##### *Preliminary Results – October 2012*

##### Wildland Fire Research Logo

****

##### Public Attitudes

##### Toward Wildfire

A Survey of Homeowners in

Central and South-Central Oregon

**Principle Investigator:**

Christine Olsen

**Student Researchers:**

Suman Pant

Larry Ruiz

Abbie Sigmon

Ashley Tucker



 **School of Public Policy**

 **300 Gilkey Hall**

 **Oregon State University**

 **Corvallis, Oregon 97331-6206**

 **541-737-2811**

The following are results for the Public Attitudes Toward Wildfire Survey conducted between July 2012 and September 2012. The survey was administered to a stratified random sample of 1,704 WUI households in Central and South-Central Oregon. Recipients were asked to respond to a variety of questions associated wildfire, wildfire risk, wildfire management, and experience with wildfire.

Preliminary findings for most questions are detailed below. Due to rounding, percentages may total between 99% and 101%. Also, open ended questions were omitted from the results.

Sample Size: 1,704

Returned Surveys: 532

Response Rate: 31%

**Section 1**

In this first section of the survey we ask some general questions about interests in, activities relating to, and knowledge of wildfire issues in Central Oregon.

**Q-1.** Wildfire may create concerns for some people. Please indicate how concerned you are about the following possible effects of wildfire in Central Oregon.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Not a concern | Slight concern | Moderate concern | Great concern |
| Damage to your private property | **17.9%** | **24.2%** | **26.5%** | **31.3%** |
| Lost or diminished recreational opportunities | **9.8%** | **20.0%** | **36.8%** | **33.3%** |
| Loss of wildlife and fish habitat | **4.4%** | **15.3%** | **33.6%** | **46.7%** |
| Uncontrolled and high severity wildfires | **4.2%** | **10.6%** | **27.3%** | **57.9%** |
| Economic loss of useable timber on public land | **8.1%** | **21.0%** | **31.3%** | **39.6%** |
| Overall reduced scenic quality | **7.5%** | **17.9%** | **35.8%** | **38.7%** |
| Increased levels of smoke | **6.1%** | **18.2%** | **30.2%** | **45.3%** |

**Q-2.** Considering the forests closest to your home, in your opinion, **what is the chance of wildfire** of any severity in the next 5 years?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Percent Chance | Respondent Average |
| 0% | **1.0%** |
| 10% | **4.6%** |
| 20% | **4.6%** |
| 30% | **5.1%** |
| 40% | **3.4%** |
| 50% | **15.8%** |
| 60% | **6.3%** |
| 70% | **8.8%** |
| 80% | **10.5%** |
| 90% | **10.5%** |
| 100% | **19.4%** |
| Don’t know | **10.1%** |

**Q-3.** If a wildfire were to occur in the forests closet to your home, in your opinion, what is the chance it would damage your property or home?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Percent Chance | Respondent Average |
| 0% | **19.3%** |
| 10% | **21.2%** |
| 20% | **11.8%** |
| 30% | **6.9%** |
| 40% | **3.2%** |
| 50% | **13.9%** |
| 60% | **4.0%** |
| 70% | **3.6%** |
| 80% | **3.2%** |
| 90% | **2.3%** |
| 100% | **4.6%** |
| Don’t know | **5.9%** |

**The following questions ask about specific practices resource managers use to reduce flammable fuels and the risk of wildfire in public forests and rangelands. The terms used are:**

 **Prescribed fire:** also called controlled burning, this practice involves intentionally setting ground fires to reduce forest fuels like grass, brush, and small trees.

 **Monitoring and managing wildfire:** formerly called “let burn,” this practice involves managing some wildfires by monitoring them and allowing them to burn in a way that achieves ecological objectives without undue risk of loss to property and life. This in in contrast to a wildfire that is automatically suppressed.

 **Thinning:** using chainsaws or other machinery to reduce the number of small trees where they are so dense they increase the risk of wildfires.

