUIZ framework based on the following factors:

- Areas within 1.5 miles of at-risk communities,
- Areas adjacent to evacuation routes,
- Critical infrastructure corridors,
- Municipal watersheds,
- Areas of tribal importance,
- Emergency service facilities,
- Communication sites,
- USFS administrative sites,
- Other high-value areas identified by the planning committee.

This approach created a comprehensive foundation that required updating to incorporate new data, changing conditions, and evolving best practices.

The 2026 CWPP builds upon this foundation while incorporating enhanced methodologies and additional considerations:

- Integration of updated housing density data reflecting development patterns since 2016

- Analysis of recent fire history (2016-2024) identifying emerging risk patterns and spread potential beyond previously expected rates and distances
- Incorporation of improved vegetation and fuels information
- Consideration of changing climate conditions affecting fire behavior
- Consistency with **Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0** and **Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment** datasets
- Integration of Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) boundaries
- Incorporation of Fuels Treatment Zones networks
- Enhanced stakeholder engagement incorporating local knowledge

This refined approach ensures the WUIZ accurately reflects current conditions in Union County while providing a framework for effective wildfire mitigation planning that builds upon, rather than replaces, the 2016 foundation.

WUIZ Mapping Methodology

The mapping of the Wildland Urban Interface Zone for the 2026 CWPP utilized a multi-factor analysis approach that incorporated both technical data and local knowledge. The methodology was applied uniformly across Union County to ensure consistency while allowing for adjustments based on local conditions.

Key mapping factors included:

- **Structure Density and Risk Exposure:** Utilizing current structure location data to identify development concentrations and assess risk exposure
- **Vegetation and Fuels Classification:** Mapping wildland vegetation types and densities to identify fuels capable of sustaining wildfire
- **Buffer Development:** Creating distance-based buffers around developed areas, evacuation routes, and critical infrastructure based on potential fire spread, considering fuel continuity, expected fire behavior and flame lengths, topographic influence, and prevailing wind patterns
- **Infrastructure Integration:** Incorporating critical infrastructure including power transmission, communication facilities, emergency services, and transportation networks
- **Values at Risk Assessment:** Identifying community values including economic assets, recreation areas, agricultural components, municipal watersheds, and cultural/historical sites
- **Fire District Boundaries:** Ensuring alignment with jurisdictional responsibilities
- **Existing POD Boundaries:** Incorporating proven operational planning boundaries where applicable
- **Local Knowledge Integration:** Adjusting preliminary boundaries based on input from local fire officials, land management agencies, community stakeholders, and residents with historical knowledge of fire behavior

The 1.5-mile buffer used in Union County's Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone is grounded in research on ember travel distances and radiant heat effects, and provides consistency with federal and

state wildfire planning guidance while reflecting local fire behavior patterns observed in Union County and the broader Blue Mountains region.

Potential Operational Delineations (PODs)

Potential Operational Delineations (PODs) are landscape divisions based on fire control features such as roads, ridges, and natural barriers that fire managers use for planning both fire response and fuels management. PODs define actionable landscape units for coordinated wildfire operations and strategic fuel treatment prioritization, and have been incorporated into CWPP's.

The PODs framework builds upon successful implementation in the Wallowa-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests through the Northern Blues Forest Collaborative initiative, which since 2020 has implemented large-scale fuels reduction and forest restoration projects using PODs to guide strategic placement of treatments. The framework has demonstrated effectiveness in focusing strategic treatments, integrating cross-boundary planning, prioritizing high-risk areas, guiding prescribed fire planning, and informing wildfire response decisions during active incidents.

Union County adapts this proven regional approach to the mixed ownership pattern and community protection priorities specific to the county. Future mitigation actions will include developing PODs for WUIZ areas in collaboration with Oregon Department of Forestry, Rural Fire Protection Districts, and other stakeholders, with appropriate scale adjustments for Union County's land ownership patterns and refined boundaries based on local fire experience and knowledge.

In Union County, PODs have been adopted as the primary geographic framework to define Union County's emergency evacuation zones on National Forest lands.

Communities at Risk

The 2026 CWPP defines a Community at Risk (CAR) as "*A geographic area within and surrounding groups of permanent dwellings with basic infrastructure and services, sharing common evacuation route(s), and having a distinct wildfire risk profile.*"

This definition evolved from the Oregon Department of Forestry 2020 Communities at Risk Report, which identified Union County communities facing significant wildfire risks in the wildland-urban interface. However, the 2020 ODF assessment identified communities by name only, without establishing physical geographic boundaries, and many unincorporated residential areas within Union County were not captured. A primary objective of the 2026 CWPP revision process was to address these gaps by establishing defined physical boundaries for each Community at Risk, ensuring that dispersed rural communities and unincorporated areas are recognized and eligible for targeted planning and mitigation funding.

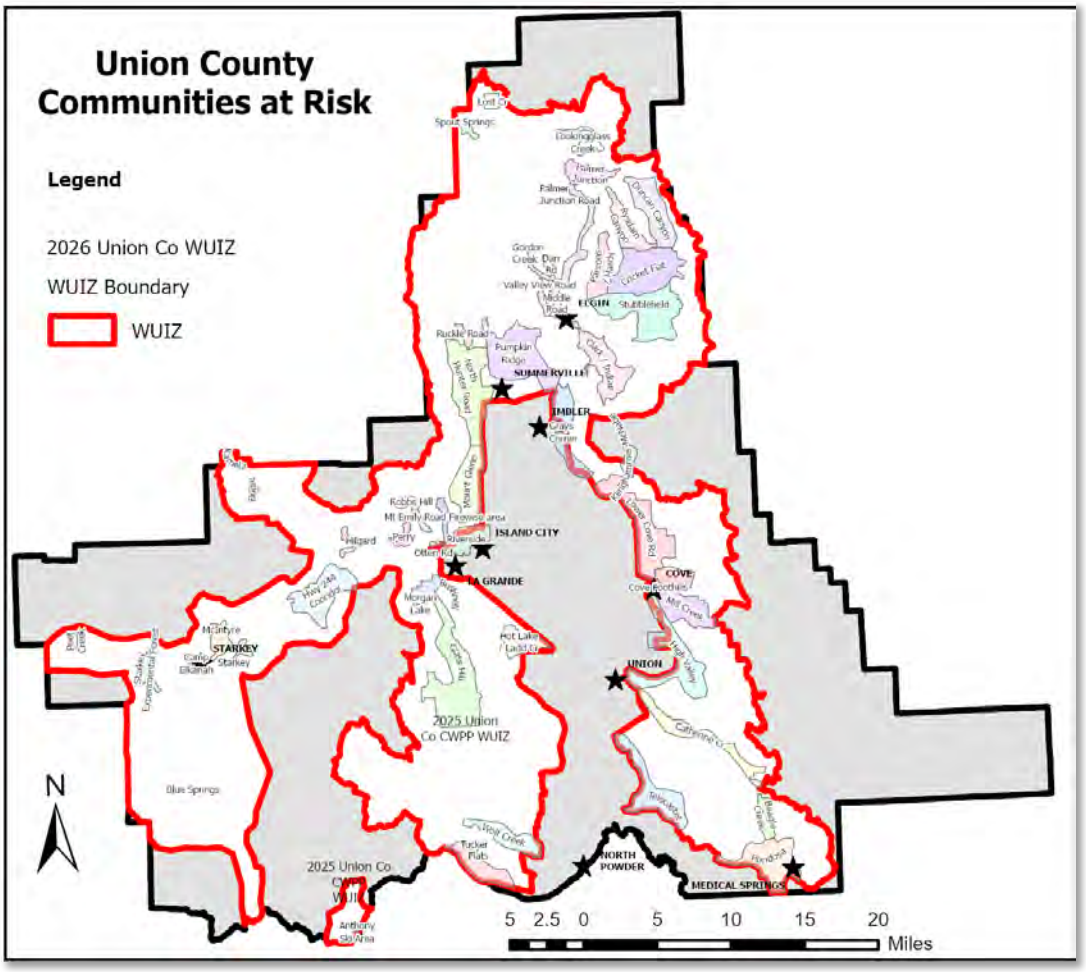


Figure 20 - Map of Communities at Risk

Communities at Risk may include incorporated municipalities, unincorporated communities, subdivisions or developments, dispersed rural residential areas with shared values or risks, areas surrounding critical facilities or infrastructure, and areas with shared protection or evacuation routes.

Fifty-seven Communities at Risk have been identified in Union County. These CARs represent the smallest workable grouping of homes and may be combined into larger zones for planning efficiency or maintained as distinct units when they have unique characteristics, risks, or mitigation needs. The identification of CARs — with explicit physical boundaries — allows for targeted assessment, planning, and implementation of mitigation measures where they will have the most significant benefit for community protection, and provides a spatial framework that federal and state partners can use to prioritize grant funding, categorical exclusion project scoping, and landscape-scale treatment planning.

Community at Risk	Acres	Community at Risk	Acres
Anthony Ski Area	182	**Mill Creek**	4,172
Beagle Creek	1,360	**Morgan Lake**	1,606
Blue Springs	55	**Mount Glenn**	5,023
Bodie	256	**North Hunter Road**	8,559
Bushnell	247	**North Powder**	400
Camp Elkanah	313	**Otten / Orodell**	191
Catherine Cr	4,464	**Owsley Mt / Emily Rd**	813
Clark / Indian	5,270	**Palmer Junction**	2,250
Cove	514	**Palmer Junction Road**	2,381
Cove Foothills	2,178	**Parsons / Hardy**	2,660
Cricket Flat	7,635	**Peet Creek**	165
Darr Rd	325	**Perry**	672
Duncan Canyon	5,190	**Pondosa**	6,149
Elgin	643	**Pumpkin Ridge**	8,854
Foothill Rd	1,598	**Ruckle Road**	746
Fox Hill / Robbs	1,232	**Rysdam Canyon**	2,973
Glass Hill	10,774	**South La Grande**	424
Gordon Creek	599	**Spout Springs**	486
Grays Corner	4,178	**Starkey**	600
High Valley	7,518	**Starkey Experimental Forest**	942
Hilgard	867	**Stubblefield**	8,532
Hot Lake / Ladd Cr	1,983	**Summerville**	167
Hwy 244 Corridor	5,801	**Telocastet**	5,989
Kamela	296	**Tucker Flats**	3,628
Lookingglass Creek	1,249	**Union**	1,600
Lost Cr	648	**Valley View Road**	620
Lower Cove Rd	7,856	**West La Grande**	170
McIntyre	1,627	**Wolf Creek**	3,375
Middle Road	845		

Table 1 - Communities at Risk

Summary

The four-tier Wildland Urban Interface framework establishes a comprehensive, multi-scale approach to wildfire risk reduction in Union County. By integrating defensible space, community protection zones, and landscape-scale planning within a unified spatial framework, this approach creates strategic opportunities for coordinated action across property boundaries and jurisdictions. The evolution from the 2016 CWPP framework demonstrates continuous improvement informed by new data, enhanced methodologies, and lessons learned from regional fire management experience.

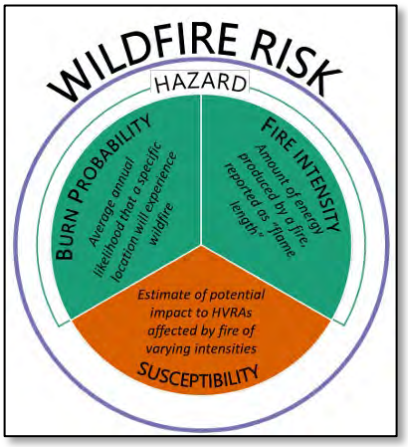
Chapter 6 builds upon this WUI framework by establishing the risk assessment methodology used to evaluate wildfire hazards and determine relative risk levels for communities throughout Union County.

Chapter 6 – Risk Assessment Framework

Introduction

For the Union County CWPP, wildfire risk is defined and quantified as **Fire Likelihood** (burn probability), **Fire Intensity** (e.g., flame length), and **Impacts** (susceptibility) to highly-valued resources or assets.

Wildfire risk is not simply a measure of how likely a fire is to occur—it is the combination of these three factors that, taken together, determine how much harm a wildfire can cause at any given location (Scott et al. 2013):



Burn Probability—How probable is it that wildfire will occur here? This is driven by ignition patterns, fuel conditions, weather, and topography, and is measured through burn probability modeling.

Fire Intensity—How severe will the fire be if it does ignite? Flame length and energy output vary with fuel type, moisture, wind, and slope, and determine how difficult a fire will be to fight and how much damage it can cause.

Susceptibility—What is at risk, and how badly will it be affected? Homes, watersheds, timber, and ecosystems each respond differently to fire depending on its intensity.
Where susceptibility is high and there is little buffer from wildfire, the consequences can be severe.

Where these three factors come together—high likelihood, high intensity, and high susceptibility—wildfire risk is at its greatest. Equally important, these are also the places where strategic action can make the biggest difference. Fuel treatments, structure hardening, and landscape-scale management can each reduce one or more of these factors, lowering risk to communities.

It is within this framework that the Union County CWPP evaluates and prioritizes wildfire risk to communities and landscapes within the county's Wildland-Urban Interface Zone. This plan establishes the wildfire risk context, defines priority areas for treatment, and provides the framework for project development. Detailed resource-level analysis, treatment unit prioritization, and site-specific risk assessments will be conducted as part of project-level planning and grant applications, where they can be tailored to specific treatments and updated as conditions change. This CWPP is designed as a planning document, not an analysis report, and Chapter 6 focuses on identifying Communities at Risk and their relative risk ratings to guide mitigation priorities.

Historical Context

West Wide Wildfire Risk Assessment 2013

The West Wide Wildfire Risk Assessment (WWRA) was a joint effort among federal and state agencies across 17 western states, completed in 2013, to create a consistent method for measuring wildfire risk

from the state down to the community level. The WWRA methodology was applied in Union County's 2016 CWPP, utilizing three key components:

Fire Threat Index (FTI)—Combines fire history, vegetation, terrain, and weather to identify where fires are most likely to start and spread

Fire Effects Index (FEI)—Evaluates potential consequences by assessing what's at stake (homes, infrastructure, resources) and suppression difficulty

Overall Fire Risk Index—Integrates likelihood (FTI) with consequences (FEI) to identify the highest-priority areas, classified into four levels: low, moderate, high, and extreme

In the 2016 Union County analysis, 29% of the county (380,000 acres) rated as High or Extreme Fire Risk, with the most significant concentrations in forested areas of the Blue Mountains and wildland-urban interface zones. Detailed maps and analysis are available in the 2016 Union County CWPP.

Current Risk Assessment Framework

The 2026 Union County CWPP employs a two-tier risk assessment strategy. At the strategic level, **Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 (WRC 2.0)** provides nationally consistent risk metrics and community-level percentile rankings that quantify Union County's relative wildfire risk in metrics commonly used in grant applications and inter-agency prioritization.

At the operational planning level, the **2023 Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (PNW QWRA)** provides spatially explicit, multi-value risk analysis accessible through the **Oregon Explorer CWPP planning tool**, enabling community, project, and landscape-scale prioritization of fuel treatment locations within the WUIZ based on the convergence of risk to structures, ecological integrity, timber, infrastructure, and other highly valued resources and assets.

Both assessments share a common hazard modeling foundation—but reflect slightly different fuelscape vintages and calibration periods. Burn probability values for the same location may therefore differ slightly between the two products depending on which dataset is referenced.

These two frameworks were selected because both are readily available as online applications, incorporate the most current modeling science and data, and are accepted as industry standards at the State and National levels.

The Oregon CWPP Planning Tool (PNW QWRA) has a distinct advantage for project planning in that it accepts spatial user input and generates reports for custom areas such as Communities at Risk or project planning areas.

WRC 2.0 is limited to pre-identified communities, and frequently the conditions within those defined boundaries do not accurately represent fuels and fire conditions surrounding that community. The underlying base data is available for custom analysis by users with expert-level GIS capabilities in programs such as ArcGIS Pro.

Strategic Risk Assessment

Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 (WRC 2.0) - wildfirerisk.org

The WRC 2.0 outputs fall into three distinct categories, and each answers a different question:

"What would the risk be here if a home existed?"

"What is the actual risk to structures that exist right now?"

"How does Union County and the communities within Union County compare?"

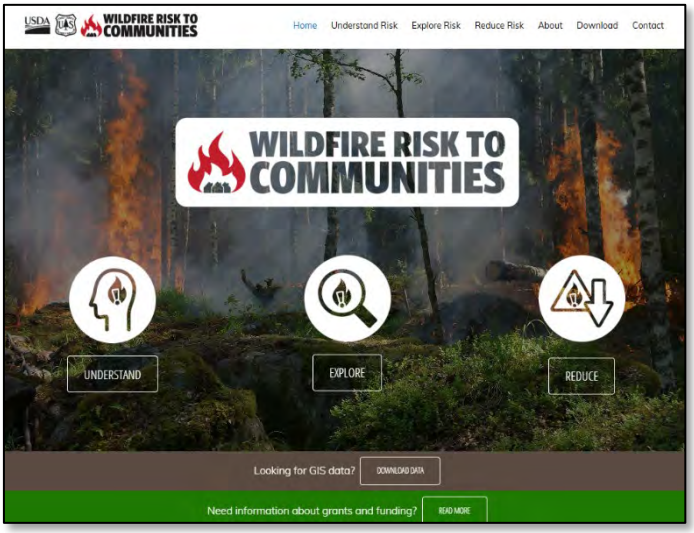


Figure 21 – wildfirerisk.org home page

Landscape-wide metrics

"What would the risk be here if a home existed?" These factors are calculated for every pixel on the landscape regardless of whether structures are actually there; they are available at the wildfirerisk.org website as an interactive map, and as data downloads. Metrics from WRC 2.0 include:

- **Burn Probability (BP)**—Annual likelihood of fire at each location. The foundational likelihood input. Called *"Wildfire Likelihood"* on the website.
- **Conditional Risk to Potential Structures (cRPS)**—Consequence to a structure if fire occurs, integrating intensity and susceptibility by lifeform (tree/shrub/grass). Called "Wildfire Consequence" on the website.
- **Risk to Potential Structures (RPS)**—The full risk product: BP × cRPS. This integrates likelihood and consequence into a single metric. Called *"Risk to Homes"* on the website.
- **Wildfire Hazard Potential (WHP)**—Indexes how difficult a fire would be to control, incorporating ignition density and fuel resistance to control. Useful for suppression planning context.
- **FLEP4 / FLEP8**—Probability that flame length exceeds 4 ft (limit of hand crew control) or 8 ft (limit of mechanical control). Operationally relevant but more tactical than strategic.

Populated area metrics

"What is the actual risk to structures that exist right now?" These layers incorporate real building and housing unit data.

- **Housing Unit Exposure (HUExposure)**—Expected annual housing units exposed to fire. BP × housing unit count.
- **Housing Unit Impact (HUImpact)**—Potential damage to existing housing if fire occurs. Housing unit count × cRPS × Exposure Type.

- **Housing Unit Risk (HURisk)**—The full risk to existing housing: housing unit count × cRPS × BP. This is the populated-area equivalent of RPS.

Zone and summary metrics

"How does Union County and the communities within Union County compare?"

Tabular summaries—Community and county percentile rankings for BP, cRPS, RPS, WHP, expected annual exposure, and expected annual risk. These are the grant-facing metrics that demonstrate Union County's risk position relative to other communities across Oregon and the nation. The downloads from the website includes whitepages to document the process, summary spreadsheets of the findings, and access to the GIS data used to generate these datasets.

The downloads include a spreadsheet **"Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program: Potentially High-Ranking Communities"** commonly used for grant application rating systems. The following statement is from a recent Community Wildfire Defense Grant application for Union County using this spreadsheet as part of the scoring criteria. This application was successful.

> *"Union County, OR, meets or exceeds the "wildfire hazard potential" criteria and has a higher **wildfire risk to homes** than 93.6% of counties in the nation. Additionally, Union County has an overall **wildfire hazard potential** greater than 87% than all counties in Oregon, and 91% greater than all counties nationally."*

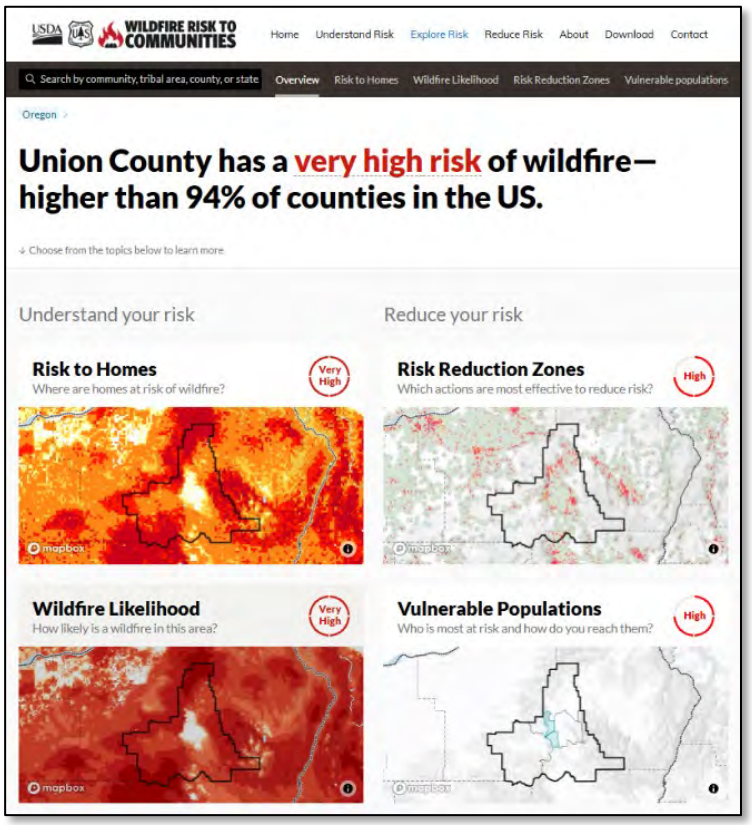


Figure 22 - wildfirerisk.org WIldfire Risk Tab results for Union County, Oregon

Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone (CWiRRZ)—The spatial zone raster that forms the foundation of the WUIZ structure. The Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 (WRC 2.0) framework classifies the landscape surrounding communities into three exposure zones based on the spatial relationship between structures, burnable wildland vegetation, and modeled burn probability. .

- **Direct Exposure Zone** — Structures located immediately adjacent to wildland fuels, where ignition risk comes from direct flame contact as well as ember transport and radiant heat. This zone represents the highest priority area for defensible space programs and home hardening investments.
- **Indirect Exposure Zone** — Structures separated from burnable vegetation by non-burnable land cover but within approximately one mile of wildland fuels, where ignition risk is driven primarily by ember transport and potential structure-to-structure fire spread.
- **Minimal Exposure Zone** — Structures beyond the ember transport threshold, where wildfire exposure is negligible.
- **Wildfire Transmission Zone** — The burnable wildland area surrounding communities within approximately 1.5 miles of structures.

In the 2026 CWPP, we have defined these four zones together as the **Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone**. This is a primary foundation for defining the WUIZ within Union County, and is the primary landscape for fuels management investments aimed at interrupting fire spread before it reaches structures.

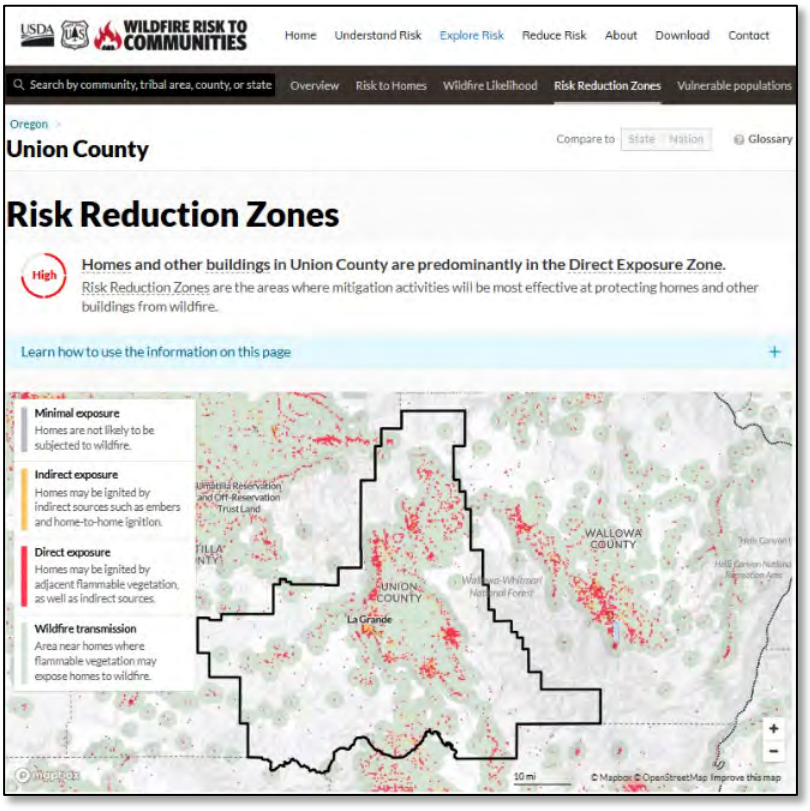


Figure 23 - Wildfire Risk to Communities - Risk Reduction Zone Web result

Operational Risk Assessment

2023 Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (PNW QWRA) - Oregon Explorer CWPP Tool

Where the WRC 2.0 framework establishes Union County's risk position relative to communities across the state and nation, the **2023 Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (PNW QWRA)** provides the operational planning layer—spatially explicit risk information calibrated to local conditions that guides where and how fuel treatments should be prioritized within the WUIZ.

