



SENATE BILL 762

BIANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2024





MISSION

To protect people, property, and the environment from fire and hazardous materials.

VALUES

Integrity, Dedication, Leadership, Partnerships, and Service to Others

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

Oregon Revised Statutes
Chapters 336, 453, 470, 476, 478, 479, 480

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BY THE NUMBERS

FIRE SEASON 2023



\$6 MILLION

2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant



1,515

Firefighters Added



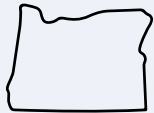
\$25 MILLION

Engine Program



76

Local Fire Agencies Receiving Apparatus



\$12.5 MILLION

2023 Mobilization Expenses



\$3 MILLION

Apprenticeship Program



DEFENSIBLE SPACE ASSESSMENTS

Total Assessments Completed:	611
Total Assessors:	254
Total Agencies:	54

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE & PRE-POSITIONING

2023 was the third year these tools were available to the OSFM and Oregon fire service

2023

Immediate Response: 16 mobilizations
Pre-positioning: 5 mobilizations

2022

Immediate Response: 12 mobilizations
Pre-positioning: 6 mobilizations

2021

Immediate Response: 9 mobilizations
Pre-positioning: 7 mobilizations

EDUCATION & OUTREACH



Facilitated **66** projects in **25** counties for community wildfire risk reduction investments



Coordinated work plans with **106** OSFM grant recipients



SENATE BILL 762 REPORT OVERVIEW

Statute requires the Oregon State Fire Marshal to provide the Oregon legislature with biannual reports to document work relating to 2021's Senate Bill 762 (ORS 476.398). Senate Bill 762 codified wildfire prevention, community risk reduction, and proactive emergency response tools for the OSFM.

This report provides status and financial updates for:

- **FIRE ADAPTED OREGON**
 - Community risk reduction and the establishment, administration, and enforcement of defensible space requirements.
- **RESPONSE READY OREGON**
 - Mobilizations, pre-positioning, immediate response, and conflagration costs.
- **MOBILIZATION COSTS**
 - Money expended during the year for fire suppression on wildland-urban interface lands.
- **STATE FIRE MARSHAL RECOMMENDATIONS**
 - Including but not limited to legislative action, current or future resource and funding needs for community risk reduction, and establishing, administering, or enforcing defensible space requirements.



FIRE ADAPTED OREGON PROGRAM UPDATES

Fire Adapted Oregon establishes strong, community-driven initiatives to enhance wildfire resilience. Special emphasis is given to people ranking high on the social vulnerability index and areas of our state in the wildland-urban interface. These programs, working together, represent Oregon's primary way to safeguard both people and property from wildfires, helping every Oregonian safeguard what they hold dear.



COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION

The OSFM created a Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program with agency directors from wildfire partner agencies and organizations working together to protect Oregonians. All partners are strategically designing programs and services to combat the current wildfire crisis in our state.

Membership includes the Oregon State Fire Marshal, Oregon Department of Forestry, Department of Consumer Business Services Building Codes Division and Division of Financial Regulation, Department of Land Conservation and Development, Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and Oregon State University. The group is creating a charter to formalize their partnership.

This group comes together to better serve Oregonians by:

- Reducing barriers to people who seek wildfire services.
- Providing all-encompassing solutions to wildfire in Oregon.
- Increasing communication between stakeholder agencies, leading to better overall experiences and service.

The OSFM's fire risk reduction specialists' work helps Oregonians increase their wildfire protection.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Continuing projects from strategic investments in 25 counties within 66 community wildfire risk preparedness plans.
- Coordinating work plans with 106 OSFM grant recipients and serving as local project liaisons.
- Assisting local partners with the Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program and other grant opportunities to support community wildfire risk reduction.
- Working with our Analytics & Intelligence Unit for data to inform decisions to best assist local counties, partners, and programs.
- Collaborating with partner agencies to address smoke impacts and serve vulnerable populations, including those who are houseless or in adult foster care facilities.
- Adapting to best fit the needs of Oregonians, partner agencies, and public and private organizations to provide the best local solutions.