**Q-4.** What is your opinion of using the following practices to reduce flammable fuels and the risk of high severity wildfire on public lands (e.g. National Forests)?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Totally Unacceptable | Somewhat Unacceptable | Neutral | Somewhat Acceptable | Totally Acceptable | Don’tKnow |
| Prescribed fire: |
| -- around neighborhoods | **19.4%** | **15.6%** | **10.9%** | **25.7%** | **26.1%** | **2.3%** |
| -- in remote forest areas | **7.7%** | **7.5%** | **6.5%** | **21.3%** | **55.7%** | **1.3%** |
| Monitoring and managing wildfire: |
| -- around neighborhoods | **30.6%** | **17.3%** | **10.3%** | **15.6%** | **24.7%** | **1.5%** |
| -- In remote forest areas | **8.4%** | **9.5%** | **7.6%** | **25.8%** | **46.9%** | **1.7%** |
| Thinning:  |
| -- around neighborhoods | **5.3%** | **2.5%** | **5.1%** | **15.7%** | **70.3%** | **1.1%** |
| -- In remote forest areas | **4.8%** | **3.4%** | **8.2%** | **15.6%** | **66.9%** | **1.1%** |

**Q-5.** The use of **prescribed fire** and **monitoring and managing wildfire** may create concerns for some people. Please indicate how concerned you are about the following possible effects for both prescribed fire and monitoring and managing wildfire in Central Oregon.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Prescribed Fire** | **Monitoring and Managing Wildfire** |
|  | Not a concern | Slight Concern | Moderate Concern | Great Concern | Not a Concern | Slight Concern | Moderate Concern | Great Concern |
| Damage to private property | **16.9%** | **33.6%** | **29.6%** | **20.0%** | **10.5%** | **26.4%** | **32.0%** | **31.1%** |
| Loss or diminished recreational opportunities | **23.9%** | **31.2%** | **28.9%** | **16.0%** | **15.6%** | **26.2%** | **32.9%** | **25.2%** |
| Loss of wildlife and fish habitat | **14.3%** | **30.0%** | **30.2%** | **25.4%** | **8.3%** | **24.2%** | **33.1%** | **34.4%** |
| Risk of fire getting out of control | **4.3%** | **20.3%** | **34.8%** | **40.6%** | **3.8%** | **14.6%** | **29.6%** | **52.0%** |
| Economic loss of useable timber | **21.2%** | **30.2%** | **24.4%** | **24.2%** | **13.5%** | **28.2%** | **27.3%** | **31.0%** |
| Reduced scenic quality | **17.1%** | **32.2%** | **31.4%** | **19.3%** | **13.9%** | **26.3%** | **33.0%** | **26.7%** |
| Increased levels of smoke | **10.4%** | **25.9%** | **30.1%** | **33.6%** | **9.0%** | **24.3%** | **27.6%** | **39.1%** |

**Q-6.** What is your opinion about **smoke from prescribed fire** and **monitoring and managing wildfire**?

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neutral | Somewhat Agree | Strongly Agree |
| I am not concerned about smoke | **33.3%** | **26.5%** | **14.6%** | **17.3%** | **8.4%** |
| I think smoke levels are managed acceptably | **13.1%** | **22.4%** | **23.4%** | **29.5%** | **11.7%** |
| Smoke is acceptable if it results in healthier forests | **10.3%** | **15.4%** | **17.0%** | **33.1%** | **24.2%** |
| I worry about the effects on my personal or family health | **13.7%** | **11.2%** | **23.7%** | **28.8%** | **22.6%** |
| I worry about the effects of smoke on travel safety | **12.0%** | **13.4%** | **30.2%** | **31.0%** | **13.4%** |

**Q-7.** Within the **last five years**, have any of the following occurred on your property or nearby **public or** **private lands**?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| A wildfire occurred… | **Yes** | **No** | **Don’t know** |
|  on my property | **2.0%** | **97.2%** | **0.8%** |
|  in my neighborhood | **13.8%** | **84.1%** | **2.2%** |
|  just outside my neighborhood | **25.6%** | **70.0%** | **4.4%** |
|  lands within several miles of me | **64.3%** | **31.4%** | **4.3%** |
|  on lands within my watershed | **50.9%** | **27.1%** | **22.0%** |
|  |  |  |  |
| A controlled burn or prescribed fire occurred… |  |  |  |
|  on my property | **3.2%** | **94.7%** | **2.2%** |
|  in my neighborhood | **5.3%** | **90.3%** | **4.3%** |
|  just outside my neighborhood | **19.8%** | **71.3%** | **8.8%** |
|  lands within several miles of me | **60.6%** | **25.2%** | **14.2%** |
|  on lands within my watershed | **47.9%** | **22.3%** | **29.7%** |
|  |  |  |  |
| A tree insect infestation or tree disease outbreak occurred… |  |  |  |
|  on my property | **13.5%** | **77.3%** | **9.2%** |
|  in my neighborhood | **18.4%** | **63.9%** | **17.6%** |
|  just outside my neighborhood | **20.3%** | **53.0%** | **26.8%** |
|  lands within several miles of me | **44.2%** | **22.4%** | **33.5%** |
|  on lands within my watershed | **41.7%** | **14.7%** | **43.6%** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Invasive plant species became established… |  |  |  |
|  on my property | **21.3%** | **67.9%** | **10.8%** |
|  in my neighborhood | **43.1%** | **33.3%** | **23.7%** |
|  just outside my neighborhood | **47.0%** | **16.9%** | **36.0%** |
|  lands within several miles of me | **52.5%** | **8.3%** | **39.3%** |
|  on lands within my watershed | **46.1%** | **7.6%** | **46.3%** |
|  |  |  |  |

