

# **BUTTE FALLS COMMUNITY FOREST PROJECT**



## **Declaration of Cooperation**

Oregon Solutions  
September 2022

## Preface

In June 2019, Governor Kate Brown designated the Butte Falls Community Forest as an Oregon Solutions project following a request initiated by city of Butte Falls. The Governor designated Mayor Linda Spencer (City of Butte Falls) and Bill Thorndike (Medford Fabrication) as co-convenors of the project; and, Oregon Solutions formed a project team of more than 20 members including key stakeholders, local community leaders, state and federal agency staff, academics, and regional nonprofit representatives.

## Purpose of the Declaration of Cooperation

The Declaration of Cooperation (DoC) outlines the collective commitments and actions of the Butte Falls Community Forest Project. It is designed to align resources and provide a framework to support the ownership, management, and future stewardship of the Community Forest. This process will largely define the long-term governance structure, as well as potential new and ongoing strategies the city of Butte Falls may pursue to achieve the goals for the Community Forest. Some of these areas of accountability and responsibility will reside in this document; more will be captured in future intergovernmental agreements, MOUs, MOAs, contracts and related documents. Working in concert, the Declaration of Cooperation, Action Plan, and Forest Management Plan will provide the residents and the government of the city of Butte Falls – and their partners – a framework to work together to manage and maintain the Community Forest over time.

## The Butte Falls Community Forest Project

The Butte Falls Community Forest Project Team was formed to collaboratively create a new stewardship approach for 400 acres of newly acquired forestlands that surround the city of Butte Falls, which was previously privately owned. The approach offers a model for rural, remote communities to manage their own local forests to simultaneously improve fire resilience, support a sustainable economy, and expand forestry research and knowledge.

To project team was guided by the following purpose statement:

*“To create the Butte Falls Community Forest, this team will work to support 1) community forest management and restoration, 2) education and research, 3) community economic health and process, 4) recreation and 5) funding. It is expected that the creation of an Oregon Solutions Team for this project will help make efficient use of available resources, accelerate the pace of the project, overcome potential impediments early on, raise awareness of the project on a statewide level and bring effective partners to the table.”*

To best approach its work, the project team organized itself into a steering team and four subcommittees. Project partners provided diverse ideas and input along with technical expertise. They met six times as a full group, and more as subcommittees, throughout the duration of current phase, to review work products and provide assistance for the community from June 2020 to April 2022.

# **BUTTE FALLS COMMUNITY FOREST GOALS**

## **Forest Resilience**

To protect the town, the adjacent forest, and waterways from increasing fire threat, the community forest will adopt resilient practices, restoration efforts, and all-lands partnerships approach to holistic forest management, in addition to working with partners to coordinate around collaborative fire planning that involves engaging local landowners, prescribed burning, and monitoring for invasive species. The use of restoration efforts will help return the forest to a healthy state, protect and enhance adjacent water resources and soil productivity, as well as promote climate resilience through carbon sequestration. The forest management will be integrated with public access and recreation planning to strategically use trails and others considerations as fuel breaks and fire mitigation approaches. Through the implementation and adaptive management approach, the city will regularly review management strategies and outcomes in order to achieve the community forest goals and to develop a long-range stewardship ethic.

## **Community Building and Engagement**

To build community and continue to engage local residents through shared decision-making about management of the forest, the city will use the community forest to raise and enhance awareness about the value and opportunities to support and steward the land.

## **Public Access and Recreation**

To promote and enhance local infrastructure, ensure safe access to forests, the falls and other community assets, and to improve the health of the community, the city will require a public access and recreation plan for the community forest and the development of multi-use trails.

## **Economic Health and Development**

To promote economic opportunities, the city and other partners will work to manage the community forest with an aim to provide local jobs, community and regional workforce development opportunities, engagement for local businesses, and overall community growth through an overarching economic development strategy for the city.