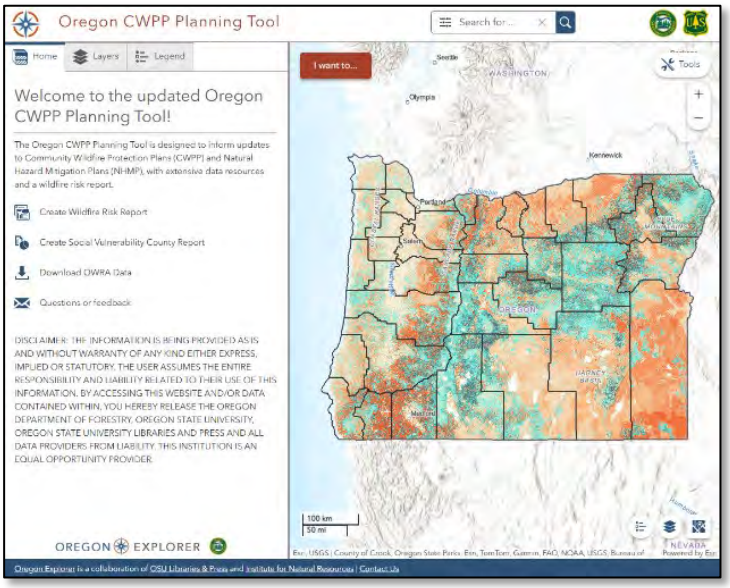


Figure 24 - Oregon Explorer CWPP Tool Home Page

This data is available from the Oregon Explorer CWPP Tool – an online interactive map that allows users to query and map fire risk components using county, community or custom query areas.

Three PNW QWRA outputs are used in the 2026 CWPP: burn probability, fire intensity (average flame length), and highly valued resources and assets (HVRAs).

PNW Burn Probability indicates where fire can reach communities
Average Flame Length indicates where fire will do the most damage and helps indicate where treatment should be prioritized
Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs) identify what is at stake when fire occurs

PNW Burn Probability

Both WRC 2.0 and the PNW QWRA model burn probability using FSim large-fire simulation, but they reflect different fuelscape vintages and serve different purposes. WRC 2.0, based on LANDFIRE 2.2.0 (end of 2020), provides the nationally comparable likelihood layer used for community percentile rankings and grant-facing comparisons. PNW QWRA reflects fire season 2022 conditions and incorporates adjustments for irrigated agriculture and burnable agricultural lands—particularly relevant to Union County's wildland-agriculture interface.

Burn probability is the estimated average annual likelihood that wildfire will burn a given location. These values represent long-term averages, not seasonal forecasts. PNW BP is presented as a value between 0–1 (1 being the highest burn probability), and is a very small number representing the average annual percentage chance of fire at that location. Also, the inverse of annual burn probability is the expected fire return interval. As an example, a 3% BP equals a 33 year fire return interval (1/0.03). Both metrics are shown in the chart. Also, because of the small size of many of these percentages, the percentage may be shown by decade as chance in 10 years of a fire.

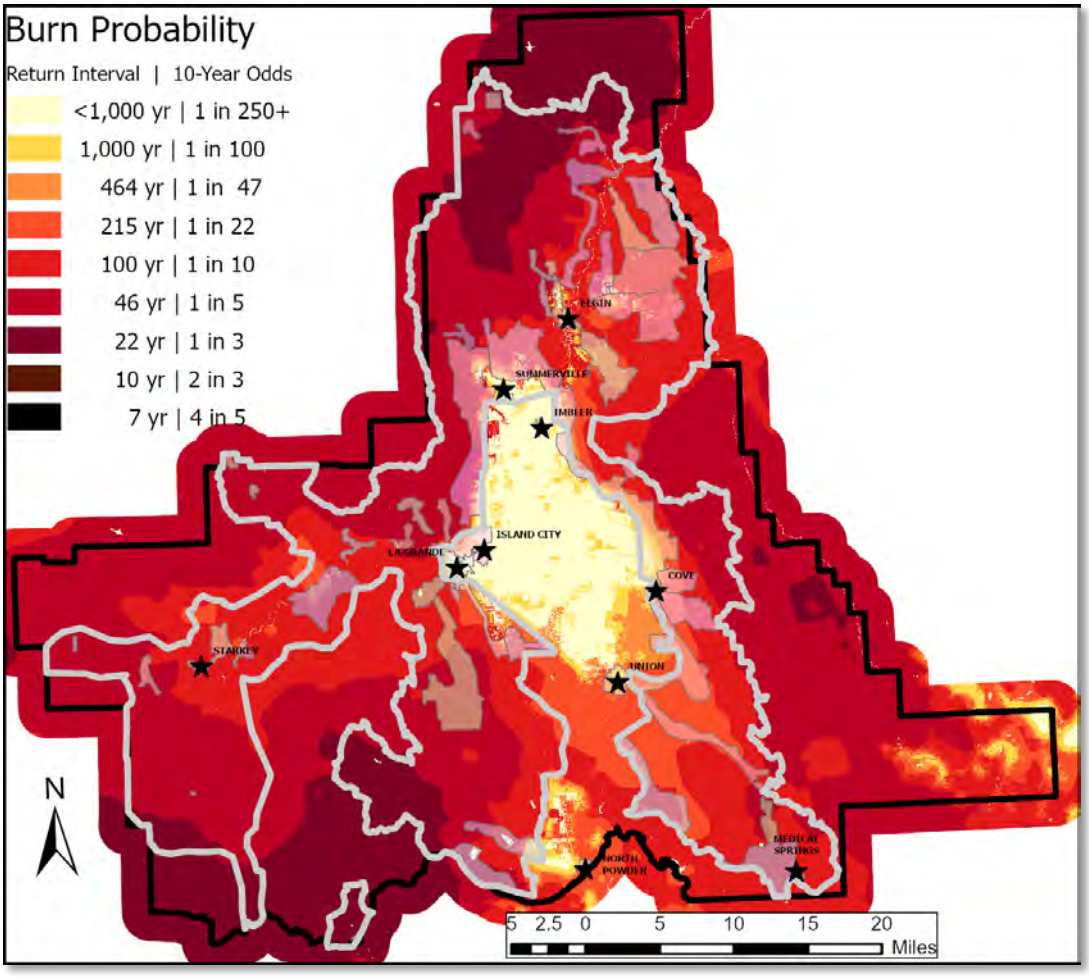


Figure 25 - PNW QWRA - Map of Burn Probability

For treatment prioritization within the WUIZ—where fire is most likely to reach communities and where fuel treatments will most effectively reduce that likelihood—the PNW QWRA burn probability layer serves as the operationally accurate baseline.

Fire Intensity—Average Flame Length

Fire intensity reflects the energy released at the flaming front of a wildfire and is most usefully represented as flame length for planning purposes. At any given location, intensity varies with fuel type,

moisture, wind, and slope, and the PNW QWRA provides a weighted average flame length across simulated fire conditions for each location in the county.

Flame length matters for community protection planning because it determines what kinds of impacts fire will have on the landscape and on people's ability to respond. In a mature timber stand, flame lengths of two feet may cause only minor damage, but flame lengths of eight feet represent a severe threat to timber value and create fire behavior conditions that limit suppression options. Within the WUIZ, flame length directly informs the distinction between zones: in the structure protection buffer, it governs the reach of radiant heat and ember spotting toward homes; in the community protection zone, it determines whether suppression equipment and crews can safely and effectively operate.

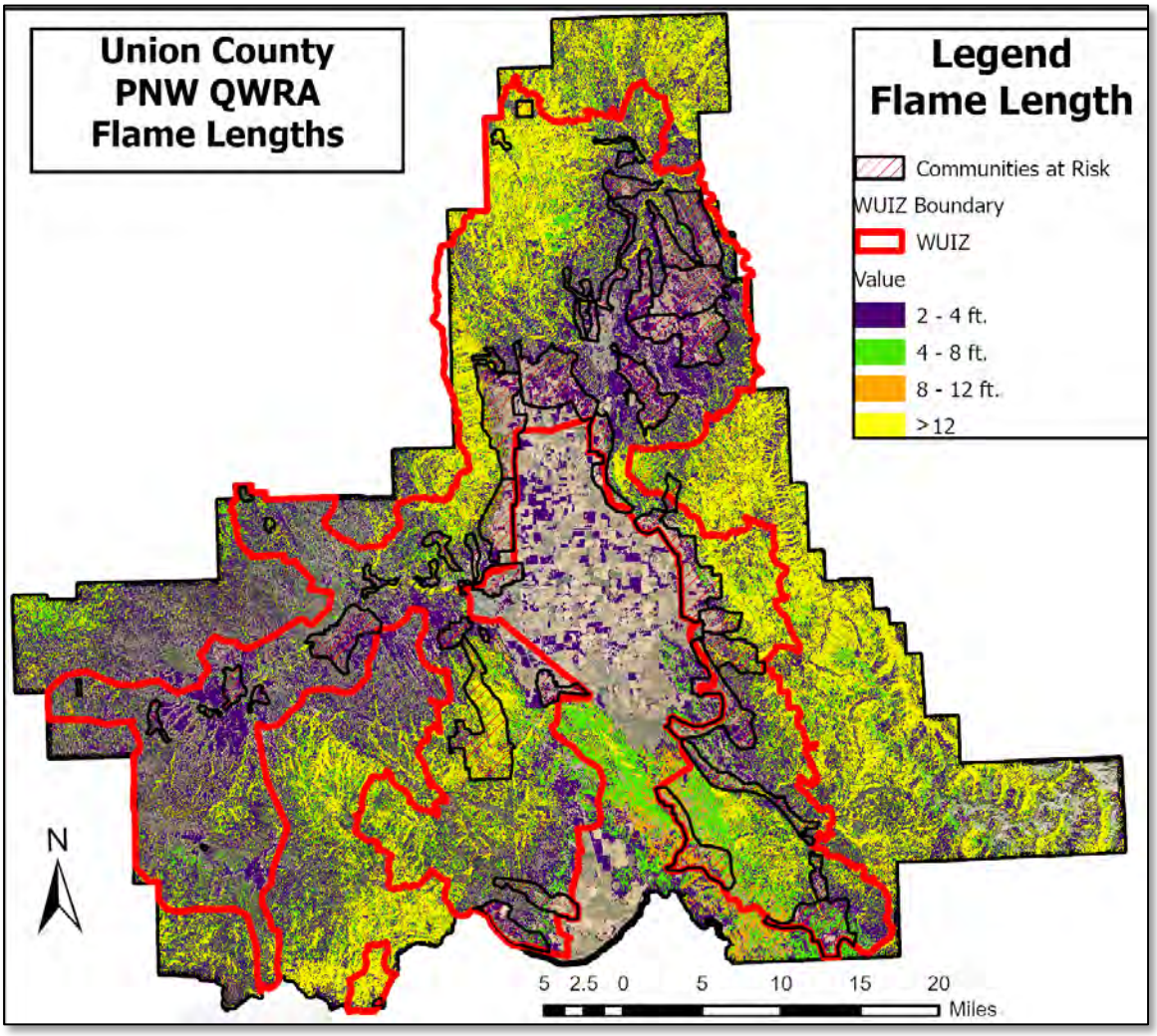


Figure 26 - PNW QWRA Map of Flame Lengths

Flame length is classified into four categories based on suppression capability and potential fire effects:

Class 1 (0-4 feet): Direct attack possible with hand crews. Low to moderate intensity fire with limited potential for crown fire initiation. Typically results in mosaic burn patterns with minimal tree mortality in forested areas.

Class 2 (4-8 feet): Mechanized equipment required, direct attack challenging. Moderate to high intensity surface fire with potential for torching of individual trees. May result in moderate tree mortality in forested areas.

Class 3 (8-12 feet): Indirect attack methods necessary, potential for crown fire. High intensity fire with active crowning likely in susceptible forest types. Typically results in high tree mortality.

Class 4 (>12 feet): Extreme fire behavior, crown fire likely, control difficult. Very high intensity fire with independent crown fire possible. Typically results in stand-replacing fire effects.

Flame Length Feet	Fireline Intensity BTU/ft/sec	Interpretation
< 4	< 100	- Fires can generally be attacked at the head or flanks by persons using hand tools. - Hand line should hold the fire.
4 – 8	100– 500	-Fires are too intense for direct attack on head of fire* by persons using hand tools -Hand line cannot be relied on to hold the fire. -Equipment such as dozers, pumpers, and retardant aircraft can be effective.
8 – 12	500 - 1200	-Fires may present serious control problems due to torching out, crowning, and spotting. -Control efforts at the head* of the fire will likely be Ineffective.
>12	>1200	-Crowning, spotting, and major fire runs are probable. -Control efforts at head of fire are ineffective.*

Figure 27 - Hauling Chart for Fire Behavior

Highly Valued Resources and Assets (HVRAs)

The PNW QWRA assesses wildfire risk impacts across eight categories of highly valued resources and assets: People & Property, Drinking Water, Infrastructure, Timber, Ecological Integrity, Wildlife Habitat, Agriculture, and Recreation. Each HVRA is evaluated using **Expected Present Net Value change (ePNV)**, which accounts for both potential losses and potential benefits from wildfire**. Expected Present Net Value (ePNV)** is an economic metric that expresses wildfire risk as a dollar value by weighting the probability of fire occurrence against the magnitude of potential effects — both losses and benefits — to a given resource. It allows diverse resource values to be compared on a common scale.

Important Considerations:

Wildfire risk can reflect both negative and beneficial consequences. Quantitative wildfire risk assessments like the 2023 PNW QWRA account for beneficial impacts of wildfire (e.g., habitat improvement, forest health restoration) as well as negative ones. Where risk is reported as beneficial, it does not mean wildfire will always have positive outcomes.

Positive ePNV values indicate that, under average fire weather conditions, a net beneficial impact is expected for the specific HVRA(s) included—but under different fire weather conditions or for different HVRAs, the expected outcome at the same location may differ significantly. The same caveat applies in

reverse: negative ePNV values do not mean fire will always produce negative consequences for all HVRAs.

Wildfire risk is relative. Risk values are classified from "Very High Loss" to "Very High Benefit" based on underlying quantitative values. These categories reflect risk at any one location relative to all other risk values in Oregon and Washington. For this reason, it is not appropriate to compare risk outputs to outputs from other assessment sources.

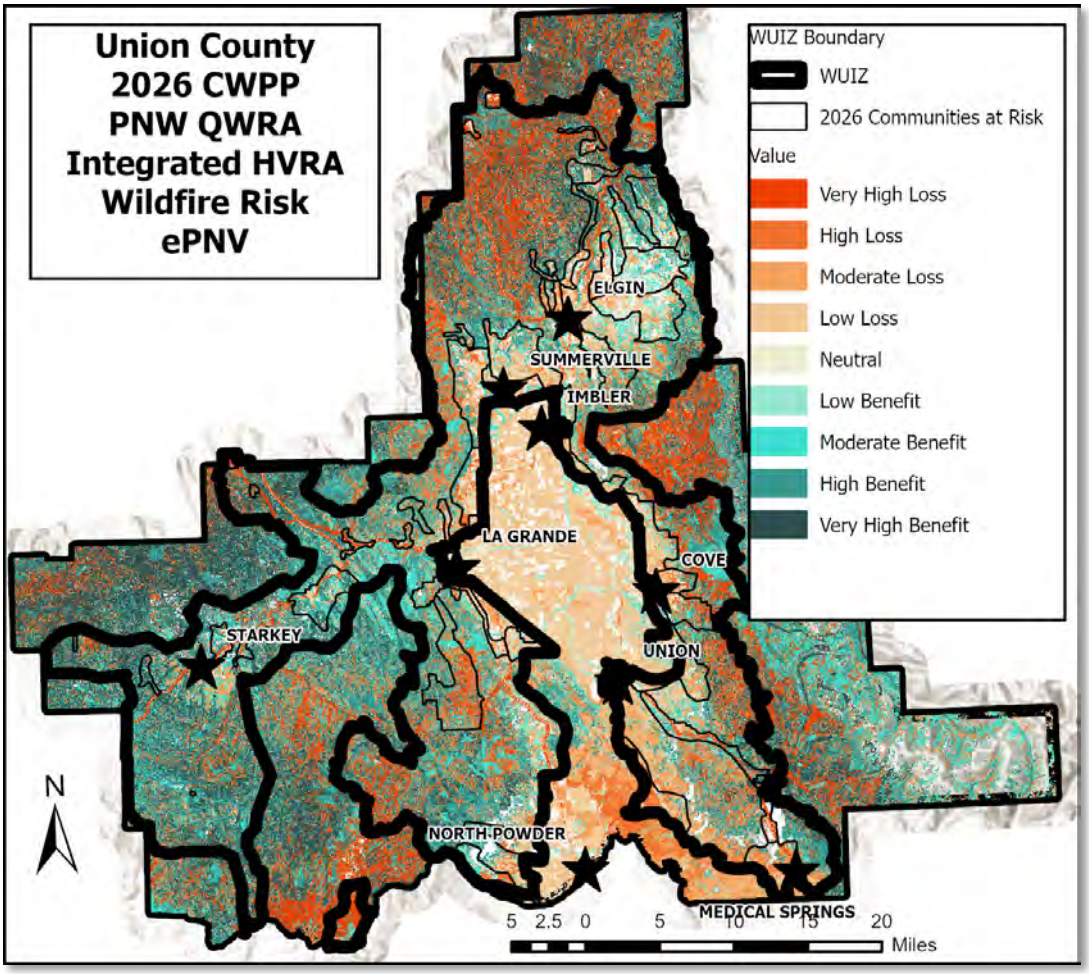


Figure 28 - Integrated HVRA

The integrated wildfire risk metric that combines all eight HVRAs is valuable for landscape-scale treatment planning where ecological benefits are part of management objectives. However, for community protection prioritization, ecological HVRAs (Timber, Ecological Integrity, Wildlife Habitat) often show beneficial ePNV values that can obscure direct threats to communities.

PNW QWRA HVRA-People and Places and Infrastructure

These two HVRAs focus on loss-oriented HVRAs—particularly People & Property—when evaluating Communities at Risk. The metric is loss in expected Net Present Value, and is ranked from Very High to Very low.

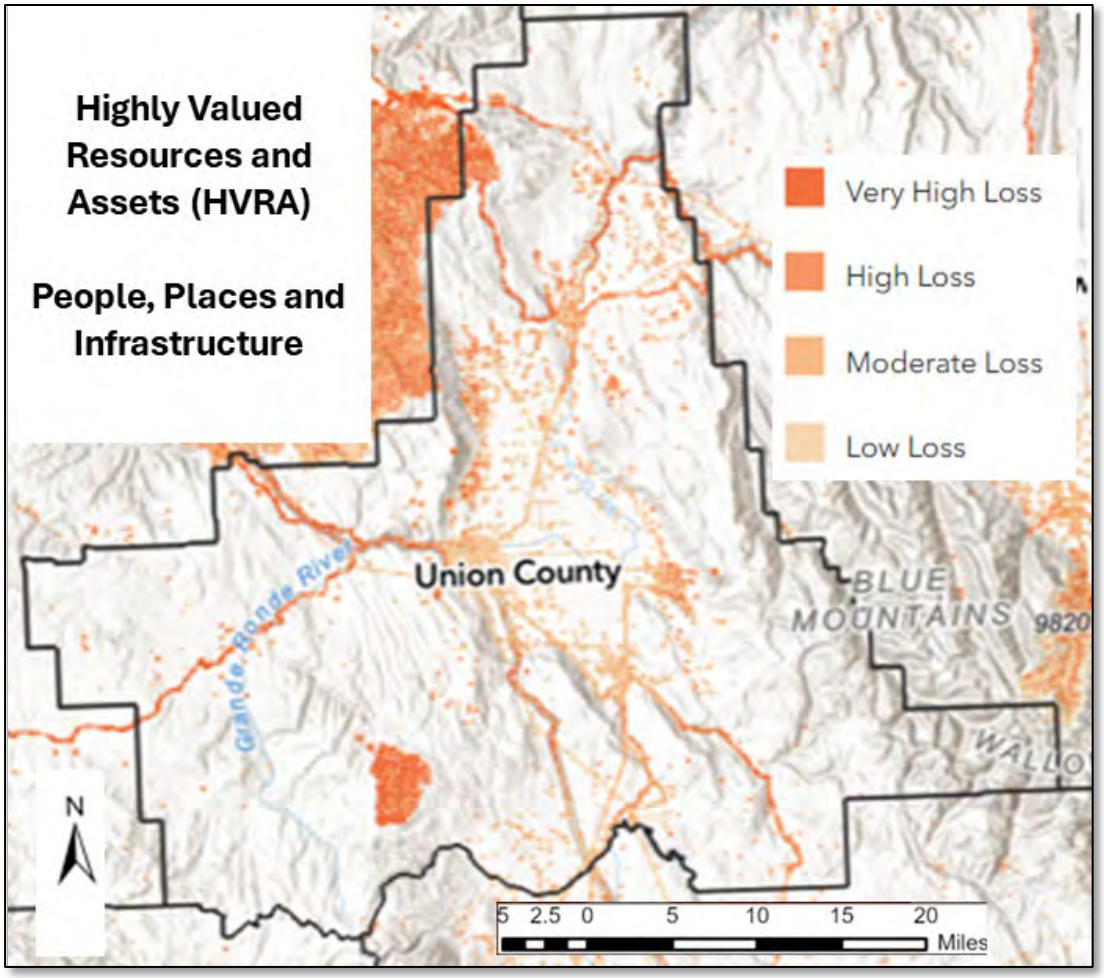


Figure 29 - HVRA - People, Places and Infrastructure

Exposure and Vulnerability Assessment

Wildfire Exposure Mechanisms

Communities in Union County face wildfire threats through two primary exposure mechanisms: direct exposure and indirect exposure.

Direct Exposure occurs when flammable vegetation is continuous with or immediately adjacent to structures, allowing fire to spread directly to buildings through flame contact or radiant heat. Areas within the Direct Exposure Zone (as defined in Chapter 5) contain vegetation that could support direct flame impingement on structures. Fire behavior in these areas is influenced by fuel type, topography, and weather conditions, with flame length serving as the primary indicator of direct threat intensity.

Indirect Exposure occurs through ember transport—the primary cause of structure ignitions during wildfires. Research indicates that up to 90% of structure ignitions during wildfires are caused by embers rather than direct flame contact.

Ember Transport and Spotting

Embers (also called firebrands) are burning pieces of vegetation or structural materials that are lofted and carried by convection columns and winds during a wildfire. Understanding ember transport is critical for community wildfire protection planning because many residents mistakenly believe their homes are safe if they are not adjacent to wildland vegetation, when in fact ember transport creates risk zones extending far beyond the fire front.

Research-Based Transport Distances:

Average transport distance of approximately 1.5 miles under typical conditions
Documented extreme cases of ember transport up to 10.5 miles
Australian research has documented ember travel up to 25 miles in extreme conditions

Ember Production Factors in Union County:

Vegetation types most likely to produce embers include trees with loose, fibrous bark, conifers with fine branching patterns and high resin content, and dense shrublands with fine, elevated fuels. Topographic features that may enhance ember lofting and transport include ridge tops and steep slopes, canyons and drainages that channel winds, and areas subject to high wind speeds or turbulence.

The Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones directly incorporate ember transport considerations. The Indirect Exposure Zone encompasses areas within approximately 1.5 miles of flammable vegetation where structures may be subject to ember ignition but are unlikely to experience direct flame contact. The Community Protection Zone extends from approximately 1.5 miles beyond developed areas to the WUIZ boundary, and represents vegetated areas that could spread towards and throw embers that threaten structures.

Community Vulnerability Factors

Beyond exposure to wildfire hazards, community vulnerability determines how severely a wildfire event will impact residents, infrastructure, and economic activity. The risk assessment framework evaluates vulnerability based on several key factors:

Structure Characteristics and Distribution:

Building materials and construction types (wood siding, combustible roofing, etc.)
Age and condition of structures
Presence of vulnerable features (wood shake roofs, open eaves, wooden decks, attached fences)
Structure density and spacing
Potential for house-to-house ignition in dense developments

Access and Evacuation:

Road network density and connectivity
Road surface type and condition (paved vs. gravel, width, grade)
Presence of secondary evacuation routes

Potential evacuation constraints (bridge weight limits, steep grades, narrow roads, single egress)
Distance to safe zones

Critical Infrastructure:

Water systems and availability for fire suppression (hydrant systems, water storage, drafting sites)
Power transmission and distribution systems
Communication infrastructure
Emergency services facilities and staging areas

Special Population Considerations:

Areas with high concentrations of elderly or mobility-impaired residents
Seasonal population fluctuations (vacation homes, recreational areas)
Special facilities (schools, hospitals, care facilities)
Economic dependence on structures or resources (tourism, recreation facilities, key employers)

Fire Protection Capacity:

Rural Fire Protection District resources and capabilities
Response times to remote areas
Mutual aid agreements and availability
Water availability for suppression operations
Pre-positioned equipment and caches

Application of Risk Assessment Data to Communities at Risk

For the purpose of evaluating and ranking Communities at Risk in Chapter 6, this CWPP employs a multi-factor approach that integrates quantitative geospatial analysis with qualitative professional judgment.

