



# FIRE ADAPTED COMMUNITIES LEARNING NETWORK

## Southern Oregon Middle-School Students Get Wise to Fire

April-May 2015

### Notes from the Field

**Students at Ruch School in Jacksonville, Oregon learned about becoming better adapted to fire and created a Firewise demonstration site at their school.**

#### The Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative

(SOFRC), Bureau of Land Management, Applegate Fire District 9 and Ruch School middle-schoolers came together this spring to help get their community ready for fire season.

**Students learned about fire science**, fire behavior, fire adapted ecosystems and communities, and the three zones that make up a defensible space. Then they put what they learned into practice—they assessed their own school, then helped make it a Firewise demonstration site. The work included planting fire resistant plants and clearing fuels on the school grounds, as well as installing signs to explain defensible space. Students then went to their own homes to assess them for potential fire hazards.

#### Beyond the School

**Students also nominated** vulnerable members of the community to receive assistance from Oregon Department of Forestry crews to do fuel reduction work around their homes.

**For more information** about this project, contact:

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For more about the FAC Learning Network, visit:

<http://facnetwork.org/>

The work was highlighted as part of May 2 National Wildfire Community Preparedness Day activities

**A \$500 Firewise grant** for community projects offered by the National Fire Protection Association sponsored by State Farm—one of just 65 awarded nationwide—provided funding for this project. Other support came from Plant Oregon and community members, who donated plants, and Advanced Landscape Services donated mulch.

**Local media** covered the students' work—one such story is at <http://www.mailtribune.com/article/20150421/NEWS/150429930/0/>.

**The Applegate Fire District** has since reported increased calls from the public for help with clean up around their homes—the students really helped to raise community awareness and spur action.

*From top:* Students cleared brush and ladder fuels from wooded areas of the school yard. They installed signs to explain landscaping choices in the three zones of defensible space. A sign near the school entrance gives an overview of its new landscape. *Photos: SOFRC*



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