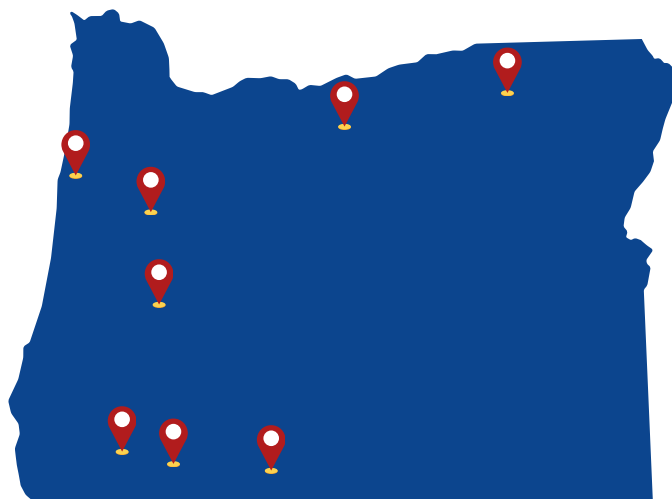
READ MORE



ASSOCIATION OF OREGON COUNTIES MEETINGS

OSFM Chief Deputy Claire McGrew and Assistant Chief Deputy Chad Hawkins attended nine Association of Oregon Counties meetings with the Oregon Department of Forestry and other partners.

OSFM leadership traveled across the state to educate, get feedback, and answer questions from all Oregonians on defensible space. The topics also included the defensible space standard code, timelines for adoption, and assessments and inspections.



 MEETING LOCATIONS

DEFENSIBLE SPACE PROGRAM

Since the program launched in June 2023, **611** homes and properties have been inspected, giving those receiving assessments the knowledge and tools to improve their defensible space and wildfire resiliency. The program has **254** fire service professionals representing **54** agencies trained to complete inspections around the state.

The OSFM trained partnering agencies using the same inspection tool and standards, leading to a consistent experience for Oregonians. During assessments, the OSFM and fire service agencies collect information to help determine how our agencies can best assist homeowners and property owners increase their wildfire resiliency.

In fall 2023, the OSFM rolled out a robust campaign to inform Oregonians about the free assessments provided by local fire service professionals, and how important defensible space is in protecting their homes and properties. Our agency hosted media availabilities around the state, created [a video](#), updated [our website](#), collaborated with partners, and advertised on TV, radio, and social media.

**BE SURE TO CHECK OUT
THE OSFM'S DEFENSIBLE
SPACE VIDEO.**

SCAN ME



RESPONSE READY OREGON PROGRAM UPDATES

The OSFM successfully tackled another challenging fire season in 2023 through Response Ready Oregon and funding from Senate Bill 762. 2023 was the third year the agency mobilized resources outside a conflagration through pre-positioning and immediate response. These programs keep fires small and away from communities, preventing large, costly wildfires.

- **Pre-positioning** places firefighting equipment and personnel in high-risk areas during brief periods of increased fire danger.
- **Immediate response** sends equipment and personnel to growing wildfires. The OSFM mobilizes the Oregon fire service structural task forces and, through collaboration with the Oregon Department of Forestry and federal agencies, firefighting aircraft like air tankers and helicopters. Immediate response protects our communities by minimizing catastrophic structural fires and wildfires, limiting costs to the state of Oregon.
- The \$3-million investment in the **Oregon State Fire Fighter Joint Apprenticeship Program** provided Klamath County Fire District No. 1 and Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue with apprentices to serve their communities. These two regions have experienced more wildfires in the past decades, increasing firefighter demand. This investment helps fill that need and provides highly-trained personnel to stop fires before they have a chance to grow and impact communities. While mitigating the firefighter shortage, this program strives for diversity and inclusivity in our fire service, echoing the communities we protect.
- The \$6-million **2023 Wildfire Season Staffing Grant** provided 1,515 firefighters and personnel around the state during the wildfire season. These extra firefighters allow fire agencies to respond to other calls, improving response times, and ultimately saving lives.
- The \$25-million **Engine Program** is moving forward. Apparatus went through final inspection in November 2023 and delivery to local agencies began in January. The OSFM hosted a webinar with training and program guidelines in January. Across Oregon, 76 local fire agencies were selected to receive a new type 3, type 6, or water tender to boost firefighting capacity.