## **Education and Research**

To expand educational opportunities through the community forest, the property will be used as an outdoor classroom and land lab, in cooperation with local schools and other regional schools and universities for field trips, development of forestry education programming, and research opportunities. Engaging youth in the understanding, connection and enhancement of the community forest for future generational impacts will be critical.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM 2019-2022

- The city of Butte Falls, Trust for Public Land, and Weyerhaeuser secured and entered an option agreement that signaled willingness to work with each other and support the project. During the course of the Oregon Solutions engagement, a property sale occurred to transfer ownership holding from Weyerhaeuser to Chinook Forest Management who continued to honor the option agreement.
- In 2020, The Ford Family Foundation contributed \$16,680 to the city of Butte Falls to cover matching costs for the Oregon Solutions facilitation and process support.
- \$1,150,000 was raised for the purchase of the 400 acres of timberland property. Contributions came from the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest program (\$400,000), the Oregon State Legislature (\$700,000), the Oregon Community Foundation's Doris Duke Resilient Landscape Program (\$40,000), the Medford Water Commission (\$6,000), and Gordon Elwood Foundation (\$5,000).
- In June 2020, the city began hosting monthly Forest Chats for members of the public to meet in Butte Falls and discuss various topics about the community forest project. These Forest Chats still regularly occur.
- In July 2020, the city established a governance structure for the community forest, instituted as the Community Forest Commission. The Commission is intended to act as an advisory body to the City Council on all issues related to the community forest, actively hear citizen needs and concerns, publicize information regarding forest activities to the general public, oversee management decisions, budget, program planning, and grant writing for various sectors the community forest.
- In January 2021, the city of Butte Falls initiated the FIREWISE certification process. It is on track to be completed by the spring of 2022. Early implementation fuels reduction planning has already started.
- An independent contractor from Cascade Siskiyou Forestry was hired by the city and Trust for Public Land, with funds and direction provided by the USFS Community Forest Program, to develop a Community Forest Management Plan with collaborative review and input from project partners. The plan was approved by the Butte Falls Community Forest Commission and Town Council in the fall of 2021.
- In spring 2021, the city created a public-facing, municipal website to display town history, news and events, community forest project information, and public engagement opportunities.
- In the winter of 2021, a draft conceptual trail plan for the property was developed by the Bureau of Land Management Medford District, with collaborative review and input from project partners.
- In November 2021, Cecil Bailey and Ruby Edwards donated \$23,250 towards the operational needs of the community forest, with a preference for projects involving children.
- In December 2021, the city created a municipal community forest manager position within its Public Works Department, and committed funding to hire a local resident to fill this position.

- The Gordon Elwood Foundation contributed funds to the Trust for Public Land to allow the city to hire a contractor to work as the community forest administrator and support the Community Forest Manager in the implementation of the Forest Management Plan.
- In winter 2022, The Ford Family Foundation contributed \$2,500 to A Greater Applegate to support the city’s community-building and engagement efforts oriented around the community forest.
- In January 2022, the National Park Service’s Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance program confirmed it would provide technical assistance to the city, with funding support from FEMA, to facilitate a community engagement and planning process around public access and recreation for the community forest. This ancillary plan will supplement and integrate with the Forest Management Plan.

## **DECLARATION OF COOPERATION**

*This Declaration of Cooperation, while not a binding legal contract, is evidence to and a statement of the good faith and commitment of the undersigned parties to meet the spirit and goals of the project through individual and collective action.*

In order to achieve the goals and purpose statement for the Butte Falls Community Forest project, all project partners commit to fulfilling any commitments we have made as individuals or organizations. As such, all signees pledge to:

- Seek to provide administrative, financial, and technical resources to local collaborative partnerships to build trust, set priorities, seize emerging opportunities and otherwise help identify the most efficient, effective and pragmatic means to implement and sustain the vision of the community forest.
- Mutually support the leveraging of resources needed for implementation, operation and maintenance of the community forest through the Forest Management Plan as appropriate given each stakeholder’s resources, expertise, and mission.
- Advocate for and identify specific opportunities for linking fire resiliency and ecological health, recreational opportunity, educational enhancement and economic development.
- Provide strategic technical assistance to other partners as needed and available.
- Link local collaborative partnerships to outside technical expertise as needed.
- Continuously seek to identify other stakeholders that should be considered for participating in the on-going project’s future phases.

