

News release



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Forestland classification process completed in Yamhill County

MCMINNVILLE, Ore. – A formal forestland classification project has been completed in Yamhill County that determined which lands are in need of protection from wildland fires. Lands classified as forestland are assessed for the costs of wildland fire protection. This process will net a more equitable distribution of costs associated with wildfire protection services.

Oregon Department of Forestry protects public and private forestland from wildfire across the state and provides this service in Yamhill County within the Forest Protection districts. Through the forestland classification process it was found that there are properties in Yamhill County that are not covered by current Forest Patrol Assessment but should be. Beginning in the fall of 2018, 1,284 tax lots will be added to the Yamhill County Forest Patrol Assessment rolls.

The classification was carried out by a six member Forestland Classification Committee. The committee members were representatives of the State Fire Marshal's Office, the Oregon Department of Forestry, the Oregon State Extension Office, and three landowners who were authorized and appointed by Yamhill County commissioners.

The Forestland Classification Committee was tasked with examining all lands within Yamhill County, and classifying those lands as either "forestland" or "not forestland." Classification decisions were based upon several factors, including fire risk potential, vegetation type (fire fuel), community structure, and proximity to other forestland.

The committee began holding regular public meetings in January 2016. The committee sometimes met in the field to verify classification decisions. Once draft classifications were made, Oregon Department of Forestry staff hosted five informational sessions throughout the county to provide the public an opportunity to learn more about the history, process and current status of the project. These sessions also provided a forum for interested members of the public to provide valuable input to the committee, which led to subsequent review of some draft classifications. In November 2017, a public hearing was held to allow landowners to provide written or oral testimony. In January 2018, the committee voted to consider all forestland classification decisions final.

For more information about the project, interested persons may go online to the forestland classification page on the Yamhill County assessor's website:

<http://www.co.yamhill.or.us/content/forestland-classification-review-committee> or the ODF Forest Grove District blog: fgdfire.com. Information may also be obtained by calling the Oregon Department of Forestry at these numbers:

- Forest Grove District Office: 503-357-2191
- Dallas Unit Office: 503-934-8146

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