Primary Quantitative Metrics for Union County CAR risk assessment

WRC 2.0 Structure density and distribution data quantifies the magnitude of exposure—how many homes and buildings face potential wildfire impact. Communities with higher structure counts face greater potential for catastrophic loss, even if individual structure risk is similar to less densely developed areas.

WRC 2.0 Housing Unit Risk (HURisk)—The full risk to existing housing: housing unit count × cRPS × BP. This is the populated-area equivalent of RPS.

WRC 2.0 Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone (CWiRRZ)—The spatial zone raster that forms the foundation of the WUIZ structure. It measures the amount that houses are directly and indirectly exposed to wildfire.

WRC 2.0 Risk to Potential Structures (RPS)—The full risk product: BP × cRPS. This integrates likelihood and consequence into a single metric. Called *"Risk to Homes"* on the website.

WRC 2.0 Wildfire Hazard Potential (WHP)—Indexes how difficult a fire would be to control, incorporating ignition density and fuel resistance to control. Useful for suppression planning context.

PNW QWRA Integrated Wildfire Risk measures weighed risk across all eight HVRAs and is valuable for landscape-scale treatment planning. It incorporates beneficial fire effects for ecological resources (such as forest health improvement and wildlife habitat enhancement) that can obscure community protection priorities

PNW QWRA People & Property HVRA The People & Property HVRA isolates expected losses to structures and human safety, providing the most directly relevant metric for CWPP community protection objectives.

PNW QWRA Burn Probability indicates the annual likelihood that wildfire will reach a given community, providing the foundational likelihood component of risk assessment. Higher burn probability values identify communities in the path of potential fire spread from surrounding wildlands.

PNW QWRA Average Flame Length serves a dual purpose in community risk assessment. First, it indicates fire intensity and the difficulty of suppression response—higher flame lengths represent more dangerous conditions for both firefighters and residents. Second, flame length helps identify mitigation opportunities: areas with high flame length potential are strong candidates for fuel reduction treatments that can moderate fire behavior and improve suppression effectiveness.

Qualitative Risk Factors

Quantitative geospatial data provides essential baseline information, but community wildfire risk assessment must also account for factors that cannot be easily mapped or modeled:

Evacuation constraints: Road network limitations, single-egress communities, bridge capacities, steep or narrow access routes, and seasonal closures all affect evacuation safety and must be considered in risk assessment.

Critical infrastructure vulnerability: Communities dependent on vulnerable water systems, power transmission corridors, or communication infrastructure face compounded risk if these systems are damaged during wildfire events.

Economic impact potential: Some communities support key county industries (timber, agriculture, recreation, tourism) or serve as regional economic centers. Wildfire impacts to these communities have cascading effects beyond direct property loss.

Special population considerations: Communities with concentrations of elderly residents, limited-mobility populations, seasonal occupancy patterns, or special facilities (schools, care facilities) require additional consideration in risk assessment and evacuation planning.

Fire protection capacity: Local firefighting capabilities, water availability for suppression, mutual aid access, and protection district resources all influence how effectively communities can respond to wildfire threats.

Historical fire patterns: Local knowledge of fire occurrence, problem ignition areas, and historical fire behavior provides context that supplements modeled risk assessments.

Risk Rating Methodology

Chapter 6 presents individual risk profiles for each identified Community at Risk, integrating quantitative data with qualitative factors to assign overall risk ratings of Very High, High, Moderate, or Low. This approach recognizes that wildfire risk assessment is not simply a mathematical calculation but requires informed professional judgment that accounts for the unique characteristics, vulnerabilities, and contexts of individual communities. The combination of rigorous geospatial analysis with qualitative factors provides a more complete and defensible risk assessment than either approach alone.

Summary

The Union County risk assessment framework provides a comprehensive, science-based approach to evaluating wildfire risk across the county. By employing a two-tier assessment strategy—WRC 2.0 for strategic positioning and grant applications, and PNW QWRA for operational planning—the framework addresses wildfire threats at multiple scales. The incorporation of both direct fire behavior metrics (flame length, burn probability) and indirect exposure mechanisms (ember transport), combined with systematic vulnerability assessment, ensures that all pathways of wildfire threat to communities are accounted for.

This framework builds upon the foundational work of the 2016 CWPP while incorporating the latest fire science, modeling capabilities, and assessment methodologies. The resulting risk assessments guide mitigation priorities, inform community planning, and support grant applications for wildfire risk reduction projects. Chapter 7 applies this framework to Union County's identified Communities at Risk to develop specific risk ratings and mitigation strategies tailored to each community's unique circumstances and vulnerabilities.

Chapter 7 – Risk Analysis Results

Strategic Risk Assessment – Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 (wildfirerisk.org)

This chapter presents the results of the Union County wildfire risk assessment using the two-tier analytical framework described in Chapter 6. Results are organized first by individual metric, presenting the top ten ranked Communities at Risk for each measure, followed by a composite ranking table that integrates all metrics into an overall priority ranking for all 57 identified CARs.

The individual metric results are presented in two sections — Strategic Risk Assessment using Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 (WRC 2.0) datasets, and Operational Risk Assessment using the Pacific Northwest Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment (PNW QWRA) Oregon Explorer CWPP tool. Together these two datasets provide complementary perspectives on wildfire risk, from national-scale strategic positioning to locally-calibrated operational planning.

The composite ranking table that follows the individual metric summaries integrates all nine metrics into a single priority ranking intended to guide mitigation investments, support grant applications, and inform community planning.

Risk to Potential Structures (RPS)

Risk to Potential Structures integrates wildfire likelihood and fire intensity with a generalized consequence function to estimate relative risk to a structure at any location on the landscape. RPS is calculated as the product of burn probability and conditional risk to potential structures, and asks the hypothetical question: *"What would be the relative risk to a house if one existed here?"* Mean RPS values were calculated for each CAR using zonal statistics. Communities in mountainous and timbered landscapes dominated the top rankings, reflecting the combination of high burn probability and high fire intensity in those landscapes.

Rank	Community at Risk	Risk Rating
1	Anthony Ski Area	Very High
2	Lost Cr	Very High
3	Spout Springs	Very High
4	Bodie	High
5	Kamela	High
6	Lookingglass Creek	High
7	Peet Creek	High
8	Ruckle Road	High
9	Fox Hill / Robbs	High
10	Glass Hill	High

Wildfire Hazard Potential

Wildfire Hazard Potential is an index that quantifies the relative potential for wildfire that may be difficult to control, integrating wildfire likelihood, fire intensity, historical ignition density, and resistance to control by fuel type. WHP is designed to inform prioritization of fuel treatment needs. Mean WHP values were calculated for each CAR. Lost Creek, Anthony Ski Area, and Spout Springs form a clear Very High tier well above the remaining CARs, with a significant gap between the third and fourth ranked communities.

Rank	Community at Risk	Risk Rating
1	Lost Cr	Very High
2	Anthony Ski Area	Very High
3	Spout Springs	Very High
4	Glass Hill	High
5	Bodie	High
6	Lookingglass Creek	High
7	Ruckle Road	High
8	Perry	High
9	Kamela	High
10	Fox Hill / Robbs	High

Housing Units Risk

Housing Unit Risk estimates expected annual risk to existing housing units by combining housing unit counts with burn probability and conditional risk values. Unlike RPS which assumes a structure on every pixel, HUR is calculated only where housing units currently exist, making it a direct measure of risk to people and property as they are distributed today. Total HUR was calculated for each CAR. Note in the completed analysis that 6 CARs consisting primarily of seasonal recreational cabins are not represented in the WRC housing unit dataset due to classification differences between recreational and residential structures — risk to those communities is captured through other metrics.

Rank	Community at Risk	Risk Rating
1	North Hunter Road	Very High
2	Mount Glenn	Very High
3	Elgin	Very High
4	South La Grande	Very High
5	West La Grande	High
6	Union	High
7	Cove Foothills	High
8	Valley View Road	High
9	Owsley Mt / Emily Rd	High
10	Pumpkin Ridge	High

Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zone

Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones (CWiRRZ) classify the landscape into exposure zones based on the relationship between vegetation, structures, and wildfire behavior. The Direct Exposure Zone represents the area immediately surrounding structures where surface fire and embers pose the greatest risk to buildings — roughly equivalent to the zone where defensible space and home hardening have the most impact. The percentage of each CAR within the Direct Exposure Zone was used as the ranking metric. Communities with a high percentage of their land area in the Direct Exposure Zone have limited buffer between structures and burnable fuels.

Rank	Community at Risk	Direct Exposure Acres	% CAR Direct Exposure	Risk Rating
1	Blue Springs	54	98.4%	Very High
2	Valley View Road	538	87.1%	Very High
3	Gordon Creek	459	76.9%	Very High
4	Bushnell	188	75.9%	Very High
5	Bodie	190	74.6%	Very High
6	Cove Foothills	1,549	71.1%	Very High
7	Otten / Orodell	136	71.1%	Very High
8	Cove	365	70.9%	Very High
9	Darr Rd	222	68.6%	High
10	Middle Road	535	63.2%	High

Operational Risk Assessments - PNW Quantitative Wildfire Risk Assessment – Oregon Explorer CWPP Tool

Burn Probability

Burn Probability is a PNW QWRA metric representing the modeled annual probability that a given location will experience a wildfire. Values were derived using the FSim fire simulation model and reflect long-term average fire likelihood based on historical ignition patterns, fuel conditions, and weather. Mean BP values were calculated for each CAR and expressed as annual probability and equivalent fire return interval.

Rank	Community at Risk	Annual Burn Probability	Fire Return Interval (yrs)	Risk Rating
1	Lost Cr	4.6%	22	Very High
2	Spout Springs	4.1%	25	Very High
3	Peet Creek	3.5%	29	Very High
4	Starkey Experimental Forest	3.0%	33	Very High
5	McIntyre	2.9%	34	High
6	Camp Elkanah	2.9%	35	High
7	Anthony Ski Area	2.7%	37	High
8	Lookingglass Creek	2.6%	39	High
9	Bodie	2.6%	39	High
10	Kamela	2.5%	40	High

Only four Union County CARs — all in upper elevation timbered landscapes — exceed the Very High threshold of 3.0% annual burn probability, representing a modeled fire return interval of 33 years or less.

Average Flame Length Greater than 8'

Flame Length is a PNW QWRA metric derived from FSim fire simulation outputs representing the modeled flame length under fire-conducive weather conditions. Flame lengths exceeding 8 feet are generally considered to exceed the effective suppression capability of hand crews and ground equipment, representing conditions where aerial resources or indirect attack strategies are required. The percentage of each CAR with modeled flame lengths exceeding 8 feet was used as the ranking metric, with high-risk acres also shown for context. Note that flame length values for dense lodgepole pine stands — particularly Blue Springs — may underestimate actual crown fire potential due to limitations in the underlying LANDFIRE fuel models.

Rank	Community at Risk	High Risk Acres (8'+)	% CAR at High Risk	Risk Rating
1	Lost Cr	487	75.7%	Very High
2	Spout Springs	258	53.2%	Very High
3	Glass Hill	5,450	50.6%	Very High
4	Telocastet	1,782	29.9%	Very High
5	Mill Creek	879	21.1%	Very High
6	Ruckle Road	153	20.5%	Very High
7	Bodie	48	19.0%	Very High
8	Anthony Ski Area	34	18.9%	Very High
9	Perry	101	15.6%	Very High
10	Lookingglass Creek	150	12.3%	Very High

The flame length analysis reinforces the critical need for pre-fire mitigation in communities where suppression effectiveness is compromised. The three Very High risk communities—Lost Creek, Spout Springs, and Glass Hill—warrant immediate attention for community preparedness, evacuation planning, defensible space programs, and strategic fuels reduction projects. The limited effectiveness of suppression tactics in these areas during active fire events places greater emphasis on preventive measures, home hardening, and community wildfire protection infrastructure that can function independently of firefighting response.

The twelve High risk communities represent significant opportunities for landscape-scale fuel treatment projects. With approximately 11,500 combined acres of high-priority treatable area across the Very High and High categories, strategic investments in fuels reduction can measurably reduce flame length potential and expand the window for effective suppression response. Projects should prioritize community protection zones, evacuation routes, and strategic fuel breaks that segment large areas of continuous high-intensity fuels.

Highly Valued Resources and Assets

The **People and Places HVRA** represents the expected annual change in value to residential structures, developed recreation sites, and community infrastructure within each CAR. Risk scores are expressed as negative values, where a more negative score indicates greater expected annual loss. Values were calculated using the PNW QWRA custom polygon analysis tool and reflect both the density of people and places assets and the

Rank	Community at Risk	HRVA People & Places Acres	Risk Rating
1	Spout Springs	207	Very High
2	North Hunter Road	3,735	Very High
3	Mount Glenn	2,360	Very High
4	Camp Elkanah	136	Very High
5	Lost Cr	264	Very High
6	Cove Foothills	1,374	Very High
7	Clark / Indian	1,067	Very High
8	Palmer Junction	672	Very High
9	Valley View Road	482	Very High
10	Mill Creek	999	Very High

probability and intensity of wildfire affecting those assets. Scores are a relative index and should be interpreted comparatively across CARs rather than as absolute loss estimates.

Highly Valued Resources and Assets — Infrastructure (HVRA Infra)

The **Infrastructure HVRA** represents the expected annual change in value to roads, highways, railways, and transmission lines within each CAR. As with HVRA PP, risk scores are expressed as negative values where a more negative score indicates greater expected annual loss to infrastructure assets. Only 34 of 57 CARs contain mapped infrastructure assets — the remaining 23 CARs were not included in this analysis. Catherine Creek ranks highest due to the length of state highway corridor traversing the CAR, which disproportionately drives the risk score relative to other CARs. Infrastructure risk scores should be interpreted in the context of the specific asset types present in each CAR.

Rank	Community at Risk	HVRA Acres	Infrastructure Type	Risk Rating
1	Catherine Cr	1,141	State Hwy	Very High
2	Hilgard	441	Interstate, Railway	Very High
3	Spout Springs	128	St. Hwy, Ski Area, Communication Site, Snow Park	Very High
4	Camp Elkanah	184	State Hwy	Very High
5	McIntyre	215	State Hwy	Very High
6	Hwy 244 Corridor	433	State Hwy	Very High
7	Beagle Creek	315	State Hwy	Very High
8	Kamela	131	Railway	Very High
9	Pondosa	513	State Hwy	Very High
10	Telocastet	897	State Hwy, Railway	High

Highly Valued Resources and Assets — Integrated HVRA

The **Integrated HVRA** combines all individual HVRA categories — People and Places, Infrastructure, timber, range, and other resource values — into a single composite score representing the total expected annual change in value across all assets within each CAR. Risk scores are expressed as negative values where a more negative score indicates greater expected annual loss across all resource categories. Catherine Creek ranks highest due to the combination of state highway corridor length and adjacent resource values.

Rank	Community at Risk	Risk Rating
1	Catherine Cr	Very High
2	Spout Springs	Very High
3	Hilgard	Very High
4	Camp Elkanah	Very High
5	Glass Hill	Very High
6	Pondosa	Very High
7	Telocastet	Very High
8	Beagle Creek	Very High
9	Lost Cr	Very High
10	McIntyre	Very High

A significant finding of this analysis is that 16 of 57 Union County CARs received a Beneficial score, meaning modeled fire effects could result in a net positive change in resource values — primarily in dry forest and rangeland CARs where fire plays a natural ecological role. These communities represent priority areas for prescribed fire as risk reduction tools.

Taken by itself, this metric could skew hazardous risk rating by applying a positive value to areas that would not always benefit from fire. This is offset by combining all risk ratings where this metric is only one of nine that go into that combined rating.

Union County Communities at Risk - Wildfire Hazard Risk Rankings

The following table summarizes hazard risk ratings for all 57 Union County Communities at Risk across nine individual metrics, combined into a composite score that reflects overall wildfire hazard risk priority. Each metric rating is converted to a numeric value — Very High = 4, High = 3, Moderate = 2, Low = 1, Very Low = 0, Beneficial = 0 — and summed across all available metrics to produce a total composite score. Communities missing data for one or more metrics, primarily Housing Unit Risk for seasonal cabin communities and Infrastructure HVRA for CARs without mapped infrastructure assets, are scored on available metrics only. A higher composite score indicates greater overall wildfire risk priority across multiple dimensions of hazard, exposure, and consequences.

Metric abbreviations used in the table: RPS = Risk to Potential Structures, WHP = Wildfire Hazard Potential, HUR = Housing Unit Risk, DE = Direct Exposure, BP = Burn Probability, FL = Flame Length, PP = People and Places HVRA, INF = Infrastructure HVRA, HVRA Int = Integrated HVRA.

Wildfire Hazard Risk Rankings

Rank	Community at Risk	WRC 2.0				PNW QWRA					
		RPS	WHP	HUR	DE	BP	FL	HVRA PP	HVRA INF	HVR A INT	Total Score
1	Spout Springs	VH	VH	H	M	VH	VH	VH	VH	VH	33
2	Lost Cr	VH	VH	M	H	VH	VH	VH	H	VH	32
3	Camp Elkanah	M	H	M	H	H	H	VH	VH	VH	28
4	Perry	H	H	H	M	M	VH	H	H	H	26
5	Bodie	H	H	None	VH	H	VH	M	H	H	25
6	North Hunter Road	M	H	VH	H	M	VH	VH	None	H	25
7	Valley View Road	M	M	H	VH	M	H	VH	M	H	25
8	Gordon Creek	M	H	H	VH	H	VH	VH	None	L	24
9	Hilgard	L	M	M	M	H	H	H	VH	VH	24
10	Cove Foothills	L	M	H	VH	M	VH	VH	None	H	23
11	Pondosa	M	M	M	L	M	H	H	VH	VH	23
12	Beagle Creek	M	M	L	M	M	H	M	VH	VH	22
13	Mount Glenn	M	M	VH	H	L	H	VH	None	H	22
14	Glass Hill	H	H	M	VL	H	VH	H	None	VH	22
15	Mill Creek	L	H	M	M	H	VH	VH	None	H	22
16	Kamela	H	H	None	L	H	H	L	VH	H	21
17	Palmer Junction	M	M	M	M	H	H	VH	H	B	21
18	Catherine Cr	L	M	L	L	M	VH	M	VH	VH	21
19	Anthony Ski Area	VH	VH	None	M	H	VH	L	N/A	H	21
20	Lookingglass Creek	H	H	L	M	H	VH	H	M	B	21
21	Telocastet	L	M	L	VL	M	VH	H	H	VH	20
22	McIntyre	L	L	L	M	H	L	H	VH	VH	20
23	Owsley Mt / Emily Rd	H	M	H	H	M	M	H	N/A	L	19
24	Duncan Canyon	M	M	M	L	H	H	VH	M	B	19

Wildfire Hazard Risk Rankings											
Rank	Community at Risk	WRC 2.0				PNW QWRA					
		RPS	WHP	HUR	DE	BP	FL	HVRA PP	HVRA INF	HVR A INT	Total Score
25	Ruckle Road	H	H	M	H	M	VH	M	None	B	19
26	Morgan Lake	L	M	M	M	M	H	VH	L	L	18
27	Palmer Junction Road	M	M	M	M	H	M	VH	L	B	18
28	Clark / Indian	L	M	M	M	M	H	VH	L	B	17
29	Otten / Orodell	L	M	H	VH	L	M	L	None	M	16
30	Stubblefield	L	L	M	L	L	M	H	H	M	16
31	Peet Creek	H	H	None	M	VH	H	L	None	B	16
32	Pumpkin Ridge	L	L	H	M	L	M	VH	M	B	16
33	Fox Hill / Robbs	H	H	None	L	H	VH	L	None	B	15
34	West La Grande	L	L	H	H	L	M	M	None	M	15
35	South La Grande	VL	L	VH	H	L	L	H	None	M	15
36	Cricket Flat	L	L	M	L	L	L	H	H	M	15
37	Blue Springs	M	M	None	VH	H	L	L	None	L	14
38	Middle Road	VL	L	M	H	L	L	H	L	M	14
39	Bushnell	L	L	L	VH	M	M	L	L	L	14
40	Starkey Experimental Forest	M	M	None	L	VH	L	L	H	B	14
41	Parsons / Hardy	L	L	L	L	M	L	M	M	H	14
42	High Valley	VL	L	L	L	M	M	H	L	M	13
43	Darr Rd	M	M	L	H	M	M	L	None	B	13
44	Lower Cove Rd	VL	L	L	L	L	H	M	L	H	13
45	Starkey	VL	L	L	H	H	L	H	L	B	13
46	Foothill Rd	VL	L	M	M	L	M	M	None	M	12
47	Hot Lake / Ladd Cr	VL	L	L	M	L	M	L	M	M	12
48	Rysdam Canyon	M	M	L	L	M	M	M	None	B	12
49	Hwy 244 Corridor	L	L	VL	VL	M	M	M	VH	B	12
50	Cove	VL	VL	M	VH	L	L	M	None	L	11
51	Elgin	VL	VL	VH	M	L	L	M	None	L	11
52	Union	VL	VL	H	H	L	L	L	None	L	10
53	Wolf Creek	L	L	L	L	M	M	M	None	B	10
54	Tucker Flats	M	M	L	VL	M	L	L	None	B	9
55	North Powder	VL	VL	M	M	L	L	L	None	L	8
56	Grays Corner	VL	VL	VL	L	L	L	L	M	L	7
57	Summerville	VL	VL	VL	M	L	L	L	None	L	6
	Very High - VH	High - H		Moderate - M		Low = L		Very Low - VL		Beneficial - B	

Note: The top two CARs are remote locations with limited permanent housing. This is accounted for by adding in weight for population and permanent housing in a composite rating system in the next section. “None” indicates that either Housing Units at Risk or Infrastructure is not present in that CAR.

Union County Communities at Risk — Composite Community Risk Ranking

The following composite risk ranking table integrates the hazard-based risk score provided above with community exposure and fire protection factors, providing a more complete picture of comprehensive community risk than hazard alone. The hazard score from earlier, derived from the Wildfire Risk to Communities 2.0 and the PNW QWRA datasets, reflects the modeled likelihood and intensity of wildfire exposure to property and structures. However, hazard scores alone can overweigh sparsely populated areas with high fire hazard relative to established communities with permanent residents, higher housing density, and greater economic and social investment.

The composite ranking addresses this by incorporating housing unit count, population, and fire protection status alongside the hazard score. Weighting: Hazard Score 55%, Housing Units 25%, Population 10%, Fire Protection 10%. Fire protection is scored on a three-tier basis: no structural protection (highest risk), volunteer RFPD (moderate), and career fire department (lowest risk). Communities without a listed Fire Protection District receive ODF timber base protection only and no structural fire protection is provided.

Composite Rank	Community at Risk	Housing Units	Population	Acres	Fire Protection District	Hazard Score	Hazard Rank	Composite Score
1	North Hunter Road	662	528	8,559	Imbler RFPD	25	6	7.87
2	Spout Springs	17	11	486	—	33	1	7.67
3	Lost Cr	22	3	648	—	32	2	7.46
4	Cove Foothills	459	479	2,178	Cove RFPD	23	10	7.46
5	Mount Glenn	543	476	5,023	La Grande RFPD	22	13	7.26
6	Perry	58	80	672	La Grande RFPD	26	4	6.91
7	Valley View Road	123	122	620	Elgin RFPD	25	7	6.70
8	Camp Elkanah	42	21	313	—	28	3	6.65
9	Gordon Creek	69	70	599	Elgin RFPD	24	8	6.50
10	Hilgard	52	49	867	La Grande RFPD	24	9	6.50
11	Palmer Junction	81	59	2,250	—	21	17	6.39
12	Pondosa	90	66	6,149	Medical Springs RFPD	23	11	6.30
13	Mill Creek	197	172	4,172	Cove RFPD	22	15	6.09
14	Bodie	14	0	256	—	25	5	6.04
15	Pumpkin Ridge	293	225	8,854	Imbler RFPD	16	32	6.04
16	Catherine Cr	84	52	4,464	Union RFPD	21	18	5.89
17	Glass Hill	51	17	10,774	La Grande RFPD	22	14	5.76
18	Telocastet	53	30	5,989	North Powder RFD	20	21	5.69
19	Owsley Mt / Emily Rd	71	70	813	La Grande RFPD	19	23	5.48
20	Duncan Canyon	80	53	5,190	Elgin RFPD	19	24	5.48
21	Ruckle Road	57	45	746	Imbler RFPD	19	25	5.48
22	Lower Cove Rd	355	263	7,856	Cove RFPD	13	44	5.43
23	West La Grande	236	601	170	La Grande FD	15	34	5.33

Composite Rank	Community at Risk	Housing Units	Population	Acres	Fire Protection District	Hazard Score	Hazard Rank	Composite Score
24	South La Grande	500	1,485	424	La Grande FD	15	35	5.33
25	Morgan Lake	63	72	1,606	La Grande RFPD	18	26	5.28
26	Palmer Junction Road	126	88	2,381	Elgin RFPD	18	27	5.28
27	Kamela	6	0	296	—	21	16	5.22
28	Anthony Ski Area	6	0	182	—	21	19	5.22
29	Lookingglass Creek	36	12	1,249	—	21	20	5.22
30	Clark / Indian	180	136	5,270	Elgin RFPD	17	28	5.07
31	McIntyre	28	22	1,627	—	20	22	5.02
32	Cove	478	652	514	Cove RFPD	11	50	5.02
33	Elgin	1,139	1,719	643	Elgin RFPD	11	51	5.02
34	Beagle Creek	35	9	1,360	Medical Springs RFPD	22	12	4.93
35	Stubblefield	148	87	8,532	Elgin RFPD	16	30	4.87
36	Union	1,524	2,153	1,600	Union RFPD	10	52	4.81
37	Starkey	52	34	600	—	13	45	4.76
38	Cricket Flat	125	70	7,635	Elgin RFPD	15	36	4.67
39	Middle Road	163	163	845	Elgin RFPD	14	38	4.46
40	North Powder	382	493	400	North Powder RFD	8	55	4.41
41	High Valley	165	96	7,518	Union RFPD	13	42	4.26
42	Peet Creek	5	0	165	—	16	31	4.20
43	Parsons / Hardy	56	22	2,660	Elgin RFPD	14	41	4.13
44	Foothill Rd	91	57	1,598	La Grande RFPD	12	46	4.06
45	Hot Lake / Ladd Cr	115	77	1,983	La Grande RFPD	12	47	4.06
46	Blue Springs	9	0	55	—	14	37	3.80
47	Starkey Experimental Forest	10	0	942	—	14	40	3.80
48	Wolf Creek	87	28	3,375	North Powder RFD	10	53	3.65
49	Bushnell	37	50	247	La Grande RFPD	14	39	3.63
50	Otten / Orodell	45	146	191	La Grande FD	16	29	3.54
51	Fox Hill / Robbs	8	1	1,232	La Grande RFPD	15	33	3.50
52	Hwy 244 Corridor	40	13	5,801	—	12	49	3.39
53	Darr Rd	24	16	325	Elgin RFPD	13	43	3.09
54	Grays Corner	115	88	4,178	Imbler RFPD	7	56	3.04
55	Rysdam Canyon	46	19	2,973	Elgin RFPD	12	48	2.89
56	Summerville	116	138	167	Imbler RFPD	6	57	2.83
57	Tucker Flats	26	28	3,628	North Powder RFD	9	54	2.61

Any of the top 26 ranked CARs in this table should be considered priority treatment areas when project or grant prioritization is required. Rank 1-6 is Very High Composite Risk; Rank 7-17 is High Composite Risk

Chapter 8 – Mitigation Strategy

Introduction

The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) identifies a comprehensive suite of mitigation strategies designed to reduce wildfire risk across the county. These strategies address the three primary goals of the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy: 1. Creating fire-adapted communities, 2. Developing safe and effective wildfire response capabilities, 3. Promoting resilient landscapes. Implementing these mitigation measures requires coordination among federal, state, and local agencies, private landowners, and community organizations.