**City of Butte Falls** (*Trish Callahan, Mayor*)

- Maintain the Community Forest Commission for ongoing management and operations of the forest.
- Maintain the internal municipal position of forest manager within the Public Works Department and fund it part-time and semi-seasonal for the first five years.
- The city and relevant staff will participate in local and statewide fire planning efforts and as such, have committed to ongoing participation as a certified FIREWISE community and completing associated fuels reduction work.
- Will identifying regional partnerships to share a long-term stewardship vision and help provide regular volunteer and monitoring efforts. In addition to maintaining public listening sessions, regular Forest Chats, and Community Forest Commission engagement, the city will work with partners to develop a community-wide program to enhance the community's awareness of the value of the community forest and forest management.
- Maintain public outreach, engagement and information sharing through the use of the municipal website and relevant social media accounts.
- Over the course of the next five-years, the city of Butte Falls will work in partnership to identify long-term funding sources relative to the ongoing management of the community forest, recreation development and maintenance, expanding the cemetery, and/or railroad project.
- Maintain effective open and transparent communications including a website, social media, and regularly scheduled governance meetings.
- Promote and encourage the formation of local collaborative partnerships.
- Provide a neutral forum to work directly with local partners in facilitating their interests and commitments in the implementation of the FMP.

**A Greater Applegate/The Ford Family Foundation** (*Seth Kaplan, AGA Executive Director*)

- Work with the City of Butte Falls to develop strategies and processes to increase community awareness about the value of the community forest and forest management.
- Ensure appropriate community engagement in the Community Forest Commission, particularly with harder to reach members of the community.
- Work with the city to develop policies and strategies to ensure optimum community volunteerism and other resident engagement.
- Help the town develop a position description for a Community Forest Coordinator position and seek funding for it.
- Support the town's capacity to work with and engage all aspects of the community to participate in a recreation plan.

**Bureau of Land Management** (*Jared Nichol, Medford District Field Manager*)

As appropriations and legal authorities allow:

- Continue to engage in collaborative recreation planning.
- Continue to explore opportunities and support planning to connect trails from the Community Forest with the adjacent BLM property to the north for future recreational partnership.
- Assist in contributing collaborative trail maintenance on BLM lands by providing equipment and training.

- Provide GIS mapping support.
- Work with the Natural Resources Center to engage students when and where possible in the trail planning process to provide educational opportunities to highlight tools and technology.

**Business Oregon** (*Marta Tarantsey, Regional Development Team Officer*)

- Will assist the city in identifying sources of state funding for public infrastructure.
- In collaboration with the Governor’s Regional Solutions Team, Business Oregon will also actively work with businesses, and support public and private development opportunities that arise in connection with the community forest. Business Oregon will continue engaging the community and businesses in economic conversations, help the town’s Economic Committee moving forward, and help connect existing and future businesses with loan programs.

**Jackson Soil & Water Conservation District** (*Clint Nichols, Natural Resource Planner*)

- Will include the Butte Falls Community Forest and the City of Butte Falls in collaborative, regional wildfire mitigation, and resilience planning. When and where possible, the JSWCD will help seek funding for some of the post-purchase fuels management and forest health work through the Conservation Assistance Program and/or other grants.

**Lone Rock Timber Company** (*Mike Backen, Silviculturalist*)

- Support collaborative fire resilience planning with the city.
- Upkeep existing fuel breaks and maintain vegetation regrowth in the South Obenchain area.
- Coordinate access to Lone Rock lands.
- Provide expertise and technical advice as available.
- Participate in the maintenance of established fuel breaks on properties that Lone Rock manages near the City of Butte Falls and the Community Forest.
- Help develop community projects to address scotch broom and other noxious weeds that might impact trails, and integrate opportunities for volunteers and students.
- Help plant trees in identified areas, as agreed upon.
- Work with the city of Butte Falls to explore and support opportunities to educate youth and the broader community about working forest lands and has committed to help establish signs on an interpretative trail to label species as part of an educational program to inform about forest management practices.
- Engage in collaborative recreation planning to utilize topography lines as trail and fuel break strategy.
- Develop reciprocal road use agreements, permitting the right for trails to potentially cross through designated sections of Lone Rock property as agreed upon
- Review easements and details for crossing property lines in the future.
- Provide input and guidance on the development of a monitoring and security program for the community forest.
- Develop a mutually agreeable policy with the city to address public access during high and extreme fire danger days.

**Medford Water Commission** (*Craig Harper, Watershed Administrator*)

- Work in collaboration with the city and others to implement fuels treatments to reduce wildfire risk to critical water infrastructure and the assured quality and quantity of drinking water supply for the Rogue Valley.

**National Park Service** (*Barbara Rice, Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program Manager*)

- Provide technical assistance from 2022-2023 to work with the city and local partners to develop a Butte Falls Community Forest Public Use Plan that incorporates and supports the community's defined strategic goals around recreation, conservation, education, stewardship, forest health, and fire resiliency. This will include conducting a community engagement and education process; collecting data and information; mapping; inventorying and analyzing site conditions for strengths, opportunities, problems, and threats; engaging with potential stakeholders and partners; determining recreation uses; and, helping identify potential funding sources and a phased implementation approach.
- Support educational opportunities and partnership with local schools, as well as how to use the property as an outdoor classroom in the engagement process and development of the Butte Falls Community Forest Public Use Plan.