RESPONSE READY OREGON MOBILIZATION COSTS

2023 CONFLAGRATIONS

- Hat Rock - Umatilla
- Mt. Hebron - Umatilla
- Golden - Klamath
- Lookout - Lane
- Tyee Ridge - Douglas
- Smith River Complex - Josephine
- Bensel Road - Umatilla

TOTAL: \$9.47 MILLION

FROM THE 2023 CONFLAGRATIONS

Structures threatened	6,322
Structures lost	127
Structures lost <i>after conflagration declared</i>	0
Est. value of saved homes	more than \$2.2 billion

PRE-POSITION

5 assignments

TOTAL: \$947,000

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

16 responses

TOTAL: \$2.1 MILLION



COMBINED TOTAL COST: \$12.5 MILLION

2023 WILDFIRE SEASON STAFFING GRANT SUCCESS STORIES

“

On August 23, a fire broke out in the dune grass at the north end of Surf Pines only 150 yards west of nearby homes. The fire was moving toward the homes. Thanks to the Oregon State Fire Marshal staffing grant, we had extra firefighters to extinguish the fire and provide coverage for our fire district during the call. Because of the additional staffing, we were able to keep this fire small at about one-tenth of an acre and away from the homes on Ocean Road.

-GEARHART VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT



“

Central Oregon was in a heat advisory with temperatures over 100 degrees all week. Jefferson County Fire and EMS decided to upstaff for wildland firefighting responses. On August 14 in the late afternoon, we were dispatched for a brush fire in a high-hazard area. The OSFM grant funds allowed us to upstaff and stop the fire. Because of the temperatures, topography, and fuel type, the fire had significant growth potential, but we were able to stop it at one acre.

-JEFFERSON FIRE AND EMS

“

Sutherlin Fire Department was awarded a Wildfire Season Staffing Grant from the Oregon State Fire Marshal as part of their Response Ready Initiative. Using this grant, we hired some of our volunteers to staff a brush rig 40 hours a week during the weekdays through September. We also staffed weekends during increased fire danger and events such as the Sutherlin Throwdown and Blackberry Festival. These extra staff allow us to quickly respond to wildland fires and stop them before they have a chance to grow into larger fires or conflagrations. They also greatly help our response to multiple calls as we are often dispatched to more than one call at the same time.

-SUTHERLIN FIRE DEPARTMENT



2023 WILDFIRE SEASON STAFFING GRANT SUCCESS STORIES

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We assisted Banks Fire District 13 with a residential fire that spread to surrounding timber off Highway 26. We sent a water tender with a paid full-time firefighter and a seasonal paid firefighter. Special thanks to the Oregon State Fire Marshal for approving the seasonal grant, allowing us to hire three additional firefighters to help increase staffing 10 hours per day, seven days a week.