This chapter establishes the strategic framework for wildfire mitigation in Union County — including guiding principles, the Community Protection Zone and fuel break framework, treatment approaches, prioritization criteria, and implementation planning. Specific **Mitigation Action Items (MAIs)** are presented in Chapter 9.

Mitigation Measures Guidance

Effective mitigation requires a strategic approach that balances immediate needs with long-term goals. The following principles should guide mitigation planning and implementation:

- **Risk-Based Prioritization:** Focus resources on areas with the highest combination of hazard, vulnerability, and exposure
- **Cross-Boundary Coordination:** Ensure treatments and actions are coordinated across jurisdictional boundaries
- **Multiple Values Protected:** Consider ecological, social, and economic values when designing mitigation measures
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Maximize risk reduction relative to resources expended
- **Sustainable Implementation:** Develop approaches that can be maintained over time with available resources
- **Co-Benefits:** Prioritize actions that provide multiple benefits beyond wildfire risk reduction
- **Adaptive Management:** Regularly evaluate effectiveness and adjust strategies as needed

Mitigation actions should be tailored to local conditions and community needs. What works in one part of Union County may not be appropriate in another due to variations in vegetation types, development patterns, community capacity, and other factors. Implementation should be guided by both technical expertise and local knowledge.

CWPP Mitigation Action Items Implementation Prioritization

Successful implementation of the CWPP requires strategic prioritization of projects and actions. With limited resources, it is essential to focus on investments that will provide the greatest risk reduction

benefits. The following criteria should be used to prioritize implementation of the action items described in Chapter 9.

Prioritization Criteria

Risk Reduction Potential

- Protection of life safety (highest priority)
- Number of values at risk protected
- Potential to significantly reduce fire spread, intensity, or ignition probability
- Strategic importance within the landscape

Project Feasibility

- Technical and operational feasibility
- Cost-effectiveness (benefit relative to cost)
- Landowner cooperation and community support
- Capacity of responsible parties to implement
- Environmental compliance requirements

Timing Considerations

- Seasonal constraints for implementation
- Relationship to other projects (sequencing requirements)
- Funding cycle alignment
- Urgency based on current conditions

Multiple Benefits

- Ecological benefits beyond wildfire risk reduction
- Economic development and job creation potential
- Water quality and watershed protection
- Wildlife habitat improvement
- Recreation enhancement

Priority Project Types

Based on the risk assessment and stakeholder input, the following project types are identified as high-priority for initial implementation.

Strategic Fuel Breaks to Protect Communities at Risk

- Focus on areas identified as having high or extreme risk in the wildfire risk assessment
- Prioritize projects that protect multiple communities or critical infrastructure
- Emphasize projects with committed maintenance plans

Access Improvement for Emergency Response

- Focus on communities with limited evacuation routes

- Prioritize improvements that benefit multiple fire response agencies
- Address access limitations identified in the risk assessment

Enhancement of Water Supply Infrastructure

- Target areas with insufficient water resources for fire suppression
- Prioritize projects serving multiple purposes (fire protection and community water supply)
- Focus on high-risk areas with extended response times

Community Education and Preparedness

- Emphasize communities identified as having high or extreme risk
- Focus on programs with measurable outcomes
- Prioritize underserved and vulnerable populations

Cross-Boundary Landscape Treatments

- Target areas where coordination across ownerships will create landscape-scale benefits
- Prioritize projects that leverage multiple funding sources
- Focus on fire-adapted forest types where treatments will enhance ecological health

Progress Monitoring and Implementation Planning

Tracking implementation progress is essential for adaptive management and continued improvement. The Union County CWPP Steering Committee will establish a monitoring program with the following components:

- **Annual Review:** The Steering Committee will convene annually, or as needed, to assess implementation progress, identify priority projects for the coming year, and may add mitigation action items as necessary based on changes to conditions or situations.
- **Performance Metrics:** Quantifiable measures will track accomplishments (e.g., acres treated, number of homes with defensible space)
- **Implementation Challenges:** Barriers to progress will be identified and addressed
- **Success Stories:** Successful projects will be documented and shared as models
- **Adaptive Management:** Strategies will be adjusted based on monitoring results and changing conditions
- **Five-Year Update:** A comprehensive review and update of the mitigation strategy will occur at five-year intervals

Each action item includes responsible parties, timeframe, and potential funding sources to facilitate monitoring and accountability. The annual review will consider priority projects based on available funding cycles and resources, define objectives and timelines, and document accomplishments from the previous year. Progress will be made available to the public to maintain transparency and engagement.

Mitigation Action Item Updates

The mitigation action items in this plan are intended to be living guidance — responsive to new opportunities, emerging threats, available funding, and lessons learned through implementation. Formal plan amendments and periodic full revisions remain the primary mechanism for comprehensive updates, but the following process allows mitigation action items to be added, modified, or removed between full revisions without requiring action by the Board of County Commissioners.

Any member of the CWPP Review Committee may propose a change to the mitigation action item list. Proposals should briefly describe the suggested addition, modification, or removal and the rationale behind it — including any relevant funding opportunity, project need, or change in conditions that prompted the suggestion. Proposals are submitted directly to the Union County Emergency Manager, who will determine the appropriate course of action. The Emergency Manager may approve or decline the proposal, bring it before the full Review Committee for input, or determine that the change warrants coordination with or approval by the Board of County Commissioners. Approved updates take effect upon the Emergency Manager's written concurrence and are documented in the annual review record, including the date of approval and the rationale for the change.

Community Protection Zones and Strategic Fuel Breaks

A critical component of Union County's wildfire mitigation approach is the strategic implementation of Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones (CWiRRZ), Community Protection Zones (CPZ), and Strategic Fuel Break Networks (FBN). These complementary systems are designed to reduce wildfire risk to communities through a science-based approach that addresses the primary mechanisms of wildfire spread and structure ignition.

Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones (CWiRRZ)

Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones (CWiRRZ) are designated areas extending 1.5 miles outward from the boundaries of identified Communities at Risk. These zones are established based on extensive research on ember dynamics and structure ignition patterns during wildfire events.

Research from recent catastrophic wildfires demonstrates that wind-driven embers (firebrands) are responsible for up to 90% of home ignitions during wildfire events. These embers can travel well ahead of the main fire front, with documented travel distances of up to 1.5 miles under extreme fire weather conditions. By reducing fuels and ember-producing vegetation within this zone, communities can significantly decrease the likelihood of structure ignitions even when wildfires burn nearby.

Treatment Intensity Gradient

- **Inner Zone (0–0.5 miles):** Most intensive treatments focused on creating defensible space, reducing surface fuels, breaking crown fire potential, and creating safe operational space for firefighters
- **Middle Zone (0.5–1.0 miles):** Moderate intensity treatments designed to reduce ember production, disrupt crown fire spread, and modify fire behavior

- **Outer Zone (1.0–1.5 miles):** Strategic treatments in high-risk areas focused on reducing ember production and spotting potential, particularly on south and west aspects aligned with prevailing winds

Implementation priorities address:

- Fire intensity (flame length) modeling results from the risk assessment
- Topographic features that influence fire behavior
- Prevailing wind patterns during fire season
- Vegetation types and condition classes
- Strategic importance for access and suppression
- Landowner willingness and coordination potential

Strategic Fuel Break Networks

Strategic Fuel Break Networks complement Community Protection Zones by creating linear, defensible zones where firefighters can safely engage wildfire. These fuel breaks are designed to disrupt fire spread, reduce fire intensity, and provide safe access for fire response. Union County's Proposed Strategic Fuel Break Network employs a 1,000-foot (~300 m) width standard, consistent with the fuel break network designed for the Umatilla National Forest (Ager et al., 2023). These fuel breaks are designed using expert opinion from local fire management staff, with a planned 1,000 ft width to allow for suppression and other fire management activities.

This width standard is designed to effectively disrupt crown fire spread under most fire weather conditions, account for potential spot fires within the fuel break, provide adequate safety zones for firefighting resources, allow for various treatment intensities, and maintain effectiveness even with some vegetation regrowth between maintenance cycles. These fuel breaks would be eligible for **the Fuel Break Categorical Exclusion (CE),** established under Section 40806 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act along Forest Service roads.

Strategic Placement

- Along ridgetops where they can interrupt vertical fire spread
- Adjacent to existing roads to improve access and operational safety
- Around critical infrastructure and evacuation routes
- Along Potential Operational Delineation (POD) boundaries as identified by cooperators
- At the Wildland-Urban Interface Zone where they protect multiple values at risk
- In areas where they can connect to natural features like rock outcrops, riparian areas, or previous burn scars

Treatment Approaches

- Thinning to reduce crown density and increase crown spacing
- Pruning to raise canopy base height and reduce ladder fuels
- Surface fuel reduction to decrease flame lengths and fire intensity

- Creation of shaded fuel breaks in forested areas
- Maintenance of existing fuel breaks through prescribed fire or mechanical means

Integration with Other Mitigation Strategies

- **Defensible Space:** Property-level treatments connect to broader landscape treatments
- **Access Improvement:** Fuel breaks often align with critical access routes
- **Fire Response Planning:** Pre-identified fuel breaks serve as tactical features in fire response plans
- **Prescribed Fire:** Maintained fuel breaks can serve as control lines for prescribed fire operations
- **Post-Fire Recovery:** Strategic fuel breaks help protect recovering landscapes from subsequent fires

Implementation requires close coordination across ownership boundaries and jurisdictions. Union County will work with federal, state, and private partners to design, implement, and maintain these systems as core elements of the county's wildfire mitigation strategy.

Treatment Types and Applications

Effective fuels management requires not only initial treatments but also ongoing maintenance and sustainable utilization of biomass. The following section outlines approaches for comprehensive fuels management across Union County.

Different landscape conditions require different treatment approaches. The following treatment types are recommended for Union County based on vegetation types, access, resource values, and other factors.

Mechanical Treatments

Thinning and Pruning

- **Application:** Dense forest stands, particularly in ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forest types
- **Method:** Selective removal of trees to reduce crown density and ladder fuels
- **Considerations:** Retain fire-resistant species (ponderosa pine, western larch), create mosaic patterns, maintain wildlife habitat, protect soil from compaction

Mastication

- **Application:** Dense shrub communities, small-diameter trees, and ladder fuels in accessible areas
- **Method:** Mechanical shredding of vegetation to reduce fuel height and continuity
- **Considerations:** Equipment limitations on steep slopes, altered fuel arrangement may affect fire behavior, relatively high cost per acre

Mowing and Cutting

- **Application:** Grasslands, light shrub cover, defensible space zones

- **Method:** Reduction of vegetation height and biomass using mowers, brush cutters, or other equipment
- **Considerations:** Timing affects regrowth and invasive species, may require frequent maintenance

Prescribed Fire Treatments

Broadcast Burning

- **Application:** Forest stands with appropriate fuel conditions, grasslands, shrublands with historical fire regimes
- **Method:** Controlled application of fire under specific weather and fuel conditions
- **Considerations:** Smoke management, public notification, adequate control lines, experienced personnel requirements

Pile Burning

- **Application:** Following mechanical treatments where biomass utilization is not feasible
- **Method:** Controlled burning of concentrated fuel piles during safe burning conditions
- **Considerations:** Air quality impacts, proper pile construction, adequate curing time, burn management

Chemical Treatments

Herbicide Application

- **Application:** Control of invasive species, especially highly flammable grasses and brush
- **Method:** Targeted application of approved herbicides by qualified applicators
- **Considerations:** Environmental impacts, water quality protection, certifications required, follow-up monitoring

Manual Treatments

Hand Cutting and Piling

- **Application:** Sensitive areas where mechanical equipment is inappropriate, small parcels, riparian zones
- **Method:** Crews using chainsaws and hand tools to cut and pile fuels
- **Considerations:** Labor intensive, higher cost per acre, may be combined with pile burning or chipping

Hand Line Construction

- **Application:** Creation of control lines for prescribed burning, hazard reduction around specific resources
- **Method:** Removal of vegetation to mineral soil using hand tools
- **Considerations:** Limited effectiveness for containing high-intensity fires, best used in combination with other treatments

Maintenance Strategies

Fuel reduction is not a one-time effort. The following maintenance strategies are essential for long-term effectiveness.

Retreatment Schedules

- Develop site-specific maintenance schedules based on vegetation type, growth rates, and initial treatment
- Defensible space zones typically require attention every 1–3 years
- Forest treatments may require maintenance every 5–10 years
- Monitor regrowth and adapt timing accordingly

Monitoring Protocols

- Establish photo points to document changes over time
- Implement systematic sampling to track fuel loading
- Assess effectiveness after wildfire events
- Monitor for invasive species establishment following treatments

Sustainable Maintenance Approaches

- Transition from intensive initial treatments to less intensive maintenance treatments
- Consider grazing as a maintenance tool where appropriate
- Explore prescribed fire for maintenance of previously treated areas
- Create dedicated maintenance funding streams and responsibilities

Biomass Utilization

Sustainable use of biomass from fuels reduction projects benefits local economies while reducing disposal costs and air quality impacts.

Current Utilization Options

- Firewood for home heating
- Pulp for paper production
- Chips for landscaping and erosion control
- Post and pole production for agricultural uses
- Biomass energy production where facilities exist

Emerging Opportunities

- Cross-laminated timber and other engineered wood products
- Biochar production for soil amendment and carbon sequestration
- Small-scale biomass energy generation
- Animal bedding and agricultural amendments

Utilization Constraints

- Transportation costs from remote treatment areas
- Limited processing infrastructure
- Market fluctuations affecting economic viability
- Quality and species limitations for certain products

Recommended Actions

- Conduct feasibility study for expanded biomass utilization in Union County
- Develop community-scale processing infrastructure for small-diameter material
- Explore grants and incentives for biomass utilization enterprises
- Support workforce development for biomass-related businesses
- Coordinate project timing and location to achieve economies of scale

Funding Programs

Successful implementation of mitigation strategies requires adequate funding, technical support, and program infrastructure. Union County has access to numerous resources to support wildfire risk reduction efforts, including federal and state grant programs, technical assistance, and collaborative partnerships. This section outlines the primary funding mechanisms and resources available for implementing the action items described in this plan.

Federal Funding Programs

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP)

- **Eligible projects:** Pre-disaster mitigation, defensible space, fuel reduction, critical infrastructure hardening
- **Eligible applicants:** Local governments, special districts, non-profits, private sector partners (with local government sponsorship)
- **Application timing:** Post-disaster funding becomes available following federal disaster declarations
- **Match requirements:** 75% federal / 25% local match (in-kind contributions may qualify)
- **Best suited for:** Large-scale community protection projects, infrastructure resilience, planning

FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)

- **Eligible projects:** Infrastructure protection, community resilience projects, planning, capability building
- **Eligible applicants:** Local and state governments (sub-applications through state)
- **Application timing:** Annual competitive grant cycle
- **Match requirements:** 75% federal / 25% local match
- **Best suited for:** Critical infrastructure protection, large-scale community resilience projects

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- **Eligible projects:** Forest stand improvement, fuel breaks, prescribed burning, erosion control
- **Eligible applicants:** Agricultural producers, ranchers, and private forest landowners
- **Application timing:** Continuous signup with funding batching dates throughout the year
- **Match requirements:** Up to 75% cost-share for most practices; up to 90% for historically underserved producers
- **Special considerations:** Provides both technical assistance and cost-share funding
- **Best suited for:** Private land treatments, especially for forest landowners and ranchers

USDA Forest Service – Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG)

- **Eligible projects:** CWPP development and updates, fuels reduction, defensible space, planning
- **Eligible applicants:** Local governments, Tribes, non-profits, state forestry agencies
- **Application timing:** Annual competitive grant cycle
- **Match requirements:** Varies based on community risk category (0–25%)
- **Best suited for:** High-risk WUI communities, collaborative projects, planning

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) – Fuels Management & Fire Mitigation Assistance

- **Eligible projects:** Hazardous fuels reduction, prescribed burning, community protection and planning, fire prevention, wildland fire training
- **Eligible applicants**: Local fire departments, counties, and non-profits, community organizations
- **Application timing:** Varies by BLM district office
- **Match requirements:** Typically requires cost-share or in-kind match
- **Best suited for:** Projects near BLM lands, cross-boundary treatments

State Funding Programs

Oregon State Fire Marshal –Annual Wildfire Season Staffing Grant 2026

- **Eligible projects:** Seasonal firefighter hiring to increase on-duty capacity and improve response times during fire season
- **Eligible applicants:** Local fire districts and departments (priority for agencies with annual property tax income under $2 million).
- **Application timing:** Annual competitive cycle; applications typically open spring with awards announced June. MUST APPLY ANNUALLY
- **Award amount:** Up to $35,000 per agency
- **Match requirements:** Not specified; one-time funding award
- **Best suited for:** Rural fire protection districts needing supplemental wildland staffing during fire season; directly supports WUI response capacity

Oregon State Fire Marshal – Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant

- **Eligible projects:** Home hardening, defensible space, public education, infrastructure protection
- **Eligible applicants:** Fire departments, local governments, community organizations
- **Application timing:** Annual competitive grant cycle
- **Match requirements:** Varies by project type
- **Best suited for:** Community-level projects, education and outreach, capacity building

Oregon State Fire Marshal – Community Wildfire Risk Reduction for the Built Environment Grant 2024

- **Eligible projects:** Defensible space improvements and community protection projects focused on the built environment
- **Eligible applicants:** Structural fire protection agencies, counties, and cities
- **Application timing:** Competitive cycle; most recent awards announced November 2024 – not on current planning cycle but worth watching OSFM grant page for potential opportunities.
- **Award amount:** $50,000–$75,000 per award
- **Match requirements:** Not specified on program page
- **Best suited for:** Structure ignitability reduction, defensible space projects tied to existing development, and community protection work where fire risk and social vulnerability are documentable

Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) – Landscape Resiliency Program

- **Eligible projects:** Large-scale landscape treatments, including thinning, prescribed fire, and fuel break networks
- **Eligible applicants:** Collaborative partnerships involving landowners, Tribes, local governments, and conservation districts
- **Application timing:** Periodic funding availability announced by ODF
- **Match requirements:** Varies by funding cycle
- **Best suited for:** Cross-boundary landscape-scale projects involving public and private lands

Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) Focused Investment Partnership (FIP) Grant Program - Due July 2026

- **Eligible projects:** Watershed health projects, post-wildfire restoration, riparian buffer installation, erosion control
- **Eligible applicants:** Watershed councils, Tribes, non-profits
- **Application timing:** Multiple grant cycles annually
- **Match requirements:** 25% match (in-kind may qualify)
- **Best suited for:** Projects demonstrating multiple ecological benefits beyond wildfire mitigation

Industry-Specific and Private Funding

USDA Farm Service Agency Programs

- **Available programs:** Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP), Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)
- **Eligible applicants:** Farmers and ranchers affected by wildfire and natural disasters
- **Benefits:** Financial assistance for forage loss, debris removal, fencing repairs, and post-wildfire rehabilitation of farmland
- **Match requirements:** ECP typically covers 75% of eligible restoration costs
- **Best suited for:** Post-wildfire recovery for agricultural producers

Rural Business Development Grants (RBDG)

- **Eligible projects:** Economic resilience, business continuity, recovery from wildfire-related economic disruptions
- **Eligible applicants:** Small businesses and non-profits in rural communities
- **Application timing:** Annual funding cycle
- **Best suited for:** Supporting economic stability in wildfire-affected communities

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – Firewise USA® Recognition Program

- **Benefits:** Technical assistance, recognition, and access to small grants for defensible space projects and wildfire preparedness outreach
- **Eligible participants:** Homeowners associations, neighborhoods, and communities
- **Requirements:** Community assessment, action plan, and annual investment in local wildfire mitigation activities
- **Best suited for:** Neighborhood-scale initiatives, community engagement

Pacific Power – Wildfire Resiliency Grants

- **Eligible projects:** Vegetation management, emergency preparedness, community outreach
- **Eligible applicants:** Communities and organizations in Pacific Power service areas (including parts of Union County)
- **Application timing:** Annual grant cycle
- **Best suited for:** Projects that protect electrical infrastructure and surrounding communities

Technical Assistance Resources

In addition to funding, numerous technical assistance resources are available to support mitigation planning and implementation:

- **Oregon State University Extension Service:** Education, assessments, demonstration projects
- **Oregon Department of Forestry Stewardship Foresters:** Technical guidance for forest landowners

- **Natural Resources Conservation Service:** Conservation planning assistance
- **Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network:** Peer learning and resources
- **Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal:** Prevention materials and program guidance
- **Oregon Fire Learning Network:** Training and collaborative learning opportunities

Next Steps

- **Coordinate with local agencies:** Many of these programs work best when private landowners and businesses partner with local fire districts, Union County Emergency Management, La Grande Oregon Dept. of Forestry Stewardship Foresters, local federal agencies including the Forest Service and NRCS to apply.
- **Seek assistance from existing partnerships:** Several regional partnerships provide technical assistance, landowner outreach, and grant coordination for wildfire mitigation projects:
    - **The Northern Blues Restoration Partnership** is a diverse coalition working to coordinate and implement restoration projects aimed at achieving forest, watershed, and fire resilience across public, private, and tribal forestland in the Washington-Oregon Northern Blue Mountains landscape. The Partnership operates under a 10-year Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) grant and can help connect projects to cross-boundary funding and planning frameworks.
    - **Wallowa Resources** coordinates regional, community, and neighborhood partnerships that convene forest owners, workers, managers, agencies, and diverse partners under a shared vision of restoring forestland and watersheds across Northeastern Oregon, with goals that include reducing wildfire risk, increasing landscape resilience, and supporting sustainable forestry jobs and livelihoods.
    - **My Blue Mountain Woodlands** is a Northeast Oregon partnership that connects private forest landowners with the knowledge, skills, and markets they need to manage their forests, with the aim of empowering landowners to become more active land stewards — reducing wildfire risk, improving overall forest health, and protecting water quality across Wallowa, Baker, Union, and Umatilla counties.
- **CWPP alignment:** Demonstrating that projects align with the Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) often strengthens funding applications. Many grants require a reference from the CWPP. Often, providing a link to the current CWPP, the Mitigation Action Item Identification, and a short quote from the CWPP provides validity to the request. As mentioned several times in this document, Mitigation Action Items may be amended to meet a new need or opportunity.
- **Contact local offices:** Union County NRCS, ODF La Grande Unit, and the Northeast Oregon Economic Development District (NEOEDD) can help identify appropriate programs and assist with applications.

Summary

This chapter outlines Union County's comprehensive approach to wildfire risk reduction through science-based strategies that address all elements of the fire environment. By implementing 1.5-mile Wildfire Risk Reduction Zones around populated areas, treating in the Community Protection Zones, and 1000-foot Strategic Fuel Break Networks along the boundary of the Wildland Urban Interface Zone, along with targeted industry-specific measures, the plan protects lives, property, and natural resources through multiple complementary approaches.