**Oregon Department of Forestry** (*Ross Ballou, District Fire Planner*)

- Assist with treatment and management in the form of guidance and consulting.
- Supply contractors lists and recommendations.
- Consult on logging operations and potential coordination with other timber harvest and selection, pre-commercial thinning in the area.
- Assist with map creation and road construction.

**Oregon State University Extension** (*Chris Adlam, Regional Fire Specialist*)

- Continue to provide technical input to support the town on fuels reduction and fire mitigation planning.
- Explore a collaborative program focused on regular prescribed burning with a willingness to conduct a prescribed burn in the Butte Falls area to show residents the benefits of prescribed fire.
- Share information about opportunities through The Rogue Basin Prescribed Fire Training Exchange (TRES) to provide experiential learning and training through cooperative burns on private lands. This could be a good opportunity for local contractors, volunteer firefighters, or any community members.
- Continue to work with the city, partners, and the community forest staff to contribute to and support public education and outreach on forest management practices and prescribed burning.

**Rogue Basin Partnership** (*Greg Weber, Executive Director Emeritus*)

- Support and encourage the community forest's natural resources stewardship and restoration efforts within the Rogue Basin by looking for ways its member organizations that work within the Butte Falls area, and others, can help further advance the city's goals.

**Rogue River Siskiyou National Forest Service** (*Dave Palmer, District Ranger*)

- Identify opportunities to work with the community of Butte Falls and other interested partners using such authorities as the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) to further advance goals.

**Rogue River Watershed Council** (*Brian Barr, Executive Director*)

- Provide technical assistance to incorporate considerations regarding the management surrounding Big Butte Creek and its tributaries, as it provides important habitat for native fish, especially threatened Coho Salmon.
- Continue to engage with the city of Butte Falls regarding focal area efforts around Big Butte Creek and South Fork Big Butte Creek for concentrating habitat protection and restoration activities to improve and secure the status of Upper Rogue Coho over the next 30 years.

**Rogue Valley Council of Government** (*Peter Town, Grants and Contracts Administrator*)

- Continue to provide support and engagement in pursuit of the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant for implementation of treatment prescriptions on the property.

**Rogue Valley Mountain Bike Association** (*Casey Botts, Executive Director*)

- Continue to engage in collaborative recreation planning
- Offer guidance on mountain biking considerations to include in a trail system.
- Provide a crew of volunteers to Butte Falls for trail building training once per year.
- Lead a class on how to create and maintain trails.
- Help to direct the city to recreational technical assistance grants, experts.
- Provide assistance to apply for a grant to hire professional trail building.
- If there was interest in developing a youth race course in Butte Falls, RVMBA would work to host at least one race event per year if proper trails were constructed, bringing economic activity to the community.

**Southern Oregon Forest Restoration Collaborative** (*Terry Fairbanks, Executive Director*)

- Stay connected to the city regarding future restoration needs.
- Share information regarding funding opportunities, and serve as a resource in applications or work together on funding applications around shared forestry objectives.
- Continue to engage with the city and local schools to explore interest in natural resources and fire-focused educational curriculum or projects.
- Assist with developing proposals for future educational funding pursuits.

**Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development, Inc.** (*Colleen Padilla, Executive Director*)

- Provide technical assistance, grant administration, and business support to any traded sector businesses in Butte Falls.
- Provide support for and/or serve as a co-applicant for place-making planning related to recreation and economic development and facilitate the planning process, manage the grant, and sub-contract out as needed.

**The Southern Oregon Railway Historical Society** (*Bruce Kelly, President*)

- Work with the city and others to develop a historic railway tourist train from the Landing to the cemetery
- Work with the city and others to create a railroad logging museum that builds upon past railroad spurs. This new railway would take sightseers from the town approximately 1.5 miles to the tax lot #800 on the community forest and back and would bring tourism and historical education to the town

**Travel Southern Oregon** (*Bob Hackett, Executive Director*)

- Assist in the strategic development of visitation marketing plans.
- Include the community forest and related projects, when and as appropriate, in regional visitation marketing.