**Q-8.** “**Firewise” activities** include planting fire-resistant plants, using non-flammable construction materials, pruning branches within 85 feet of your house, reducing the density of trees within 100 feet of the residence, as well as other activities to reduce fire risk near a home. Within the last five years, have you completed any “firewise” activities in the immediate vicinity of the residence?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Yes** | **74.1%** |
| **No** | **25.9%** |

**Q-9.** Now we would like to ask some more detailed questions about “firewise” activities and other actions for mitigating wildfire risk. Please indicate if you have participated in any of these activities or not in the last 5 years by circling “yes” or “no.” If you did participate in the activity (answered “yes,”) please indicate the possible reason(s) you did.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Participated?** | Reduces my risk | Required by state,county, neighbor-hood | Required by insurance | Received financial assistance to participate | Like the way it looks | Neighbor participated |
| ***General planning:***  | **Yes** **No**  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prepare an evacuation plan for your home in case of wildfire | **Yes 42.5%****No 57.5%** | **40.0%****60.0%** | **2.8%****97.2%** | **1.9%****98.1%** | **0.2%****99.8%** | **4.8%****95.2%** | **2.7%****97.3%** |
|  Consider weather reports (e.g. moisture conditions) when planning recreational activities that involved fire (e.g. campfires, fireworks) | **Yes 76.3%****No 23.7%** | **62.8%****37.2%** | **16.9%****83.1%** | **0.6%****99.4%** | **0%****100%** | **2.1%****97.9%** | **2.5%****97.5%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Community activities:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Attend community-based meetings related to wildfires | **Yes 14.3%****No 85.7%** | **12.4%****87.6%** | **1.5%****98.5%** | **0.4%****99.6%** | **0.2%****99.8%** | **1.3%****98.7%** | **4.8%****95.2%** |
| Obtain information from a land management, community group or firefighting agency on how to prepare for wildfire | **Yes 40.1%****No 59.9%** | **32.8%****67.2%** | **4.9%****95.1%** | **0.9%****99.1%** | **0%****100%** | **2.5%****97.5%** | **4.4%****95.6%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Property protection activities:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Plant fire-resistant plants | **Yes 33.7%****No 66.3%** | **28.1%****71.9%** | **3.0%****97.0%** | **0.9%****99.1%** | **0.2%****99.8%** | **10.8%****89.2%** | **2.5%****97.5%** |
|  Plant trees and shrubs at least 15 feet apart | **Yes 38.4%****No 61.6%** | **24.7%****75.3%** | **2.5%****97.5%** | **0%****100%** | **0.2%****99.8%** | **10.4%****89.6%** | **1.9%****98.1%** |
| Prune the branches of trees within 85 feet of your home | **Yes 65.0%****No 35.0%** | **47.7%****52.3%** | **3.8%****96.2%** | **1.1%****98.9%** | **0.6%****99.4%** | **19.4%****80.6%** | **2.3%****97.7%** |
| Reduce the density of trees within 100 feet of your home | **Yes 52.4%****No 47.6%** | **40.6%****59.4%** | **4.0%****96.0%** | **0.4%****99.6%** | **0.8%****99.2%** | **13.7%****86.3%** | **3.2%****96.8%** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Home protection activities:*** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Clean roof surfaces/gutters and surrounding vegetation to avoid accumulation of needles, leaves, and dead plants | **Yes 84.1%****No 15.9%** | **60.2%****39.8%** | **4.0%****96.0%** | **0.4%****99.6%** | **0.2%****99.8%** | **22.6%****77.4%** | **1.5%****98.5%** |
|  Stack firewood/lumber at least 30 feet from the home | **Yes 54.0%****No 46.0%** | **37.7%****62.3%** | **2.3%****97.7%** | **0.2%****99.8%** | **0%****100%** | **8.4%****91.6%** | **0.8%****99.2%** |
|  Use nonflammable building materials such as tile, slate, stone, etc. | **Yes 53.5%****No 46.5%** | **38.2%****61.8%** | **2.7%****97.3%** | **2.3%****97.7%** | **0%****100%** | **15.3%****84.7%** | **1.3%****98.7%** |