Implementation requires sustained commitment and coordination among agencies, organizations, businesses, and residents. The diverse funding sources identified provide multiple pathways for action, allowing Union County to maximize impact by strategically combining federal, state, local, and private resources. The CWPP Steering Committee will coordinate these efforts, aligning projects with funding cycles and regularly adapting strategies as conditions change.

As wildfire risks evolve due to changing climate conditions, development patterns, and forest health challenges, this plan provides a flexible framework for response. The investments made today in wildfire mitigation will yield dividends in safety, resilience, and sustainability for generations to come. Union County is committed to this vital work and invites all stakeholders to participate in creating a more fire-adapted community.

Figure 30 - North Powder Rural Fire Protection District acquired this engine in August 2024 through an Oregon State Fire Marshal grant. OSFM and other State investments in local fire capacity — through apparatus grants, seasonal staffing funding, and risk reduction programs — have meaningfully improved initial attack capability and mutual aid readiness across Union County's rural fire protection districts.

Chapter 9 – Mitigation Action Items

Action Items

The following action items are organized according to the three goals of the National Cohesive Wildfire Strategy:

- **Safe and Effective Wildfire Response (WR)**
- **Fire Adapted Communities (FAC)**
- **Resilient Landscapes (RL)**

And by the five industries impacted by wildfire identified in Chapter 3:

- **Forestry and Wood Products (FOR&WP)**
- **Agriculture and Ranching (AG)**
- **Outdoor Recreation and Tourism (REC)**
- **Transportation and Logistics (T&I)**
- **Public Health and Education (PH&ED)**

Cross-cutting strategies that apply across all sectors are identified as (XCUT).

Each section contains specific mitigation measures that address Union County's unique wildfire challenges and opportunities. Recommended funding sources are identified from the programs described at the end of this chapter.

Figure 31 - Before and After pictures of fuels treatment along Wood Rd in the Morgan Lake Firewise Community.
See**: RL-1 Strategic Fuel Breaks** and **RL-2 Reduce Hazardous Fuels in Community Protection Zones**

WR-1: Improve Fire Response Access

Description	Identify, improve, and maintain strategic access routes for fire suppression resources, with emphasis on areas identified as high priority in the risk assessment.
Implementation Actions	• Complete an inventory of existing access routes in high and extreme risk areas • Identify critical access limitations and maintenance needs • Develop and implement a maintenance schedule for priority routes • Install road signs and mapping for improved navigation • Create agreements with private landowners for emergency access • Improve evacuation routes to be passable by passenger cars in an emergency • Implement targeted mitigations to reduce the likelihood of ingress and egress routes being obstructed by intense heat, falling trees, or rolling debris during a wildfire
Responsible Parties	Union County Emergency Management, Rural Fire Protection Districts, Oregon Department of Forestry, USFS, BLM, private landowners
Timeframe	2–5 years, with ongoing maintenance
Potential Funding Sources	• **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP):** Supports access improvement for emergency response • **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):** Ideal for critical access infrastructure • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Specifically targets at-risk communities with access limitations • **Oregon Department of Forestry Community Assistance Grants:** Can support maintenance of existing fire access routes

Notes / Additional Actions:

Morgan Lake Firewise has identified a road between Wood Cr Rd and Deal Canyon Rd as an evacuation route that could use improvement to allow passenger car access.

WR-2: Enhance Water Supply Infrastructure

Description	Develop and improve water supply resources for fire suppression in strategic locations throughout Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Identify areas with insufficient water resources for fire suppression • Install dry hydrants, cisterns, and water storage tanks at strategic locations • Develop water supply plans for communities with limited resources • Map all water resources and ensure information is available to all response agencies • Implement maintenance program for water supply infrastructure
Responsible Parties	Rural Fire Protection Districts, Union County Emergency Management, municipalities, water districts, OSF, USFS
Timeframe	3–5 years, with ongoing maintenance
Potential Funding Sources	• **FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants:** Primary funding for water supply infrastructure • **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):** Supports community-wide water system improvements • **Oregon State Fire Marshal Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant:** Can fund smaller-scale water projects • **Municipal capital improvement funds:** Local match and ongoing maintenance

Notes / Additional Actions:

Locations identified in 2023 CWDG grant application for dry hydrants / cisterns include Cove, Wolf Creek / Pilcher Creek reservoirs, Palmer Junction, top of Mt. Harris, Morgan Lake,

Summerville RFPD has an underground water storage system that needs repaired or replaced.

WR-3: Strengthen Interagency Communication and Coordination

Description	Enhance coordination between all agencies with fire protection responsibilities in Union County to improve response effectiveness.
Implementation Actions	• Update mutual aid agreements between all fire protection agencies • Develop and maintain unified command procedures for multi-jurisdiction incidents • Conduct annual tabletop exercises and field-based drills • Establish common communications protocols and systems • Coordinate training opportunities to ensure consistent capabilities • Acquire and maintain reliable interoperable communications equipment such as mountain top repeaters, mobile/portable radios, and software to allow emergency response agencies to communicate and coordinate responses.
Responsible Parties	Oregon Dept. of Forestry, USFS, BMIDC; All fire protection agencies in Union County, Union County Emergency Management, Union County 911; Northern Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership,
Timeframe	1–2 years, with annual updates and exercises
Potential Funding Sources	• **Oregon State Fire Marshal training grants:** Support for interagency exercises and training • **FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants:** Communications equipment and interoperability • **Agency operational budgets:** Staff time for coordination meetings and protocol development • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Support for CWPP implementation coordination

Notes / Additional Actions:

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is currently working on Mutual Aid Agreements with Union County Fire Protection resources. This CWPP fully supports those efforts.

WR-4: Strengthen Firefighting Capacity	
Description	Enhance firefighting resources, equipment, and staffing capabilities throughout Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Complete a county-wide needs assessment for wildfire equipment, and develop and implement a strategic equipment acquisition and replacement plan • Improve Recruitment and retention by funding seasonal firefighters for longer work tours – this provides more response capacity in longer seasons and retention of more experienced firefighters. • Support volunteer recruitment and retention for rural fire departments • Enhance wildland firefighting training for all firefighters • Acquire PPE, interoperable communications equipment/software, and other equipment to facilitate safer and more efficient responses to wildfires. • Identify opportunities for shared resources between agencies • Acquire and train personnel on emerging wildfire technologies, including drones, remote sensing cameras, CAD integration, and mobile mapping applications and devices for field use. • Acquire equipment and apparatus suited to terrain access challenges, including off-highway vehicles (OHVs) for initial attack and patrol in roadless and limited-access areas.
Responsible Parties	Rural Fire Protection Districts, municipal fire departments, Union County Emergency Management, Oregon Dept. of Forestry, US Forest Service, Oregon State Fire Marsal
Timeframe	3–5 years, with ongoing recruitment and training
Potential Funding Sources	• **FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG):** Primary source for equipment acquisition – not currently open – monitor FEMA for upcoming solicitations. • **FEMA Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER):** Supports volunteer recruitment and retention • **Oregon State Fire Marshal Wildfire Grants:** Funding for extended staffing, Training and equipment for rural departments • **USFS Volunteer Fire Capacity (VFC) grants:** Specifically targets rural departments under 10,000 population • **BLM Wildland Fire Community Assistance Program:** - Supports wildland fire training for fire departments and RFPAs

	• **Forest Service-owned surplus property** loaned through State Foresters (FEPP program) and the Firefighter Property Program (FPP)

Notes / Additional Actions:

*Explore opportunities for satellite RFPD stations. *Summerville RFPD Satellite station expansion

*Develop and contribute to existing high school wildland fire classes *La Grande, North Powder Cove Imbler Summerville

Explore options for grants for assistance with social media – marketing and recruiting for volunteers

WR-5: Strengthen Evacuation Plans and Resources	
Description	Create and maintain community evacuation plans for all Communities at Risk in Union County, strengthen alert and warning systems, and develop human and physical resources to support evacuated persons.
Implementation Actions	• Identify and map primary and alternative evacuation routes • Develop evacuation timing models for high-risk communities • Create pre-designated safety zones for areas with limited evacuation options • Develop specialized plans and resources to support vulnerable populations • Conduct public outreach on evacuation procedures and personal preparedness • Exercise and expand the capabilities and redundancy of alert and warning systems used to communicate evacuations to the public • Recruit and train evacuation shelter staff • Expand the ability of facilities designated as temporary evacuation points or shelters to reunify, house, and meet the needs of displaced persons, pets, and livestock during wildfire events • Stockpile supplies likely to be needed or consumed by evacuated persons, pets, or livestock during a wildfire event
Responsible Parties	Union County Emergency Management, law enforcement agencies, fire protection agencies, Search and Rescue, community organizations
Timeframe	1–3 years, with regular updates and public outreach
Potential Funding Sources	• **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP):** Supports emergency planning efforts • **Oregon Emergency Management grants:** Development of county-wide evacuation planning • **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):** Can fund evacuation route improvements • **Oregon State Fire Marshal Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant:** Public education components
Notes / Additional Actions:	

FAC-1: Expand Defensible Space Implementation	
Description	Increase the number of properties with properly maintained defensible space in high-risk areas.
Implementation Actions	• Develop and distribute educational materials about defensible space principles • Conduct defensible space assessments for properties in Communities at Risk • Create demonstration sites showing effective defensible space implementation • Establish community chipping programs (or similar) to support vegetation removal • Organize neighborhood work days and/or coordinate hiring shared contractors or utilizing agency fire crews to accomplish defensible space maintenance • Develop programs to assist elderly and low-income residents
Responsible Parties	Fire protection agencies, OSU Extension, Firewise Community groups, homeowners associations, ODG, OSFM
Timeframe	Ongoing, with annual implementation targets
Potential Funding Sources	• **Oregon State Fire Marshal Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant:** Primary source for defensible space projects • **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):** Community-scale defensible space initiatives • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Prioritizes high-risk communities • **Oregon Department of Forestry grants:** Technical assistance and project implementation • **NFPA Firewise USA® program:** Provides recognition and access to additional resources • **Homeowner investments:** Required match for many grant programs
Notes / Additional Actions:	

FAC-2: Promote Home Hardening

Description	Increase awareness and implementation of home hardening techniques to reduce structural ignition potential.
Implementation Actions	• Develop educational materials about building materials and design features that reduce ignition risk • Conduct home ignition zone assessments in high-risk areas • Create demonstration sites showcasing home hardening techniques • Support incentive programs for retrofitting existing structures • Work with local building departments to incorporate wildfire-resistant building codes
Responsible Parties	Fire protection agencies, building departments, OSU Extension, contractors, ODF, OSFM
Timeframe	1–3 years for education and assessment; 5+ years for retrofitting
Potential Funding Sources	• **Oregon State Fire Marshal Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant:** Education and assessment components • **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):** Retrofitting critical facilities • **Oregon Building Codes Division:** Technical assistance and training • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Prioritizes home hardening in high-risk areas • **Pacific Power Wildfire Resiliency Grants:** For projects within utility service areas

Notes / Additional Actions:

Support production and distribution of Union County “Living with Wildfire” publication with OSU extension Service

FAC-3: Expand Firewise Communities Program

Description	Increase the number of recognized Firewise Communities in Union County, focusing on high-risk areas.
Implementation Actions	• Support Firewise Coordinator position in Union County • Identify priority communities for Firewise recognition • Host community meetings to introduce the program and its benefits • Support community wildfire risk assessments and planning • Assist with development of community action plans • Assist with accomplishing Home Assessments • Recognize and celebrate successful Firewise communities
Responsible Parties	Oregon Department of Forestry, local fire protection agencies, community organizations, Northern Blues Restoration Partnership, NB Cohesive Strategy Partnership, Wallowa Resources, Union Soil and Water Conservation District, Union Co Emergencies Services, Oregon State Fire Marsal
Timeframe	2–5 years to establish new Firewise communities; ongoing maintenance
Potential Funding Sources	• **Oregon Department of Forestry community grants:** Technical support for Firewise recognition • **NFPA Firewise USA® support resources:** Program materials and recognition • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Implementation of Firewise community action plans • **Oregon State Fire Marshal Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Grant:** Community projects • **Community investments:** Required for program participation and sustainability

Notes / Additional Actions:

FAC-4: Enhance Public Education and Outreach

Description	Implement a comprehensive wildfire education program reaching diverse audiences throughout Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Develop consistent wildfire preparedness messaging for various platforms • Create targeted materials for different audiences (homeowners, businesses, visitors) • Implement social media campaigns during peak fire season • Host community workshops and events focused on wildfire preparedness • Integrate wildfire education into school programs • Install educational signage in high-visitor areas • Conduct education at local Outdoor School events and promote K-12 school fire prevention and preparedness programs by providing personal and supplies
Responsible Parties	OSU Extension, fire protection agencies, Union County Emergency Management, school districts, BM Cohesive Strategy Partnership, Oregon Dept of Forestry, USFS, BLM
Timeframe	1–2 years for program development; ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• **Oregon State Fire Marshal:** Education and outreach materials and program support • **ODF Fire Prevention grants:** Community-based education initiatives • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Education components of community projects • **Agency education budgets:** Staff time and existing program support • **Oregon State University Extension Service:** Educational program development and delivery

Notes / Additional Actions:

FAC-5: Implement Ready, Set, Go! Evacuation Readiness Program	
Description	Establish the Ready, Set, Go! preparedness program throughout Union County to enhance evacuation readiness.
Implementation Actions	• Train agency personnel on program implementation • Develop locally relevant materials for all preparedness stages • Conduct public workshops on evacuation preparedness • Create evacuation kit demonstration program • Integrate with existing emergency notification systems • Conduct practice evacuation drills in high-risk communities • Provide training for local first responders on evacuating individuals with access and functional needs, and secure funding to implement individual evacuation readiness programs
Responsible Parties	Union County Emergency Management, fire protection agencies, law enforcement
Timeframe	1–2 years for program establishment; ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• **Oregon State Fire Marshal:** Program materials and training • **International Association of Fire Chiefs grants:** Ready, Set, Go! program implementation • **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** Evacuation planning and education • **Oregon Emergency Management grants:** Emergency preparedness components • **Agency operational budgets:** Staff time for program coordination
Notes / Additional Actions:	

FAC-6: Strengthen Critical Infrastructure Protection

Description	Enhance protection of critical infrastructure from wildfire impacts throughout Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Identify and map critical infrastructure in high-risk areas • Assess vulnerability of key facilities and systems • Implement defensible space around critical facilities • Support redundancy in essential systems (power, water, communications) • Develop contingency plans for infrastructure disruptions • Coordinate with utility providers on vegetation management • Bury overhead electrical lines in areas prone to high winds and/or tree fall • Create and maintain fuel breaks to protect buried and above-ground utilities • Ensure redundant, stable electrical service exists at critical communications facilities
Responsible Parties	Utility providers, Union County Emergency Management, infrastructure owners and operators
Timeframe	2–3 years for assessment; 3–5 years for implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• **FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):** Primary funding for infrastructure protection • **Pacific Power Wildfire Resiliency Grants:** Protection of electrical infrastructure • **Utility capital improvement funds:** Hardening of utility systems • **Oregon Department of Transportation:** Transportation infrastructure protection • **FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program:** Post-disaster infrastructure resilience

Notes / Additional Actions:

Assess shallowly buried powerlines in remote areas, particularly those leading to communication sites.

FAC-7: Prevention Programs to Reduce Human-Caused Ignitions	
Description	Implement targeted ignition prevention programs to reduce the number and impact of human-caused wildfires in Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Coordinate with ODF and USFS on annual fire prevention planning and messaging campaigns. • Secure funding to extend seasonal fire positions into shoulder seasons, enabling experienced personnel to deliver prevention programs while improving workforce retention. • Establish a Prevention Coordinator position and / or a prevention co-op • Develop and distribute locally relevant ignition prevention materials targeting debris burning, campfire safety, and equipment use • Support ODF Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL) compliance outreach to agricultural operators, logging contractors, and recreational users • Support and promote a consistent burn permit and debris burning education program in coordination with rural fire protection districts • Install fire prevention signage at high-use entry points, trailheads, and recreation areas • Participate in USFS Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl prevention programs • Develop targeted outreach for high-risk ignition periods and locations identified in the Union County fire history analysis, including developing of social media outreach • Support juvenile fire setter intervention programs in coordination with school districts and law enforcement
Responsible Parties	Oregon Department of Forestry, USFS, Rural Fire Protection Districts, Union County Emergency Management, OSU Extension, Bureau of Land Management
Timeframe	1–2 years for program development; ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• ODF Fire Prevention grants: Primary source for community-based prevention programs • BLM Wildland Fire Community Assistance Program: Supports training and prevention • USFS Fire Prevention & Education grants: Supports prevention campaigns including Smokey Bear program participation • Oregon State Fire Marshal: Prevention materials and program support • Agency operational budgets: Staff time for coordination and outreach delivery
Notes / Additional Actions:	

RL-1: Implement Strategic Fuel Breaks	
Description	Develop and maintain a network of strategic fuel breaks to protect Communities at Risk, infrastructure, and High Values and Resources, and that facilitate safe fire response.
Implementation Actions	• Identify priority locations based on fire modeling, Values at Risk, and ember spread potential — focus on ridgetops, valley bottoms, and other natural or existing features that enhance effectiveness • Design fuel breaks using a combination of mechanical thinning, prescribed fire, and maintenance treatments appropriate to local vegetation and topography • Implement fuel breaks up to 1,000-foot wide in strategic locations to effectively disrupt crown fire spread, accounting for spotting potential and firefighter safety zone requirements • Ensure fuel breaks connect to create a network of protection around Communities at Risk; develop networks that align with existing roads and access points where possible • Develop maintenance schedules and responsibilities; monitor effectiveness and adapt designs as needed • Acquire or provide equipment to help communities, local agencies, and organizations establish and self-maintain fuel breaks on a financially sustainable basis.
Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, private landowners, fire protection districts
Timeframe	3–5 years for initial implementation; ongoing maintenance
Potential Funding Sources	• **USDA Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership:** Cross-boundary projects on federal and private lands • **ODF Federal Forest Restoration Program:** Projects on or adjacent to federal lands • **NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** Private land fuel breaks • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Strategic protection of high-risk communities • **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board:** Fuel breaks with watershed benefits
Notes / Additional Actions:	

RL-2: Reduce Hazardous Fuels in Community Protection Zones	
Description	Implement hazardous fuels reduction treatments in defined Community Protection Zones around all Communities at Risk in Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Establish 1.5-mile Community Protection Zones around all identified Communities at Risk based on ember spread science • Prioritize treatment areas based on risk assessment results within these zones • Design prescriptions appropriate for local vegetation types and ember ignition reduction • Implement thinning, pruning, and surface fuel reduction treatments • Coordinate with landowners on cross-boundary projects • Monitor treatment effectiveness and maintain as needed
Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, private forest owners, contractors
Timeframe	Ongoing, with annual implementation targets
Potential Funding Sources	• **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Prioritizes high-risk areas identified in CWPPs • **USDA Good Neighbor Authority:** Facilitates work on federal lands through state partnerships • **NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** Private forest and rangeland treatments • **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board:** Projects with both fire and watershed benefits • **BLM Fuels Management & Fire Mitigation Assistance:** Areas adjacent to BLM lands
Notes / Additional Actions:	

RL-3: Enhance Forest Health and Resilience

Description	Implement forest management practices that enhance ecosystem health and fire resilience across Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Prioritize treatments in fire-adapted forest types • Promote appropriate species composition and density • Integrate pest and disease management with fuels reduction • Implement age class and structural diversity in forest stands • Support development of markets for small-diameter wood products
Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, private forest owners, OSU Extension
Timeframe	Long-term, 5+ years, with ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• **NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** Primary funding for private forest health projects • **USDA Good Neighbor Authority:** Cross-boundary forest health improvement • **ODF Federal Forest Restoration Program:** Projects on federal lands and adjacent private lands • **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board:** Forest health projects with watershed benefits • **Oregon State University Extension:** Technical assistance and demonstration projects

Notes / Additional Actions:

RL-4: Expand Prescribed Fire Use	
Description	Increase the safe and effective use of prescribed fire for ecosystem maintenance and hazardous fuel reduction.
Implementation Actions	• Identify priority areas for prescribed fire treatments • Support establishment of Prescribed Burn Associations • Support training and certification of Certified Burn Managers • Develop prescribed fire plans with appropriate prescriptions • Build capacity through cooperative training and equipment acquisition • Implement proactive public education and strategic communications to build social license for prescribed fire, including media engagement before, during, and after burn operations. • Monitor and document treatment effectiveness • Establish smoke management protocols to minimize impacts and update the Union County Community Response Plan (CRP) as needed. • Seek funding to implement the Union County Community Response Plan for prescribed fire smoke response and mitigation • Expand use of smoke management technologies, including air curtain burners, to reduce smoke impacts and increase prescribed fire operational opportunities
Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, OSU Extension, fire protection districts, private landowners, NEO Chapter of Oregon Prescribed Fire Council
Timeframe	3–5 years for program development; ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• **USDA Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership:** Cross-boundary prescribed fire implementation • **ODF Federal Forest Restoration Program:** State-sponsored prescribed burning • **NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** Private land prescribed fire treatments • **USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant:** Prescribed fire for community protection • **Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board:** Prescribed fire with ecological benefits
Notes / Additional Actions:	

RL-5: Manage Post-Fire Recovery	
Description	Develop protocols for post-fire assessment and landscape recovery to reduce follow-on impacts and promote ecosystem recovery.
Implementation Actions	• Establish Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) protocols • Identify critical resources requiring post-fire protection • Develop strategies for addressing invasive species post-fire • Implement erosion control measures where needed • Support reforestation of severely burned areas • Monitor recovery and adapt management as needed
Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, Union County Emergency Management, NRCS
Timeframe	1–2 years for protocol development; implementation as needed
Potential Funding Sources	• **NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection:** Post-fire stabilization and rehabilitation • **OWEB restoration grants:** Watershed recovery and erosion control • **USFS Burned Area Rehabilitation:** Recovery on federal lands • **FSA Emergency Conservation Program (ECP):** Agricultural land rehabilitation • **USDA Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):** Recovery of grazing lands

Notes / Additional Actions:

FOR&WP-1: Enhance Forest Industry Infrastructure Protection	
Description	Implement strategic protection measures for critical forestry infrastructure such as mills, processing facilities, equipment yards, and access routes.
Implementation Actions	• Complete vulnerability assessments for all major wood products facilities • Implement defensible space treatments around facilities and equipment storage areas • Develop site-specific emergency response plans for each major facility • Shift toward selective harvesting and longer rotation periods to promote diverse, resilient forest stands less susceptible to catastrophic wildfire • Install emergency water supply systems where municipal services are inadequate • Create contingency plans for supply chain and operational disruptions
Responsible Parties	Wood products companies, ODF, Rural Fire Protection Districts, industrial fire brigades
Timeframe	1–3 years for assessment and planning; 2–5 years for implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• Company capital improvement budgets • FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) • Rural Business Development Grants • Oregon State Fire Marshal grants

Notes / Additional Actions:

FOR&WP-2: Develop Timber Salvage and Utilization Protocols

Description	Establish pre-incident agreements and protocols to facilitate rapid salvage and utilization of fire-damaged timber following wildfire events.
Implementation Actions	• Develop pre-approved salvage protocols with federal and state agencies • Establish chain-of-custody and valuation procedures for fire-damaged timber • Identify processing capacity and capabilities for fire-damaged logs • Create templates for emergency contracts and agreements • Identify potential markets for various qualities of salvage material
Responsible Parties	Wood products companies, ODF, USFS, BLM, OSU Extension
Timeframe	1–2 years
Potential Funding Sources	• Industry association support • ODF Federal Forest Restoration Program • USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant • Oregon State University Extension funding

Notes / Additional Actions:

AG-1: Enhance Agricultural Infrastructure Protection

Description	Implement protection measures for critical agricultural infrastructure including irrigation systems, equipment storage, barns, and processing facilities.
Implementation Actions	• Map critical agricultural infrastructure throughout Union County • Conduct vulnerability assessments for key agricultural assets • Maintain a minimum of 100 feet of defensible space around barns, silos, hay storage, and equipment by removing dry grasses, debris, and flammable vegetation • Develop protection plans for irrigation pumps, controls, and delivery systems • Harden irrigation systems using buried lines and fire-resistant materials; install backup power supplies for pumps to maintain water delivery during emergencies • Integrate green strips (irrigated pastures or cover crops) as firebreaks between fields where feasible • Install emergency water supplies for structure protection • Create redundancy for critical systems where feasible
Responsible Parties	Agricultural producers, irrigation districts, OSU Extension, NRCS, Rural Fire Protection Districts
Timeframe	1–3 years for assessment and planning; ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) • Farm Service Agency programs • FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) • Oregon Department of Agriculture grants

Notes / Additional Actions:

AG-2: Develop Rangeland Fire Protection Strategies

Description	Implement strategies to reduce wildfire impacts on rangelands and livestock operations throughout Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Establish and support Rangeland Fire Protection Associations (RFPA's) in and outside of Union County, and explore options for mutual aid agreements across county lines • Identify and map critical forage areas and livestock concentration points • Establish strategic fuel breaks around high-value grazing lands • Develop contingency grazing plans for post-fire recovery periods if grazing range or allotments are compromised • Create emergency livestock evacuation plans and identified relocation areas • Implement invasive species management to reduce fire-prone annual grasses • Use targeted grazing to reduce fine fuels such as cheatgrass and invasive annual grasses, particularly near property boundaries and along transportation corridors • Adopt crop rotations that limit the buildup of flammable crop residues • Develop water resources that serve both livestock and fire suppression needs
Responsible Parties	Ranchers, NRCS, ODF, BLM, range specialists, OSU Extension, existing RFPA's
Timeframe	2–4 years, with seasonal implementation windows
Potential Funding Sources	• NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) • BLM cooperative agreements • Farm Service Agency programs • Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board grants