**Trust for Public Land** (*Kristin Kovalik, Oregon Director*)

- Will fund and manage the Community Forest Administrator contract position for 12 months in 2022. (The contractor will be responsible for funding their position 2023 through 2024.) TPL's engagement will be completed by the end of 2022.

**Regional Solutions, Office of Governor Kate Brown** (*Nate Stice, Director*)

- Continue to assist with state agency coordination and integration as needed for collaborative governance, technical assistance, information sharing, and regulatory considerations in support of the Butte Falls Community Forest project, aligning state and regional priorities with the recommendations and commitments of the project.
- Remain engaged with the city of Butte Falls on strategic planning, work to make introductions and connections to potential state and regional partners.
- Additionally, the Regional Solutions Advisory Committee will continue to support the implementation of the community forest concept and advocate for the project's success.

**Oregon Solutions** (*Karmen Fore, Director*)

- Highlight the Butte Falls Community Forest project as part of the Oregon Solutions website and other promotional materials.
- Coordinate two bi-annual partnership meetings, following the signing of the Declaration of Cooperation, to provide a forum for the city and stakeholders to share updates regarding Butte Falls and check-in on the implementation efforts to evaluate the project status, goals, and identify any other areas needed to support success.

Phase Two Implementation Coordination: Oregon Solutions convened two meetings for project team members and stakeholders to coordinate around implementation efforts on July 14 and August 15, 2022, in order to provide support for the next phase of work underway.

Reconvening: Oregon Solutions will have the authority to re-convene the Butte Falls Community Forest Project Team to confer with partners about key decisions or important new information. It is anticipated that the project team will re-convene in Spring 2023.

- The City of Butte Falls will have the responsibility to report back to Oregon Solutions and the Governor's office on project progress by December 31, 2022.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A. COVID-19 & WILDFIRE**

The team initiated its collaborative work entirely virtually and adjusted to the changed environment. Work of the project team was paused for four to six weeks at the onset of COVID-19 so team members could attend to more urgent community matters and then again due to the South Obenchain Fire, among the many wildfires that occurred in September 2020 throughout the State of Oregon.

Due to the changes and reductions in many agency and organizational budgets from the impacts of COVID-19, funding sources that would have been traditionally available to the project to achieve its goals no longer exist. As a result, some commitments made by project team members may be delayed in their implementation. These will be assessed on a case-by-case basis as organization and agency budgets recover.

### **Appendix B. FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN ([link](#))**

### **Appendix C. OREGON SOLUTIONS ASSESSMENT ([link](#))**

### **Appendix D. RELEVANT CITY ORDINANCES**

- Ordinance 324 - An ordinance creating a Community Forest Commission for the Town of Butte Falls, Oregon setting its membership, powers and duties and outlining the procedures to be followed.
- Ordinance 344 - An ordinance to approve the Notice of Grant Requirement between the Town of Butte Falls and the United States Forest Service for the acquisition of four (4) parcels of forest land. This gives the Town of Butte Falls approval to purchase and accept from the Trust for Public Lands for the Community Forest Project.
- Ordinance 345 - This ordinance establishes the Town of Butte Falls' Commitment to managing the Community Forest Plan in accordance with the terms of the US Forest Service community Forest program
- Resolution 620 - A resolution to accept two grants and numerous donations for the purpose of purchasing the forest land that surrounds the town.
- Resolution 624 - A resolution to accept a donation in the amount of \$23,250 from Cecil Bailey and Ruby Edwards for the Butte Falls Community forest project

### **Appendix E. BUTTE FALLS COMMUNITY FOREST STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN**

#### **Butte Falls Community Forest Project Action Plan**

**Role of the Action Plan:** The Action Plan will guide future Community Forest project efforts and management. The Action Plan is a framework for long-term investments and management; and identifies needs, opportunities, and strategies, with a particular emphasis on the goal of fire resiliency. The Action

Plan is based on input from residents of Butte Falls, partner agencies (government and non-profit), and other stakeholders. The Action Plan provides the residents and the government of the City of Butte Falls – and their partners – a framework to work together to manage and maintain the Community Forest over time.

This Action Plan includes both potential new and ongoing strategies the Town of Butte Falls may pursue to meet identified goals. It includes an adaptive management approach to regularly review management strategies and outcomes in order to achieve the goals below.