**Q-10.** Who do you receive information from, talk with, or seek advice from about actions on your property for reducing fire risk, or making changes to your home to improve fire safety? For each person/group listed below, indicate if/how you interact with this person. Use the blank spaces to add others we may have missed. If you need more space, please use the end of the survey. One example has been completed for you.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Person/Group | Do you talk with or seek advice or receive assistance from this person/group?  | How **frequently**? | How much do you **trust** the information you get from this person/group? | How **important** is the information you get from this person/group to your decision? |
| Never | Occasionally | Often | Frequently | None | Limited | Moderate | Full | Not | Slightly | Moderately | Very |
|  | No | Yes |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Family member** | 62.3% | 37.7% | 14.6% | 53.7% | 20.0% | 11.7% | 3.8% | 5.5% | 28.0% | 62.6% | 6.8% | 10.8% | 39.8% | 42.6% |
| **Neighbor**  | 70.1% | 29.9% | 18.3% | 64.5% | 14.2% | 3.0% | 6.1% | 15.0% | 50.3% | 28.6% | 9.7% | 25.7% | 44.4% | 20.1% |
| **Neighborhood association** | 73.0% | 27.0% | 25.3% | 56.6% | 12.0% | 6.0% | 15.9% | 13.8% | 42.1% | 28.3% | 17.0% | 24.8% | 37.6% | 20.6% |
| **Local fire department** | 53.9% | 46.1% | 12.4% | 72.2% | 7.5% | 7.9% | 4.0% | 4.0% | 11.2% | 80.7% | 5.0% | 6.4% | 20.2% | 68.3% |
| **Local fire awareness group (Project Wildfire, Firefree, etc.)** | 76.4% | 23.6% | 27.3% | 56.6% | 8.4% | 7.7% | 12.6% | 6.3% | 18.1% | 63.0% | 13.6% | 5.6% | 31.2% | 49.6% |
| **Local collaborative group (Lakeview Stewardship Group, etc.)** | 97.2% | 2.8% | 80.6% | 12.9% | 4.8% | 1.6% | 52.3% | 9.1% | 11.4% | 27.3% | 54.8% | 11.9% | 16.7% | 16.7% |
| **City or county government** | 78.2% | 21.8% | 28.9% | 63.7% | 5.9% | 1.5% | 13.4% | 17.6% | 31.1% | 37.8% | 16.9% | 18.6% | 32.2% | 32.2% |
| **University extension agent** | 92.5% | 7.5% | 56.1% | 35.4% | 4.9% | 3.7% | 25.8% | 16.7% | 19.7% | 37.9% | 30.2% | 14.3% | 20.6% | 34.9% |
| **Oregon Department of Forestry** | 77.6% | 22.4% | 28.6% | 55.0% | 12.1% | 4.3% | 12.9% | 8.1% | 21.8% | 57.3% | 13.9% | 12.3% | 21.3% | 52.5% |
| **Natural Resources Conservation Service (Soil Conservation Service)** | 97.2% | 2.8% | 79.4% | 16.2% | 4.4% | 0% | 49.0% | 12.2% | 16.3% | 22.4% | 51.1% | 14.9% | 14.9% | 19.1% |
| **The Nature Conservancy** | 94.9% | 5.1% | 63.6% | 33.8% | 1.3% | 1.3% | 44.3% | 13.1% | 13.1% | 29.5% | 46.6% | 17.2% | 13.8% | 22.4% |
| **U.S. Forest Service** | 67.1% | 32.9% | 17.6% | 61.5% | 12.3% | 8.6% | 9.5% | 3.0% | 28.4% | 59.2% | 9.4% | 10.6% | 29.4% | 50.6% |
| **Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Other:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

 **Section 2**

The final section of the survey asks a few concluding questions to check to see if our survey is representative of all types of people.