Notes / Additional Actions:

REC-1: Enhance Recreation Area Protection	
Description	Implement strategic protection measures for high-value recreation areas, infrastructure, and access routes.
Implementation Actions	• Prioritize fuels treatments around developed recreation sites • Create defensible space around cabins, lodges, and visitor facilities • Identify and improve emergency access and egress routes • Develop visitor evacuation plans for peak season scenarios • Install emergency notification systems at popular recreation areas • Implement targeted closures during extreme fire danger periods • Establish and support funding of recreation programs and personel to do prevention and clean-up work at recreation sites
Responsible Parties	USFS, BLM, Oregon Parks and Recreation, Union County, private recreation operators, emergency management
Timeframe	2–4 years, with priority site implementation in first year
Potential Funding Sources	• USFS Recreation Enhancement Act funds • BLM recreation program funds • Oregon Parks and Recreation grants • FEMA pre-disaster mitigation grants
Notes / Additional Actions:	

REC-2: Develop Tourism Sector Resilience Program

Description	Create a comprehensive program to build wildfire resilience within the tourism sector and reduce economic impacts from wildfire disruptions.
Implementation Actions	• Develop accurate, consistent and clear public information protocols for fire season focusing on Public Use Restrictions and Regulations • Create business continuity planning templates for tourism operators • Establish “open for business” communication strategies for unaffected areas • Develop alternative activity plans for periods of fire restrictions • Develop and promote fire-resilient recreation alternatives such as heritage tourism to offset revenue losses when backcountry areas are closed • Create post-fire recovery marketing strategies • Train tourism staff as public information resources during incidents
Responsible Parties	Chamber of Commerce, tourism providers, Union County Economic Development, emergency management, Blue Mt Interagency Dispatch Center
Timeframe	1–2 years for program development; ongoing implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• Rural Business Development Grants • Economic Development Administration grants • Travel Oregon tourism development grants • Business Oregon programs

Notes / Additional Actions:

T&I-1: Enhance Transportation Corridor Protection

Description	Implement targeted fuels reduction and infrastructure hardening along critical transportation corridors.
Implementation Actions	• Identify and prioritize critical transportation routes based on wildfire risk and importance • Implement strategic fuel breaks along high-priority corridors, including I-84 and state highways • Create defensible space around bridges, tunnels, and other critical infrastructure • Coordinate vegetation management protocols with transportation agencies • Develop alternate route plans for key corridors during fire events • Identify and maintain redundant haul routes for timber and agricultural products to minimize supply chain disruption when primary corridors are closed • Install emergency signage and traveler information systems
Responsible Parties	Oregon Department of Transportation, Union County Road Department, railroad companies, utility providers
Timeframe	2–4 years, with phased implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• ODOT maintenance and safety funds • FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) • Oregon Department of Emergency Management • Federal Highway Administration grants

Notes / Additional Actions:

T&I-2: Critical Utilities Protection Program

Description	Implement comprehensive wildfire mitigation measures for power, water, communications, and other critical utility systems.
Implementation Actions	• Complete vulnerability assessments of all critical utility infrastructure • Prioritize hardening of vulnerable components of utility systems including power supply • Implement enhanced vegetation management around power lines and substations • Develop backup power solutions for critical water and communications systems • Establish emergency repair protocols and pre-position materials • Create mutual aid agreements for rapid restoration following incidents
Responsible Parties	Utility providers, Union County Emergency Management, Oregon Public Utility Commission, communications companies, agencies using communication towers
Timeframe	2–3 years for planning and prioritization; 3–7 years for implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• Utility capital improvement programs • FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) • Oregon Department of Energy resilience grants • Pacific Power Wildfire Resiliency Grants

Notes / Additional Actions:

Assess power lines to communication sites – identify shallow buried lines that may be at risk

PH&ED-1: Healthcare System Wildfire Resilience	
Description	Enhance the capacity of healthcare facilities and systems to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire events.
Implementation Actions	• Support updates and implementation of the Union County Community Response Plan (CRP) for wildfire and prescribed fire smoke. • Conduct vulnerability assessments for all healthcare facilities • Implement defensible space and structural hardening for medical facilities • Develop smoke infiltration reduction measures for hospitals and clinics • Acquire air filtration units to mitigate smoke impacts on vulnerable populations and the operation of critical community facilities • Create protocols for patient evacuation and continuity of care • Establish backup power and water systems for critical healthcare functions • Develop surge capacity planning for respiratory conditions during smoke events • Train healthcare providers on wildfire-related health impacts and treatments
Responsible Parties	Grande Ronde Hospital, Union County Public Health, clinics, long-term care facilities
Timeframe	1–2 years for planning; 2–5 years for implementation
Potential Funding Sources	• Hospital Preparedness Program grants • FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) • Oregon Health Authority preparedness funding • Healthcare system capital improvement budgets • OSFM Defensible Space Incentive Grant for Schools and Hospitals (2022)
Notes / Additional Actions:	

PH&ED-2: School System Wildfire Preparedness	
Description	Develop comprehensive wildfire preparedness programs for school districts throughout Union County.
Implementation Actions	• Assess all school and day care facilities in Union County for vulnerability and risk to wildfire • Implement defensible space and structural hardening for school facilities • Develop protocols for school closures during wildfire and air quality events • Create evacuation and family reunification plans for all school facilities, and acquire resources and equip facilities to support reunification operations • Establish air quality monitoring and indoor air filtration in schools • Integrate wildfire safety education into school curriculum • Train and exercise staff on emergency protocols and roles during wildfire events • Incorporate school district personnel in training and wildfire simulation exercises
Responsible Parties	School districts, Union County Emergency Management, fire agencies, Eastern Oregon University
Timeframe	1–2 years
Potential Funding Sources	• Department of Education school safety grants • FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation • Oregon Department of Education • School district capital improvement funds • OSFM Defensible Space Incentive Grant for Schools and Hospitals (2022)
Notes / Additional Actions:	

XCUT-1: Business Continuity and Wildfire Resilience Planning	
Description	Encourage and support businesses, non-profits, and public agencies throughout Union County to develop Continuity of Operations Plans (COOP) that specifically address wildfire risks, ensuring that essential services and economic activities can continue or recover rapidly following wildfire events.
Implementation Actions	• Develop COOP planning templates tailored to Union County's primary industries (forestry, agriculture, recreation, transportation, healthcare) • Conduct workshops with the Chamber of Commerce and industry associations to introduce and support COOP development • Address supply chain disruptions, evacuation logistics, remote work capabilities, and communication strategies in plan templates • Identify mutual aid opportunities between businesses for shared resources during and after wildfire events • Integrate COOP planning with county emergency operations planning for coordinated response • Support early detection investments including fire lookout infrastructure, remote weather stations, and automated smoke detection to improve lead time for business continuity activation • Establish a county-wide registry of businesses with completed COOPs to facilitate coordination during incidents
Responsible Parties	Union County Economic Development, Chamber of Commerce, Union County Emergency Management, ODF, industry associations
Timeframe	1–2 years for program development; ongoing implementation and plan maintenance
Potential Funding Sources	• Rural Business Development Grants • Economic Development Administration grants • Oregon Business Development Department • FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) • Agency operational budgets
Notes / Additional Actions:	

Chapter 10 – Community Participation

Overview

Community participation is a foundational requirement of the Community Wildfire Protection Plan process. A CWPP must be developed collaboratively with participation from local government, fire agencies, and other interested parties. The Union County CWPP 2026 update reflects an extensive two-year engagement process involving core planning team meetings, interagency coordination, Firewise community outreach, regional partnerships, and public presentations. This chapter documents that process and provides the foundation for ongoing community engagement in plan implementation.

Core Planning Team

The CWPP update was guided by an interagency core planning team that met regularly from January 2024 through March 2026. Over 18 documented meetings were held at the Union County Emergency Management office, the ODF Northeast Oregon District office, the La Grande Ranger District, and via remote video conferencing. Core team members represented the primary wildfire management agencies in Union County: The core team was as follows

Agency	Title	Name
Oregon Department of Forestry, Northeast Oregon District	Cohesive Wildfire Strategy Coordinator (Project Lead)	Willy Crippen
Union County Emergency Management	Emergency Manager	Nick Vora
US Forest Service, Wallowa-Whitman NF, La Grande Ranger District	Fire Management Officer	Jon Rupp
US Forest Service, Umatilla NF, Walla Walla Ranger District	Fuels Specialist	Doug Cates
City of La Grande Fire Department	Fire Chief	Emmitt Cornford
La Grande Rural Fire Protection District	Fire Chief	Craig Kretschmer
Oregon Department of Forestry, La Grande Unit	Wildland Fire Supervisor	JB Brock
Oregon State Fire Marshal	Regional Wildfire Specialist	Chris Paul

This interagency composition ensured that federal, state, and local perspectives were integrated throughout the planning process, and that the final plan reflects operational realities across the full range of land ownership and jurisdictional boundaries in Union County.

Fire Defense Board

The CWPP update was presented to the Union County Fire Defense Board on March 8, 2024. This presentation informed fire chiefs and district representatives across the county of the planning process,

solicited input on local mitigation priorities, and ensured alignment between the CWPP and fire district operational planning.

Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan Coordination

On June 25, 2024, the CWPP team coordinated with Union County's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan (NHMP) process in a joint meeting with County Commissioners. This coordination ensured consistency between the two planning documents in wildfire risk assessments, mitigation actions, implementation strategies, and terminology.

Firewise Community Engagement

Firewise USA communities represent some of the most engaged and proactive residents in Union County with respect to wildfire preparedness. The CWPP team conducted 13 documented engagements with Firewise communities and the Union County Firewise Working Group between June 2024 and February 2026. These included regular working group meetings at the OSU Extension office, community-specific meetings in North Powder and Summerville, the Morgan Lake Firewise community event, a regional Firewise check-in done April 2025, and a Firewise Community Leaders Social in August 2025. Input gathered through these engagements informed the Communities at Risk analysis, the identification of mitigation priorities, and the development of recommended actions in Chapter 8.

Union County's active Firewise communities include Mt. Emily, Morgan Lake, North Powder, Summerville, and Igo Lane, among others. These communities represent a direct link between the CWPP planning process and on-the-ground resident engagement.

Regional Coordination

A distinguishing feature of the Union County CWPP 2026 update is its deep integration with concurrent CWPP updates in neighboring counties. This regional approach ensures consistency in methodology, terminology, mapping, and risk assessment across northeastern Oregon, and facilitates effective coordination during large-scale fire events that cross county boundaries.

Wallowa County: The CWPP team participated in 22 documented coordination meetings with the Wallowa County CWPP core group between March 2024 and January 2026. This coordination was ongoing and substantive, including joint core group meetings, preparation for public advisory meetings, and a county-wide community kick-off meeting at the Hurricane Creek Grange Hall in November 2024. The Wallowa County CWPP shares key team members, methodology, and analytical frameworks with the Union County plan.

Umatilla County: Six coordination meetings were held with the Umatilla County CWPP team between September 2024 and April 2025, primarily via virtual meeting platforms. These meetings focused on aligning risk assessment methodologies, WUI definitions, and Communities at Risk frameworks across the two counties.

Baker County: The project team provided technical assistance to Baker County's concurrent CWPP update, facilitating consistency in methodology and approach across the broader northeastern Oregon region.

Northern Blues Restoration Partnership

The project lead serves as a member of the Northern Blues Restoration Partnership (NBRP) operations team, participating in eight cross-team operations meetings annually. CWPP planning progress and community risk priorities are a regular contribution to these meetings, ensuring that community protection planning is integrated into the broader landscape-scale restoration and wildfire resilience work of the partnership. The project lead also presents a formal CWPP update at the NBRP annual work plan meeting, providing a documented link between the Union County CWPP and the partnership's landscape resiliency priorities across the Blue Mountains region.

Public Outreach and Media

In February 2024, the project lead participated in a local television interview in La Grande to raise public awareness of the CWPP update process and wildfire preparedness. In July 2025, the team participated in an OPB tour, providing media exposure for wildfire planning and community resilience efforts in northeastern Oregon. These media engagements extended the reach of the CWPP process beyond direct stakeholder participants to the broader Union County public.

Summary

The Union County CWPP 2026 update reflects more than two years of sustained community engagement — over 70 documented meetings spanning core planning team sessions, fire agency coordination, Firewise outreach, regional partnerships, and public presentations. This broad foundation of input supports both the credibility of the plan's findings and the commitment of its stakeholders to implementation.

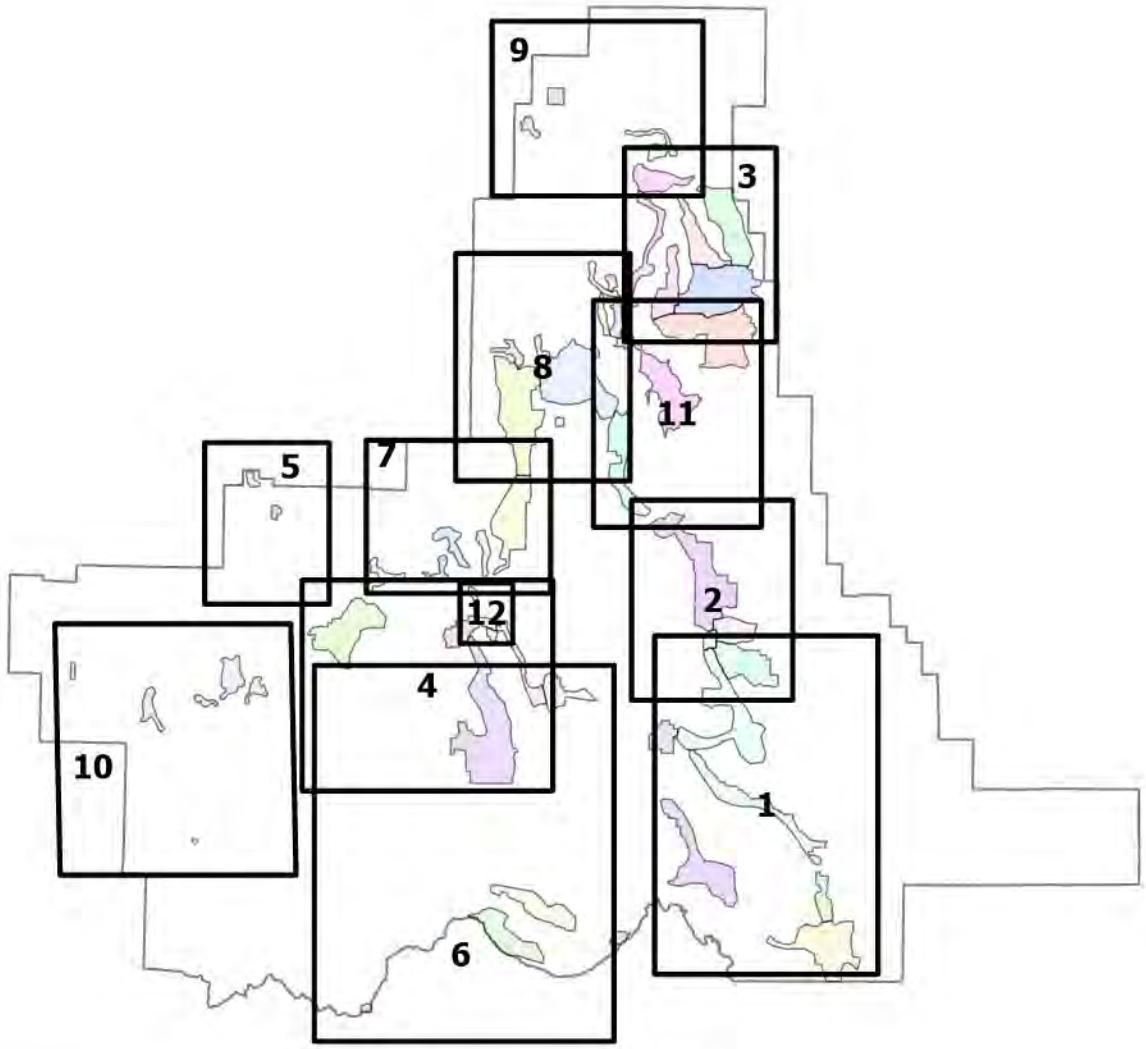
This plan is a living document. The core planning team will conduct formal annual reviews to assess accomplishments, track progress, and update priorities as conditions change, while retaining the ability to respond to specific needs as they arise. Ongoing coordination with neighboring counties, continued Firewise community support, and active contribution to community risk assessment will keep the Union County CWPP current and connected to the broader regional wildfire management landscape.

The strength of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan lies not in the document itself, but in the relationships, shared knowledge, and collective commitment it represents. The Union County CWPP 2026 was built on sustained interagency collaboration and genuine community engagement — grounded in the shared understanding that wildfire risk is best addressed through coordinated action across all jurisdictions, land ownerships, and community boundaries. As conditions change, this plan will evolve with them, guided by the partnerships that shaped it and the enduring commitment of Union County's agencies, fire districts, and communities to protect lives, property, and the natural resources that define this place.

“This plan is a living document.”