-VERNONIA RURAL FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT



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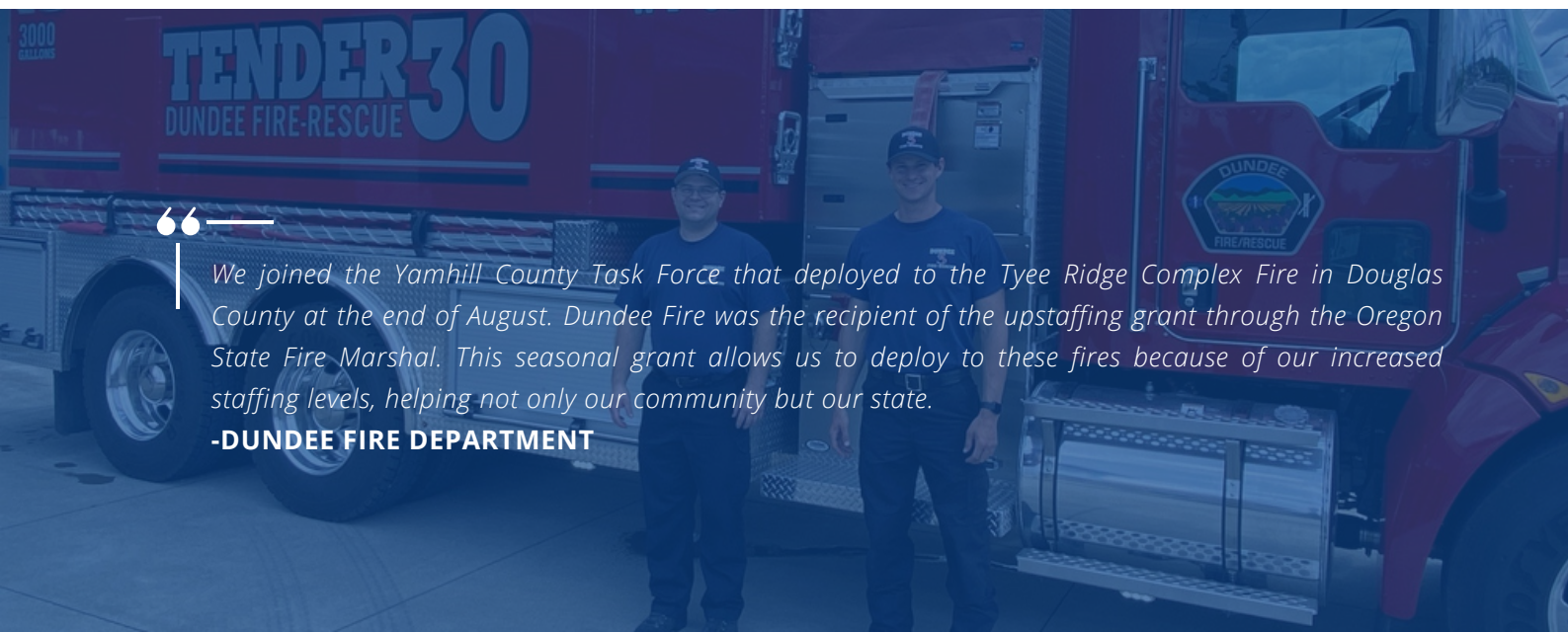
This summer we had a field fire at Fred Meyer. Two units were on scene within minutes, allowing us to quickly extinguish the fire and prevent it from spreading to nearby buildings. This was possible because of the Wildfire Season Staffing Grant from Oregon State Fire Marshal. These funds allowed us to staff a brush rig for 10 hours every day during fire season. Without this program, we would have only had one unit on scene to extinguish the flames while we had additional mutual aid resources respond. Thanks to the OSFM for this grant to help with the ever-demanding fire season.

-CORNELIUS FIRE DEPARTMENT

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We joined the Yamhill County Task Force that deployed to the Tye Ridge Complex Fire in Douglas County at the end of August. Dundee Fire was the recipient of the upstaffing grant through the Oregon State Fire Marshal. This seasonal grant allows us to deploy to these fires because of our increased staffing levels, helping not only our community but our state.

-DUNDEE FIRE DEPARTMENT



STATE FIRE MARSHAL RECOMMENDATIONS



Wildfire in Oregon is a crisis, wreaking havoc on our communities and landscapes. The causes are complex and diverse, requiring robust solutions from many partners. **The OSFM needs sustained funding to continue the successful programs built from Senate Bill 762.**

These programs brought communities together to increase their wildfire resiliency individually and as a whole. Extensive grant programs and increased emergency response, both apparatus and personnel, kept fires smaller than without these extra measures, saving our state millions of dollars.

The **Response Ready Oregon initiative** was created by the OSFM to boost capacity and modernize wildfire response within the Oregon fire service. The goal is to attack fires while they are small and keep them away from communities. Immediate response and pre-positioning are two tools under this initiative. During high-risk periods, these tools prevented multiple fires from rising to the level of a conflagration. Proactive, upfront investments for Immediate Response and Pre-positioning not only save the state money but protect our communities and people. Investment in these tools will be critical for the next fire season and years to come.

Through our **Fire Adapted Oregon initiative**, our Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Unit, grant funds, and defensible space program were impactful throughout the state. Emphasis was given to people ranking high on the social vulnerability index and areas in the wildland-urban interface, but no matter the location or population affected, we swiftly responded with the appropriate personnel and equipment to minimize impact. These programs create fire-resistant communities where people have the tools to protect themselves, paired with increased fire response services.

Ongoing financial support is paramount to realizing and maintaining the state's critical need for fire resilience. Only through a continued commitment to investment and collaboration Oregon forge ahead on its path to becoming a beacon of fire adaptation and community safety.



OREGON STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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