

LA GRANDE – Protecting property from wildfire takes cooperation among agencies, companies and landowners. To provide the most cohesive fire response and prevention measures, Union County is looking to the public for help.

In April and May the county will host public meetings in La Grande, Elgin and Union to gather information on values at risk such as structures, infrastructures, timber, grazing pasture and agricultural crops and input regarding fuel treatment opportunities and participation to alter fire behavior in efforts to slow down wildfire spread.

The Union County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) was first written in 2005. Over the past year representatives from fire management agencies and emergency services have begun to identify ways to promote fire-adapted communities to enable people to live in a fire-prone environment; mitigate loss in the event of a wildland fire, looked at ways to increase the forest's resiliency and health, especially around homes, and looked into ways to improve safety for both fire fighters and the public.

Union County is leading the CWPP revision with assistance from Oregon Department of Forestry, Union County Emergency Services, Local Rural and City Fire Departments, U.S. Forest Service (Wallow-Whitman and Umatilla National Forests), Bureau of Land Management, and a representative from the Blue Mountain Cohesive Wildfire Strategy team.

Now the committee needs help from the community to ensure all values at risk, evacuation routes, bridges, roads, access/egress concerns, water sources are identified, and provide opportunities for the communities to take a role in fire prevention and protection efforts.

The meetings are scheduled as follows:

6 pm on April 21 at La Grande Fire Department, 1806 Cove Avenue,

6 pm on April 30 in Elgin at the Fire Hall,

6 pm on May 6th at Union City Hall