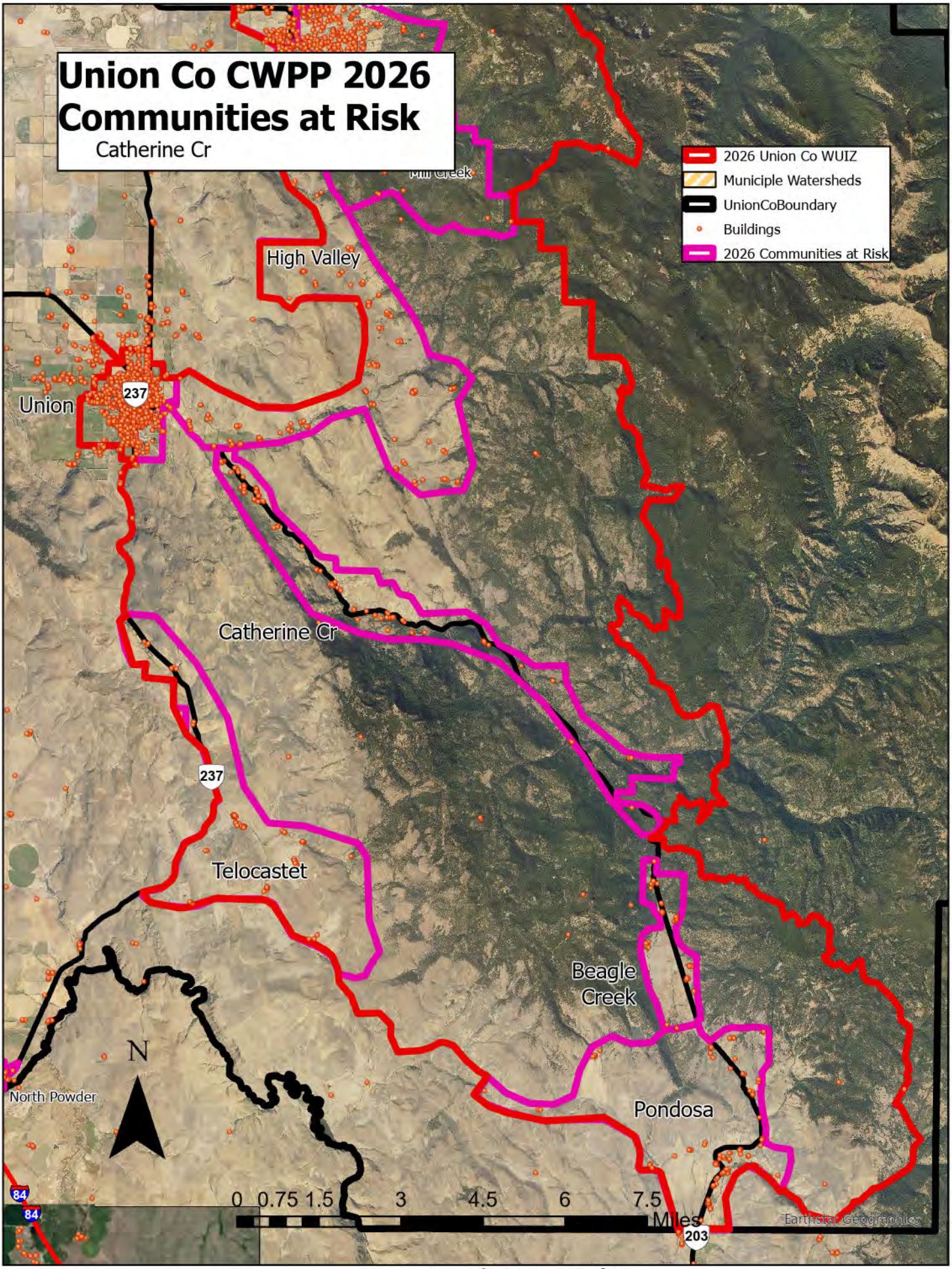
Appendix A - Communities at Risk Maps

Index Page



Communities At Risk

- CAR_Index_Pages
- Anthony Ski Area
- Beagle Creek
- Blue Springs
- Bodie
- Bushnell
- Camp Elkanah
- Catherine Cr
- Clark / Indian
- Cove
- Cove Foothills
- Cricket Flat
- Darr Rd
- Duncan Canyon
- Elgin
- Foothill Rd
- Fox Hill / Robbs
- Glass Hill
- Gordon Creek
- Grays Corner
- High Valley
- Hilgard
- Hot Lake / Ladd Cr
- Hwy 244 Cooridor
- Kamela
- Klinghammer-McNabe
- Lookingglass Creek
- Lost Cr
- Lower Cove Rd
- McIntyre
- Middle Road
- Mill Creek
- Morgan Lake
- Mount Glenn
- North Hunter Road
- North Powder
- Otten / Orodell
- Owsley Mt / Emily Rd
- Palmer Junction
- Palmer Junction Road
- Parsons / Hardy
- Peet Creek
- Perry
- Pondosa
- Pumpkin Ridge
- Ruckle Road
- Rysdam Canyon
- South La Grande
- Spout Springs
- Starkey
- Starkey Experimental Forest
- Stubblefield
- Summerville
- Telocastet
- Tucker Flats
- Union
- Valley View Road
- West La Grande
- Wolf Creek
- UnionCoBoundary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Communities at Risk
Catherine Cr
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
2026 Communities at Risk
High Valley
Union
237
Catherine Cr
237
Telocastet
Beagle
Creek
Pondosa
N
North Powder
84
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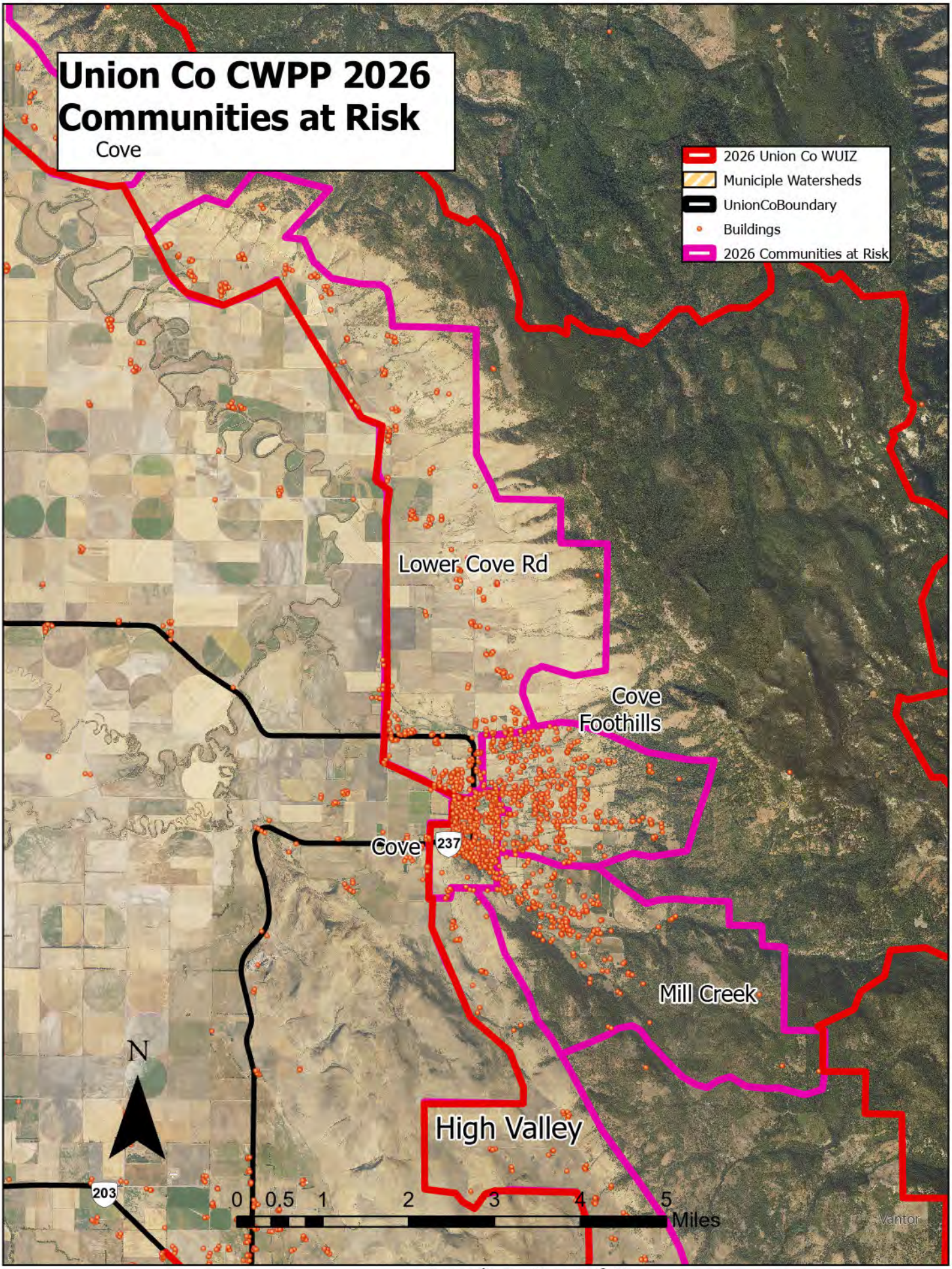
Miles
203
Earthstar Geographics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Cove
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
2026 Communities at Risk
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Cove
Foothills
Cove
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Mill Creek
High Valley
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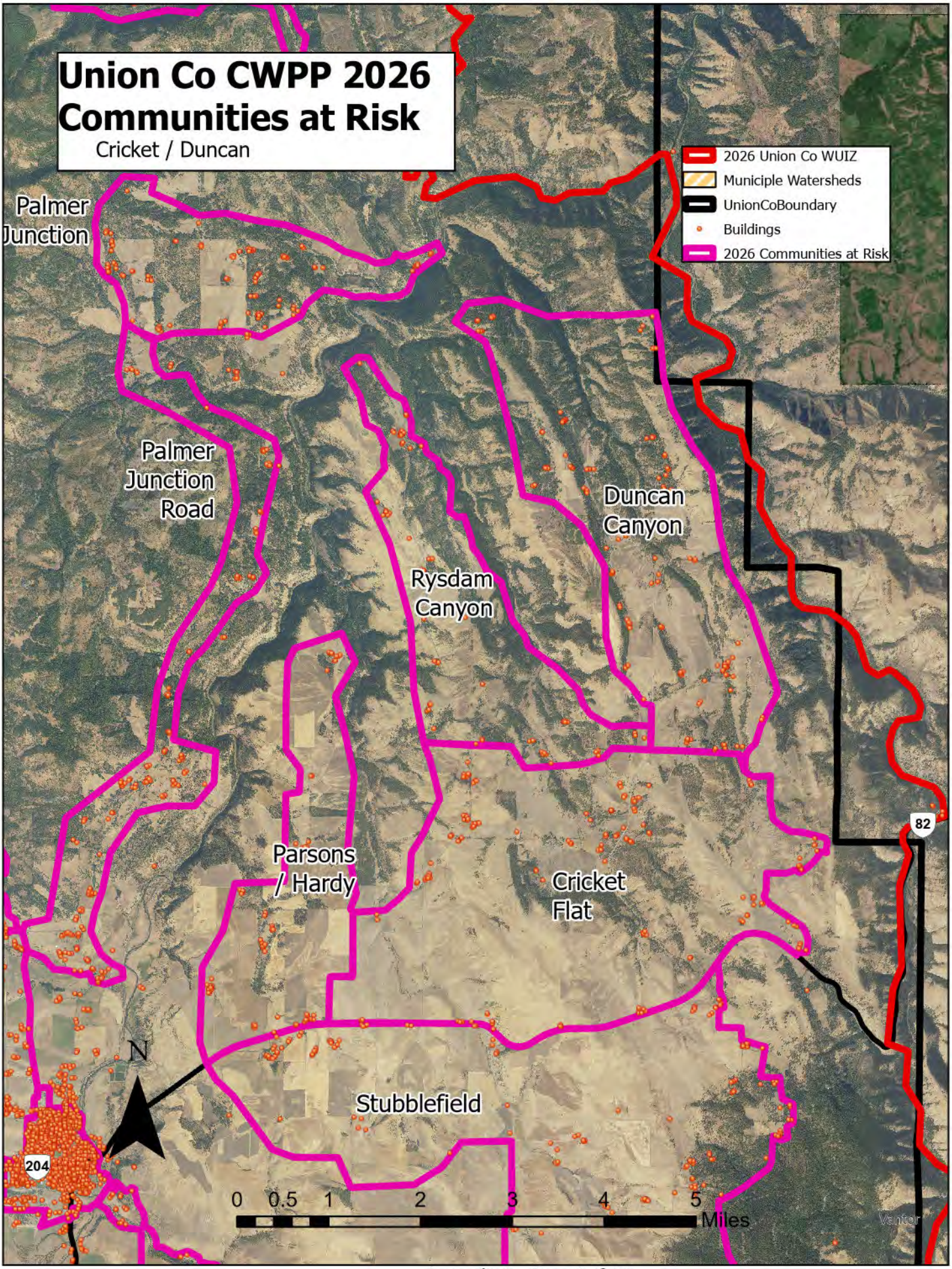
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Communities at Risk
Cricket / Duncan
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
2026 Communities at Risk
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Palmer Junction Road
Duncan Canyon
Rysdam Canyon
Parsons / Hardy
Cricket Flat
Stubblefield
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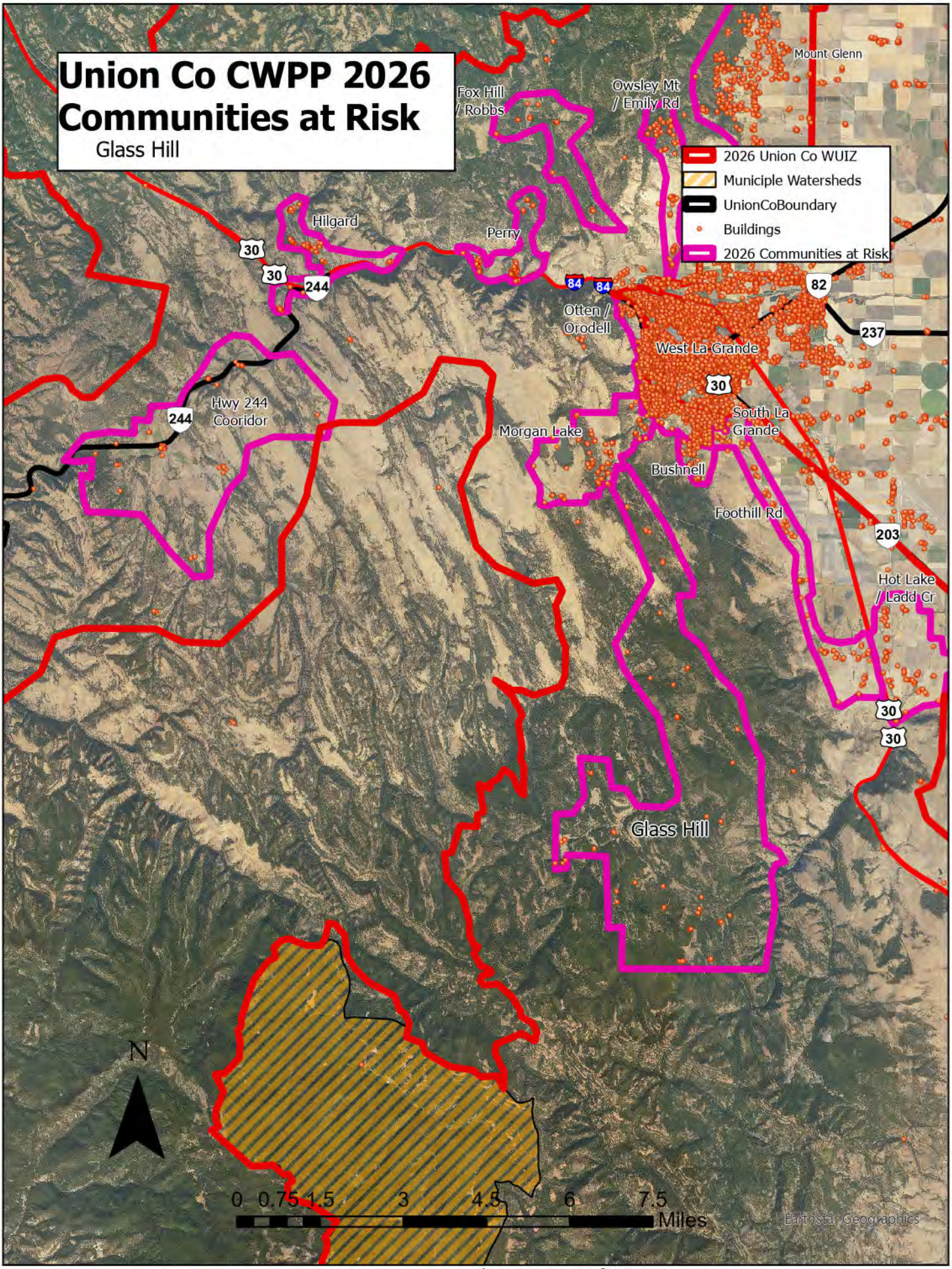
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Communities at Risk
Glass Hill
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Mount Glenn
Fox Hill
/ Robbs
Owsley Mt
/ Emily Rd
Hilgard
Perry
Otten /
Orodell
West La Grande
South La
Grande
Morgan Lake
Bushnell
Foothill Rd
Hot Lake
/ Ladd Cr
Hwy 244
Cooridor
Glass Hill
30
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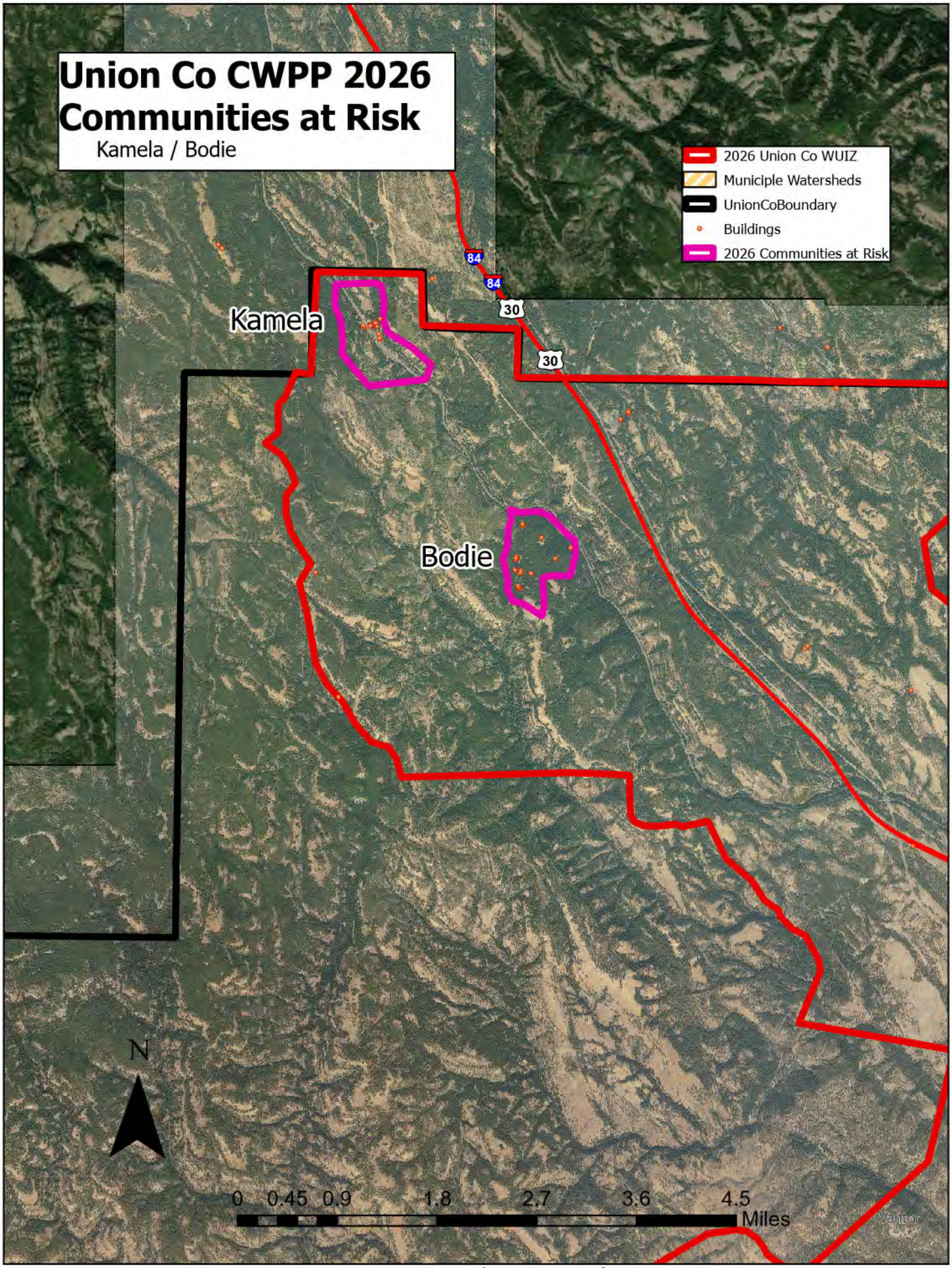
Earthstar Geographics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Kamela / Bodie
2026 Union Co WUIZ
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UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Bodie
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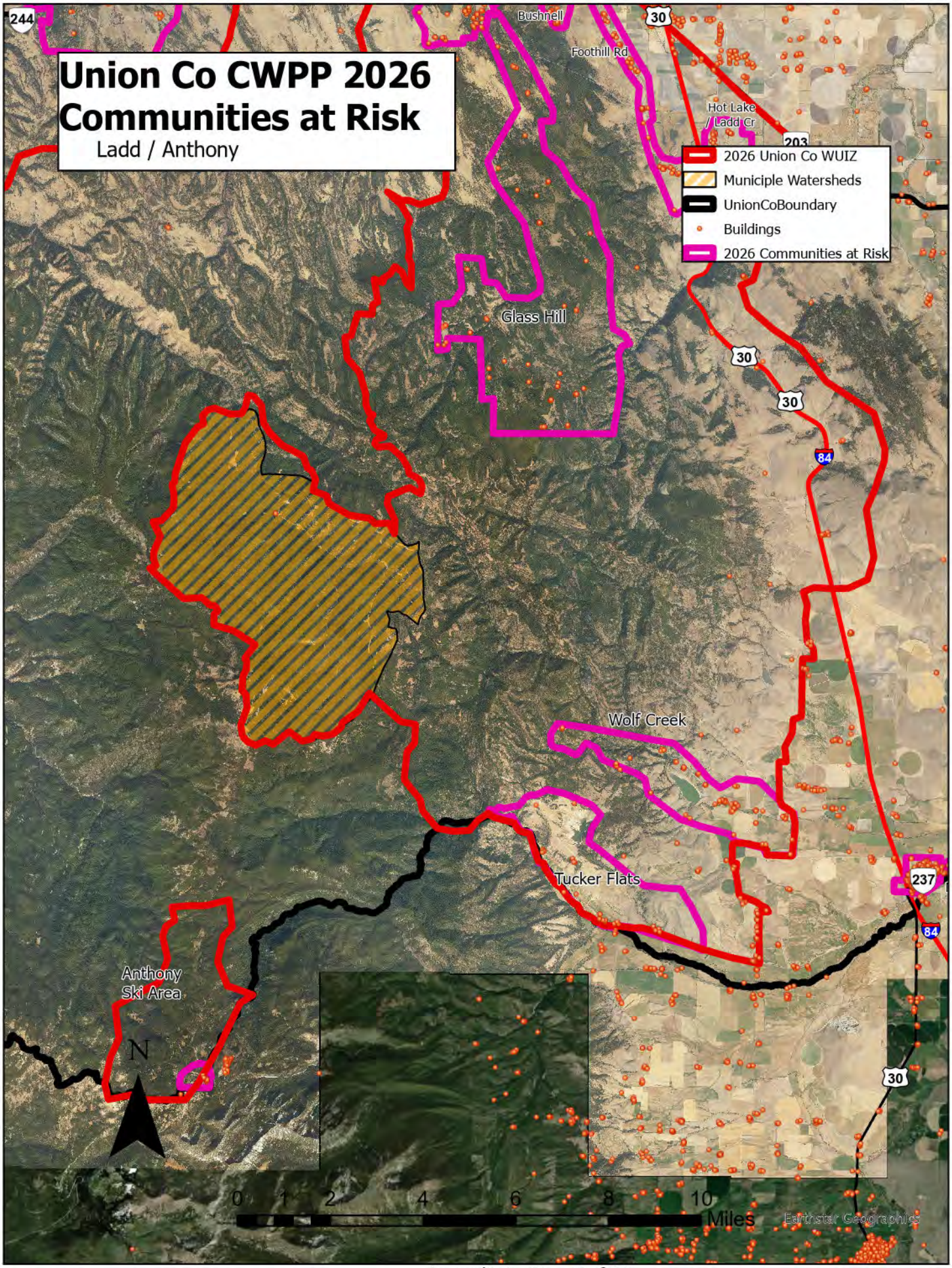
Miles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Communities at Risk
Ladd / Anthony
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Hot Lake
/ Ladd Cr
Glass Hill
Wolf Creek
Tucker Flats
Anthony
Ski Area
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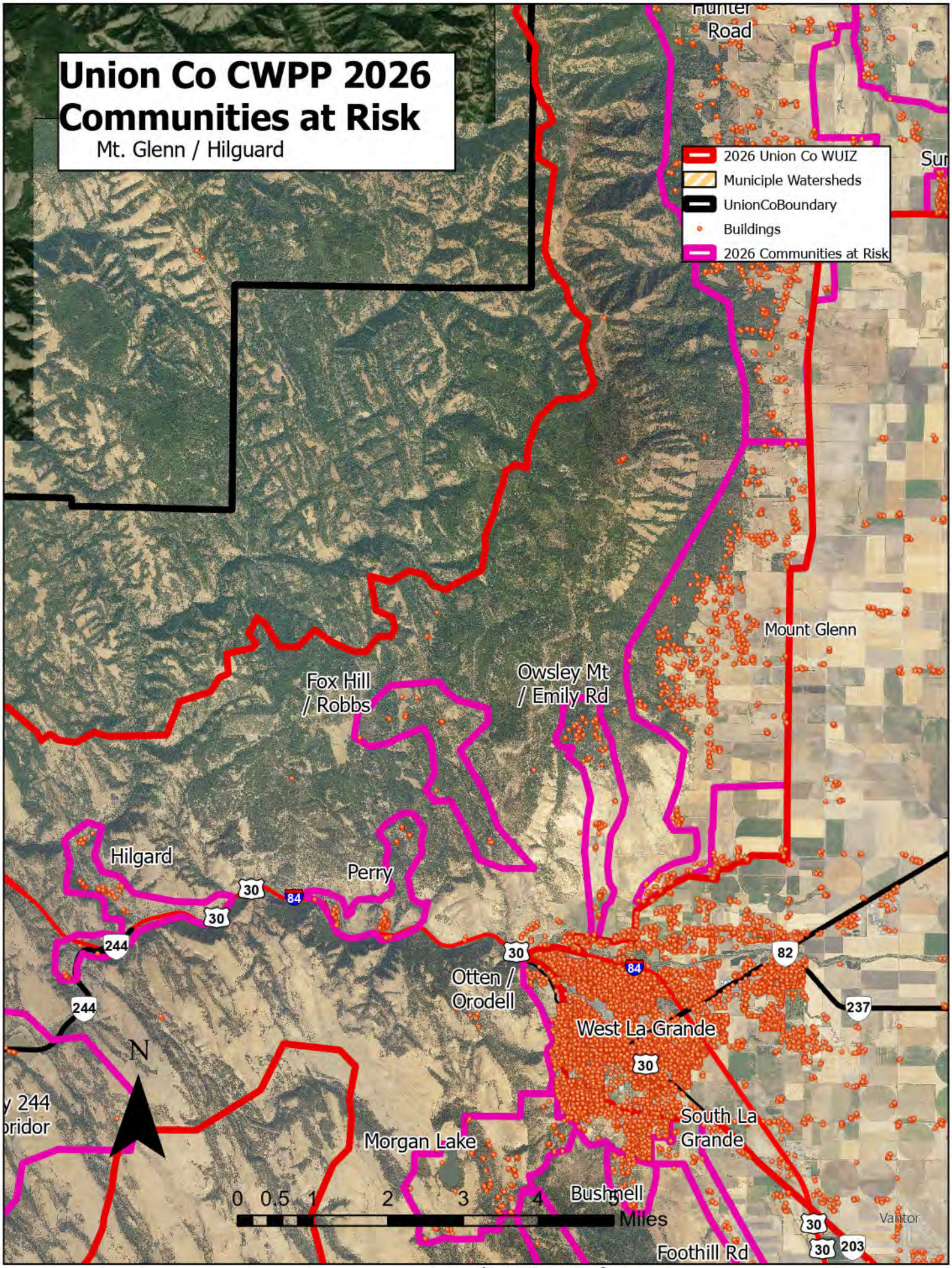
Miles
Earthstar Geographics