**Q-11.** Is the property this survey is addressed to your permanent or seasonal/vacation home?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Permanent Residence** | **98.1%** |
| **Seasonal/vacation home** | **1.9%** |

**Q-12.** How long have you lived in Central Oregon?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Live in Central Oregon** | **96.7%** | **Mean: 20.77 years** |
| **Don’t live in Central Oregon** | **3.3%** | **---** |

**Q-13.** How long have you lived in this Central Oregon residence?

***Mean:* 13.80 years**

**Q-14.** How much land do you have at this Central Oregon address?

***Mean:* 9.98 acres**

**Q-15.** Do you own or rent this property?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Own** | **90.6%** |
| **Rent** | **9.4%** |

**Q-15a.** In what year did you become the owner of this home?

***Mean:*** 1998

**Q-15b.** How did you acquire this home?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Purchased from a stranger** | **66.4%** |
| **Purchased from a friend/acquaintance**  | **6.9%** |
| **Purchased from a family member or inherited** | **3.9%** |
| **Received as a gift/inherited** | **0.6%** |
| **Other** | **22.1%** |

**Q-15c.** Which of the following factors (if any) influenced your decision to become a homeowner in Central Oregon?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Natural amenities** | **75.9%** | **24.1%** |
| **Recreation opportunities** | **65.2%** | **34.8%** |
| **Employment opportunities** | **36.5%** | **63.5%** |
| **Cost of land relative to elsewhere** | **25.2%** | **74.8%** |
| **For timber, agriculture, or ranching opportunities** | **5.2%** | **94.8%** |
| **Land investment opportunities** | **10.3%** | **89.7%** |
| **I’ve always lived here** | **12.0%** | **88.0%** |
| **Family landholding** | **3.9%** | **96.1%** |
| **To be near family** | **27.6%** | **72.4%** |
| **Other** | **10.9%** | **89.1%** |

**Q-16.**  Is the neighboring property developed with a structure or undeveloped?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Developed with a structure** | **85.3%** |
| **Undeveloped** | **8.4%** |
| **Both** | **6.3%** |

**Q-17.** Does your homeowners’ association or subdivision have rules about landscaping or building materials in your area to help protect against fires?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Yes** | **31.8%** |
| **No** | **28.0%** |
| **Don’t Know** | **16.5%** |
| **I don’t live in a homeowners’ association** | **23.6%** |

**Q-18.** How close is your home in Central Oregon to a wildland area (either forest or rangeland)?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Live within a wildland area** | **11.1%** |
| **Adjacent to a wildland area** | **13.5%** |
| **Between 100 and 300 yards** | **5.6%** |
| **More than 300 yards but less than 1 mile** | **14.9%** |
| **Between 1 and 3 miles** | **26.2%** |
| **More than 3 miles** | **28.8%** |

**Q-19.** Were you evacuated (voluntary or mandatory) due to wildfire in the past five years?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Yes** | **2.3%** |
| **No** | **97.7%** |

**Q-20.** What is your age?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Mean*** | **59.75** |

**Q-21.** Please indicate your gender?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Male** | **53.3%** |
| **Female** | **46.7%** |

**Q-22.** What is the highest level of education you have completed?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Junior high school or less**  | **0.2%** |
| **Some high school** | **0.8%** |
| **High School or GED** | **16.5%** |
| **Associate’s degree, technical school or some college** | **35.2%** |
| **Bachelor’s degree** | **25.6%** |
| **Master’s, doctoral, or professional degree** | **21.7%** |

**Q-23.** Do you or anyone in your family rely on any of the following for income?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Natural Resources** | **10.7%** | **89.3%** |
| **Agriculture** | **7.5%** | **92.5%** |
| **Service-based industry** | **17.6%** | **82.4%** |
| **Recreation** | **5.5%** | **94.5%** |

**Q-24.** What is your annual household income before taxes?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Less than $15,000** | **7.0%** |
| **$15,000 to $24,999** | **9.6%** |
| **$25,000 to $49,999** | **20.4%** |
| **$50,000 to $74,999** | **24.1%** |
| **$75,000 to $99,999** | **18.2%** |
| **$100,000 or more** | **20.8%** |

**Q-25.** Does anyone in your household suffer from a respiratory ailment?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Yes** | **29.1%** |
| **No** | **70.9%** |