Union Co CWPP 2026
Communities at Risk
Mt. Glenn / Hilguard
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Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Road
Mount Glenn
Owsley Mt
/ Emily Rd
Fox Hill
/ Robbs
Hilgard
Perry
Otten /
Orodell
West La Grande
South La
Grande
Morgan Lake
Bushnell
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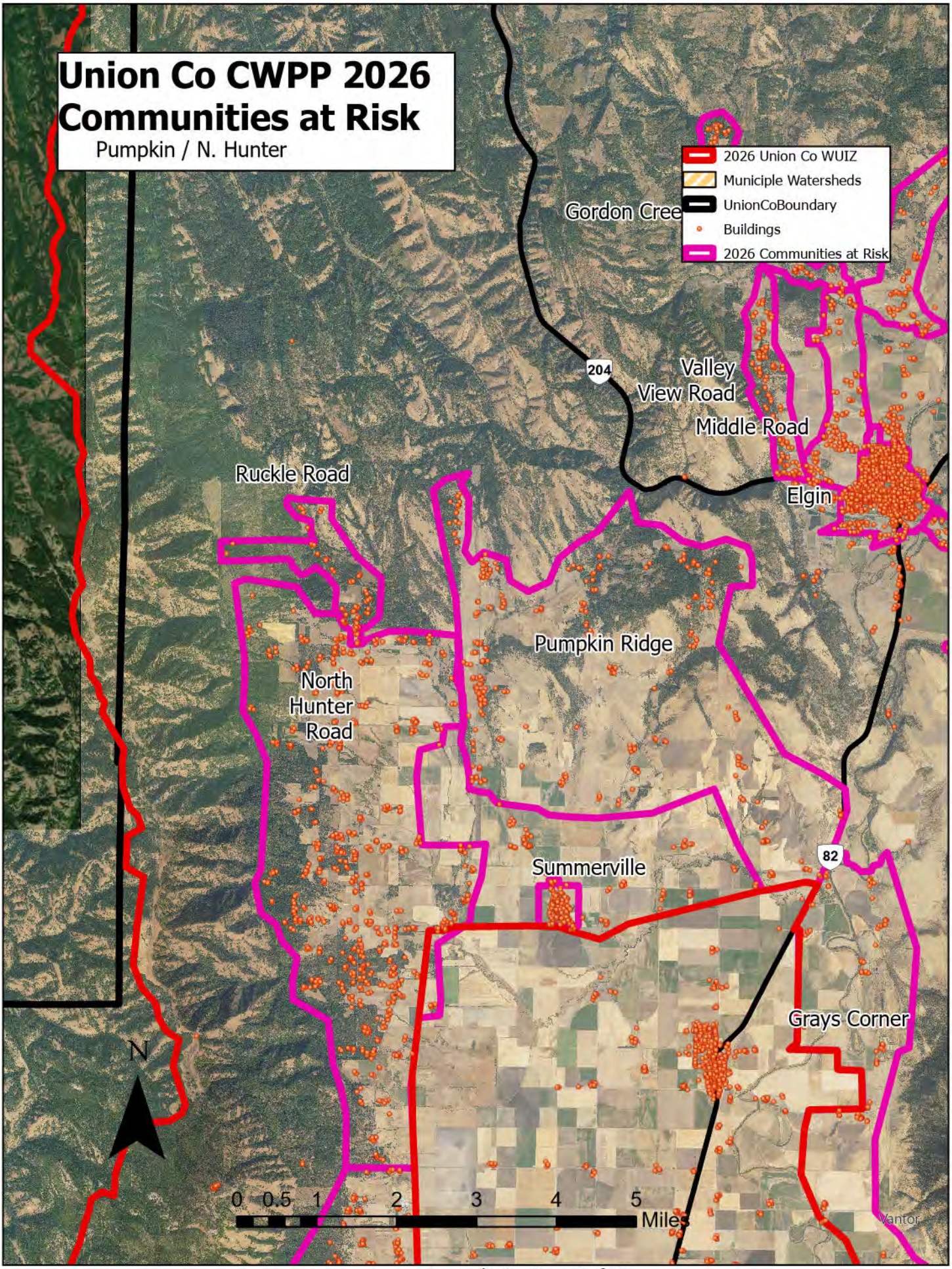
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Communities at Risk
Pumpkin / N. Hunter
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Gordon Cree
204
Valley
View Road
Middle Road
Ruckle Road
Elgin
Pumpkin Ridge
North
Hunter
Road
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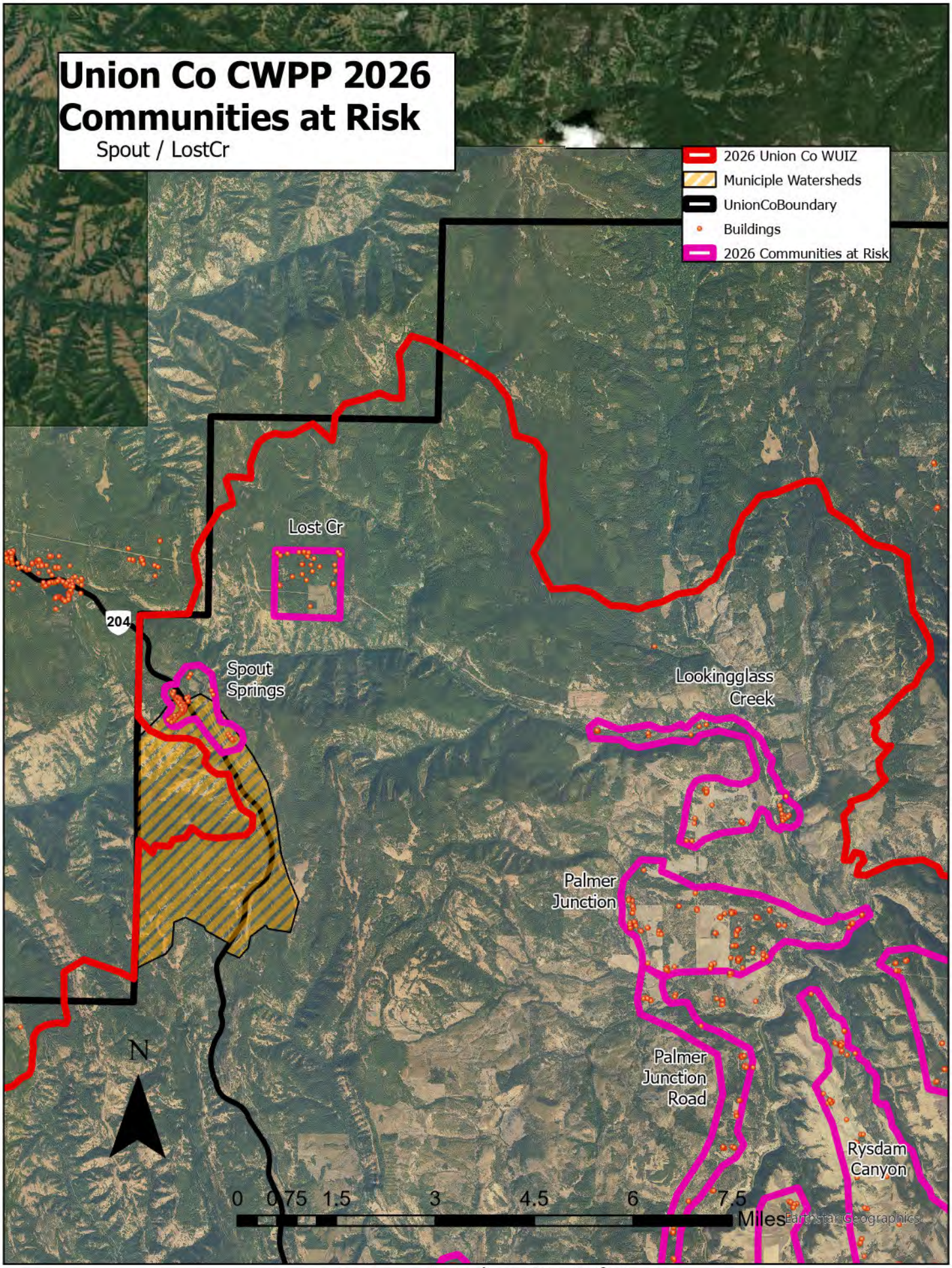
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Spout / LostCr
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Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Lost Cr
204
Spout
Springs
Lookingglass
Creek
Palmer
Junction
Palmer
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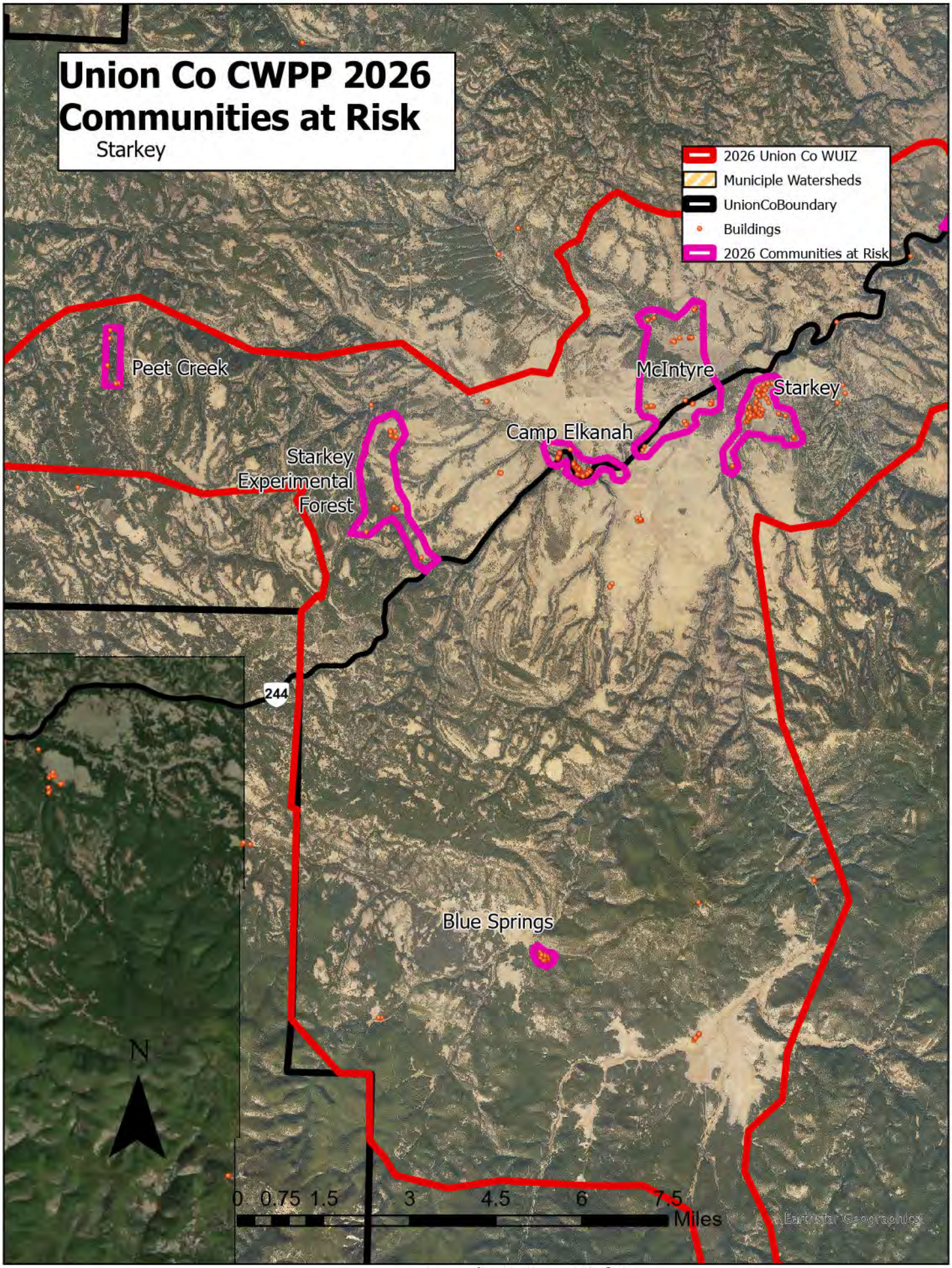
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Starkey
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Peet Creek
McIntyre
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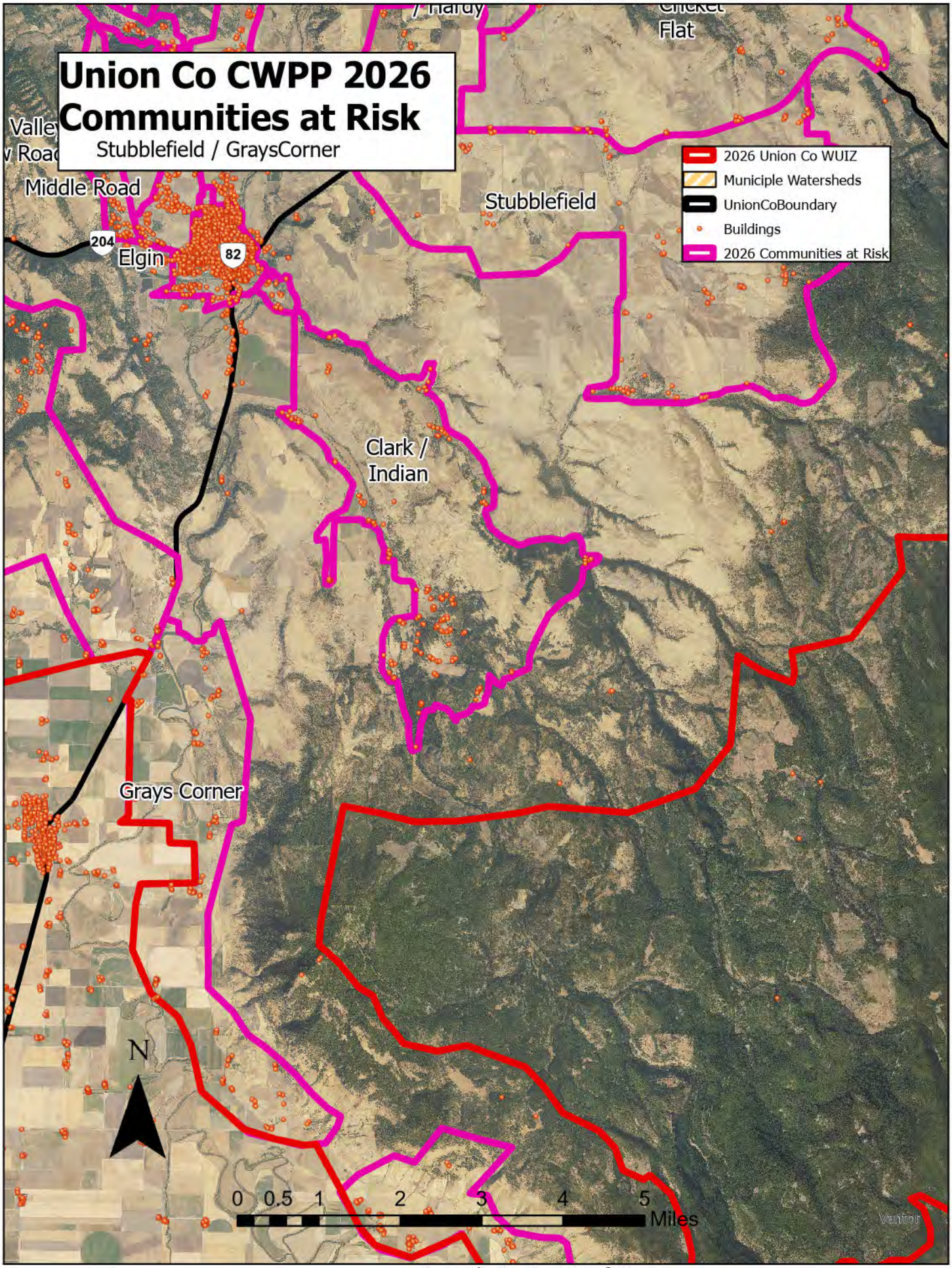
Union Co CWPP 2026
Communities at Risk
Stubblefield / GraysCorner
2026 Union Co WUIZ
Municiple Watersheds
UnionCoBoundary
Buildings
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Stubblefield
Clark /
Indian
Grays Corner
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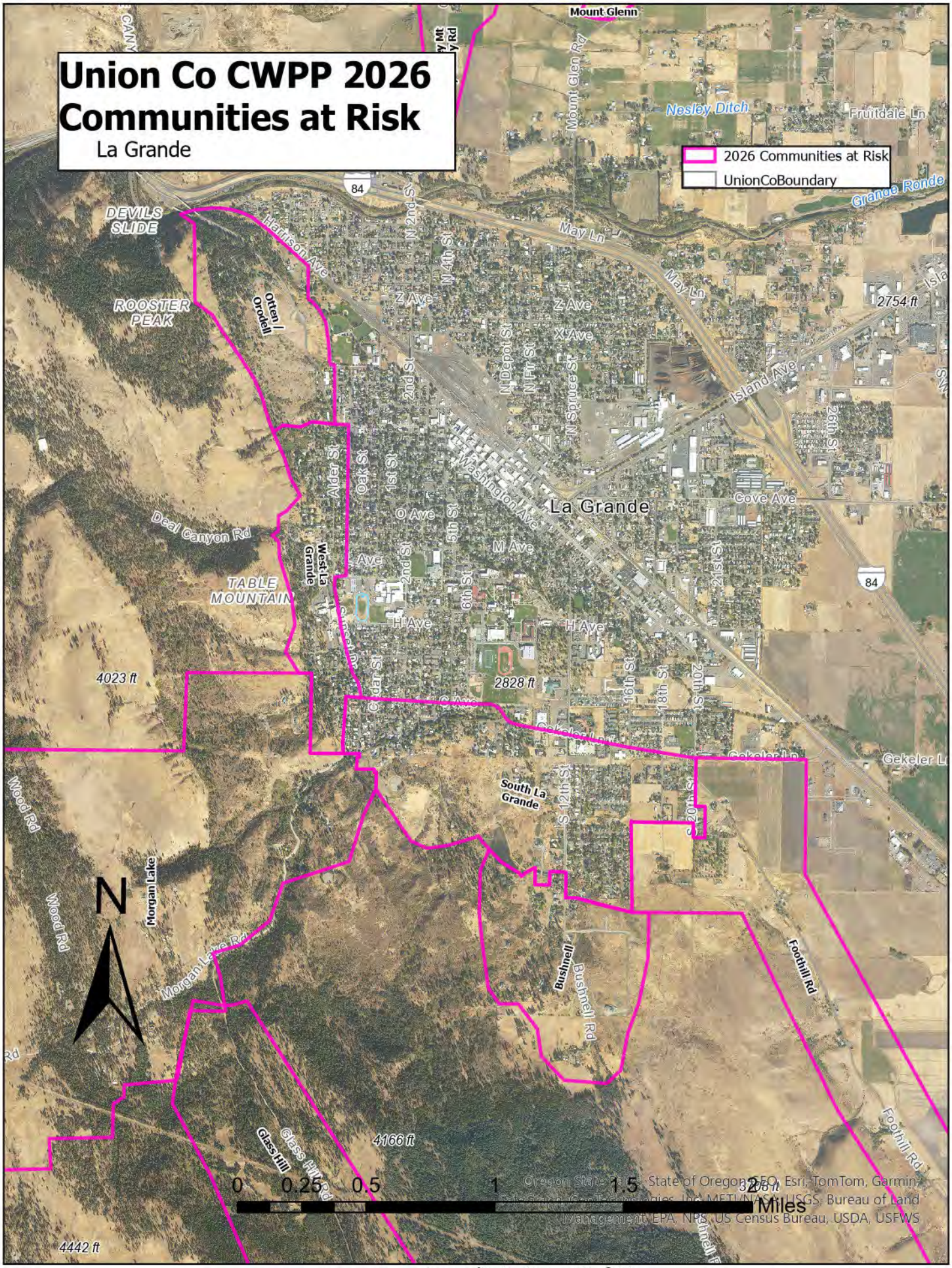
Miles


Union Co CWPP 2026
Communities at Risk
La Grande
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UnionCoBoundary
Mount Glenn
Mount Glen Rd
Nesley Ditch
Fruitdale Ln
Grande Ronde
DEVILS SLIDE
ROOSTER PEAK
Harrison Ave
Otten / Orodell
May Ln
Z Ave
X Ave
N 4th St
N 2nd St
N Depot St
N Fir St
N Spruce St
2nd St
Island Ave
2754 ft
26th St
Ader St
Oak St
1st St
Washington Ave
La Grande
Cove Ave
O Ave
M Ave
5th St
Deal Canyon Rd
West La Grande
TABLE MOUNTAIN
6th St
21st St
84
H Ave
4023 ft
2828 ft
16th St
18th St
20th St
Gekeler Ln
South La Grande
S 12th St
Wood Rd
Morgan Lake
Morgan Lake Rd
Bushnell
Bushnell Rd
Foothill Rd
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Glass Hill
Glass Hill Rd
4166 ft
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4442 ft
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Oregon State, State of Oregon, FEO, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, US Census Bureau, USDA, USFWS

[

Union County CWPP

Appendix B – Annual Review

UNION COUNTY

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

Annual Review & Mitigation Action Item Update

County:	Union County
Review Year:	[e.g., 2026]
Meeting Date:	[Date of Annual Review Meeting]
Location:	[Meeting location or virtual]
Facilitator:	[Name, AGENCY]
Participants:	[List names and agencies]
CWPP Version:	Union County CWPP 2026
Next Review:	[Year]

About This Review

This annual review documents progress on Union County CWPP mitigation action items and records significant wildfire risk reduction accomplishments. It is a working document — concise by design. Detailed project information defers to individual project plans. This review supports active CWPP status under HFRA, informs grant applications, and provides a record of interagency collaboration across Union County.

Part 1 — Annual Accomplishments

Summarize significant wildfire risk reduction work completed during the review year. Include fuels treatments, community preparedness, planning milestones, and grants awarded or received.

Project / Activity	Description	Category	Acres / Units	Partners / Funding

Additional highlights:

Part 2 — Mitigation Action Item Review

Score each MAI 1–5 based on progress during the review year. Add bullet notes on accomplishments, obstacles, and context. Use the green row to capture priority actions for the coming year.

5	4	3	2	1
Exceeding goals	Meeting goals	Making progress	Minimal progress	Not started / stalled

WILDFIRE RESPONSE (WR)

All jurisdictions participate in making and implementing safe, effective, efficient response to wildland fire.

WR-1 Improve Fire Response Access

Responsible Parties	Union County Emergency Management, Rural Fire Protection Districts, ODF, USFS, BLM, private landowners
Timeframe	2–5 years, with ongoing maintenance

Score: _____ / 5 | **Priority:** High / Med / Low | **Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

WR-2 Enhance Water Supply Infrastructure

Responsible Parties	Rural Fire Protection Districts, Union County Emergency Management, municipalities, water districts
Timeframe	3–5 years, with ongoing maintenance

Score: _____ / 5 | **Priority:** High / Med / Low | **Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

WR-3 Strengthen Interagency Communication and Coordination

Responsible Parties	All fire protection agencies, Union County Emergency Management, Northern Blues Cohesive Strategy Partnership
Timeframe	1–2 years, with annual updates and exercises

Score: _____ / 5 | **Priority:** High / Med / Low | **Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

WR-4 Strengthen Firefighting Capacity

Responsible Parties	Rural Fire Protection Districts, municipal fire departments, Union County Emergency Management
Timeframe	3–5 years, with ongoing recruitment and training

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

WR-5 Strengthen Evacuation Plans and Resources

Responsible Parties	Union County Emergency Management, law enforcement, fire protection agencies, Search and Rescue, community organizations
Timeframe	1–3 years, with regular updates and public outreach

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES (FAC)

Human populations and infrastructure can withstand a wildfire without loss of life and property.

FAC-1 Expand Defensible Space Implementation

Responsible Parties	Fire protection agencies, OSU Extension, Firewise Community groups, homeowners associations
Timeframe	Ongoing, with annual implementation targets

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FAC-2 Promote Home Hardening

Responsible Parties	Fire protection agencies, building departments, OSU Extension, contractors
Timeframe	1–3 years for education and assessment; 5+ years for retrofitting

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FAC-3 Expand Firewise Communities Program

Responsible Parties	ODF, local fire protection agencies, community organizations, Northern Blues Restoration Partnership, NB Cohesive Strategy Partnership
Timeframe	2–5 years to establish new Firewise communities; ongoing maintenance

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FAC-4 Enhance Public Education and Outreach

Responsible Parties	OSU Extension, fire protection agencies, Union County Emergency Management, school districts, BM Cohesive Strategy Partnership
Timeframe	1–2 years for program development; ongoing implementation

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FAC-5 Implement Ready, Set, Go! Evacuation Readiness Program

Responsible Parties	Union County Emergency Management, fire protection agencies, law enforcement
Timeframe	1–2 years for program establishment; ongoing implementation

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FAC-6 Strengthen Critical Infrastructure Protection

Responsible Parties	Utility providers, Union County Emergency Management, infrastructure owners and operators
Timeframe	2–3 years for assessment; 3–5 years for implementation

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

FAC-7 Strengthen Critical Infrastructure Protection

Responsible Parties	Utility providers, Union County Emergency Management, infrastructure owners and operators
Timeframe	2–3 years for assessment; 3–5 years for implementation

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

RESTORE & MAINTAIN LANDSCAPES (RL)

Landscapes across all jurisdictions are resilient to fire-related disturbances in accordance with objectives.

RL-1 Implement Strategic Fuel Breaks

Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, private landowners, fire protection districts
Timeframe	3–5 years for initial implementation; ongoing maintenance

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

RL-2 Reduce Hazardous Fuels in Community Protection Zones

Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, private forest owners, contractors
Timeframe	Ongoing, with annual implementation targets

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

RL-3 Enhance Forest Health and Resilience

Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, private forest owners, OSU Extension
Timeframe	Long-term, 5+ years, with ongoing implementation

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

RL-4 Expand Prescribed Fire Use

Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, fire protection districts, private landowners
Timeframe	3–5 years for program development; ongoing implementation

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

RL-5 Manage Post-Fire Recovery

Responsible Parties	ODF, USFS, BLM, Union County Emergency Management, NRCS
Timeframe	1–2 years for protocol development; implementation as needed

Score: _____ / 5	**Priority:** High / Med / Low	**Lead:** _____

Accomplishments / Notes:

Priority Actions for Next Year: _____

Part 3 — Sector-Specific Action Items

The following sector-specific MAIs are reviewed annually using a condensed format. Score each item, note the priority for next year, and add brief accomplishment notes in the right column.

FOREST & WOOD PRODUCTS (FOR&WP)

Protect forestry infrastructure and maintain timber utilization capacity.

MAI	Action Item	Score	Priority	Lead	Notes / Accomplishments
FOR&WP-1	Enhance Forest Industry Infrastructure Protection	__ /5	H / M / L	ODF / RFPDs	
FOR&WP-2	Develop Timber Salvage and Utilization Protocols	__ /5	H / M / L	ODF / USFS / BLM	

AGRICULTURE (AG)

Reduce wildfire impacts on agricultural operations and rangeland resources.

MAI	Action Item	Score	Priority	Lead	Notes / Accomplishments
AG-1	Enhance Agricultural Infrastructure Protection	__ /5	H / M / L	NRCS / OSU Extension / RFPDs	
AG-2	Develop Rangeland Fire Protection Strategies	__ /5	H / M / L	NRCS / ODF / BLM / Ranchers	

RECREATION (REC)

Protect recreation areas and maintain tourism sector resilience during wildfire.

MAI	Action Item	Score	Priority	Lead	Notes / Accomplishments
REC-1	Enhance Recreation Area Protection	__ /5	H / M / L	USFS / BLM / Oregon Parks / County	
REC-2	Develop Tourism Sector Resilience Program	__ /5	H / M / L	Chamber / County Economic Dev. / EM	

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE (T&I)

Protect critical transportation corridors and utility systems from wildfire impacts.

MAI	Action Item	Score	Priority	Lead	Notes / Accomplishments
T&I-1	Enhance Transportation Corridor Protection	__ /5	H / M / L	ODOT / County Road Dept. / Railroads	
T&I-2	Critical Utilities Protection Program	__ /5	H / M / L	Utility providers / County EM	

PUBLIC HEALTH & EDUCATION (PH&ED)

Enhance healthcare system and school preparedness for wildfire and smoke events.

MAI	Action Item	Score	Priority	Lead	Notes / Accomplishments
PH&ED-1	Healthcare System Wildfire Resilience	__ /5	H / M / L	Grande Ronde Hospital / County Public Health	
PH&ED-2	School System Wildfire Preparedness	__ /5	H / M / L	School districts / County EM / Fire agencies	

CROSS-CUTTING (XCUT)

Build countywide business and organizational continuity and wildfire resilience.

MAI	Action Item	Score	Priority	Lead	Notes / Accomplishments
XCUT-1	Business Continuity and Wildfire Resilience Planning	__ /5	H / M / L	County Economic Dev. / Chamber / EM / ODF	

Part 4 — Top Priorities for Next Year

Identify the top cross-cutting priorities for the coming year based on this review. These carry forward as the working agenda for the next annual cycle.

#	Priority Action	Lead Agency	MAI Ref.	Funding Target
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				

Part 5 — Review Certification

This annual review was conducted collaboratively with CWPP partner organizations. The participants listed on the cover page reviewed and contributed to this update.

CWPP Committee Lead — Northeast Oregon

Date: _____

Union County Emergency Manager

Date: _____

Part 6 — Additional Notes

[Additional narrative, upcoming grant opportunities, coordination needs, or observations not captured elsewhere in this review.]