*The objectives and strategies discussed by the project team are designed to meet the following overarching goals, identified by the community:*

1. Manage the community forest to protect the town from increasing fire threat as part of a broader “all lands” approach to holistic forest management.
2. Develop a long-range stewardship ethic that improves the health of the forest.
3. Protect and enhance the city and watershed’s water resources.
4. Promote climate resilience
5. Enhance soil productivity
6. Expand economic opportunities and create living wage jobs
7. Enhance local recreational infrastructure, ensure safe access to forests, the falls, and other community assets
8. Expand educational opportunities in cooperation with local schools
9. Use the community forest as an outdoor classroom
10. Build community and engage local residents through shared decision-making about the management of the forest.

## Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

### FOREST RESILIENCE

#### ***1. Protect the town and adjacent forest and waterways from increasing fire threat using an all-lands approach to holistic forest management***

**Objective 1.1:** Adopt resilient forest practices to return forests to a healthy state and prevent catastrophic fires that could endanger the town and surrounding timberlands.

**Strategies:**

- Treat the entirety of the delineated stands over a 5-year timeframe, beginning with the highest priority stands first. The Butte Falls Community Forest Management Plan outlines prioritized treatments to be implemented over a five-year period.
  - Year 1 – Secure funding for restoration work
  - Years 1 and 2 – Execute priority 1 stand treatment
  - Years 3 and 4 – Execute priority 2 stands
  - Year 5 – Execute priority 3 stands
- Budget on an annual basis to cover treatment costs based on the ranking of the priority.
- Prioritize protecting, maintaining, and enhancing pine-oak woodlands and oak savannah (Conservation Opportunity Area recommendation)
- Obtain and upkeep FIREWISE certification

- Utilize lessons learned from the South Obenchain fire - potential update to the Forest Management Plan.
- Integrate forest management with recreation planning to utilize trails as strategic fuel breaks
- Implement fuel breaks that leverage natural openings, existing roads, thinned and treated stands, and other landscape features to support fire suppression efforts.
- Address firefighting resources

**Objective 1.2:** Mimic the historic disturbance regime using mechanical and fire treatments to restore shrublands (Conservation Opportunity Area recommendation).

**Strategies:**

- Develop a plan to integrate prescribed burning in partnership with OSU Extension
- Where applicable, in treated stands there should be a follow-up maintenance underburn within 5-7 years after the initial treatments are completed. Following initial treatments, it is recommended to implement underburning rotations on a 10-15- year interval to build stand diversity and resilience.
- Engage the Butte Falls Fire Department, the Butte Falls Natural Resource Center, state and federal agencies, and other interested parties.

**Objective 1.3:** Control and prevent establishment of invasive species that are destructive to forest health.

**Strategies:**

- Implement a monitoring program that involves local volunteers and recreational users
- Address scotch broom

## ***2. Develop a long-range stewardship ethic***

**Objective 2.1:** Use restoration efforts to preserve and enhance trees, waterways and wildlife habitat

**Strategies**

- The Forest Manager could conduct an annual stewardship assessment for the Community Forest, based on information gathered during an annual physical inspection of the property to identify resource degradation and/or maintenance needs. The stewardship assessment could identify prioritized activities, volunteer opportunities, or expenditures needed for the coming year of management.
- Consider engagement with Southern Oregon Land Conservancy if there is interest in exploring opportunities for conservation easements in certain areas of the forest.
- Explore ODF Stewardship Plan compliance and opportunities

**Objective 2.2:** Engage the public in land management decisions and guide priorities by democratic process, public listening sessions and the Community Forest Commission

**Objective 2.3:** Develop a community-wide program to enhance the community’s awareness of the value of the community forest and forest management. Assist stewards of the community forest in providing accessible and on-going education opportunities

**Strategies**

- Stewardship activities may include: Trash and debris removal; maintenance of the trail system and trailheads; elimination of social or unauthorized trails; elimination of illegal activities; monitoring impacts of public access; minimize impacts and conflicts with adjacent public and private lands; aquatic habitat protection, stream restoration and bank stabilization.

**Objective 2.4:** Build local capacity to support, value, and maintain the community forest and community building.

#### **Strategies**

- Educating and involving residents is an important part of sustaining the community forest.
- Using volunteers can increase community engagement and awareness and ultimately increase stewardship for the community forest.
- Develop an annual community forest report to share metrics, document work completed and accomplishments, and highlight success stories. The annual report will be shared with leadership, the community and partners.
- Create volunteer opportunities for all ages and abilities
- Acknowledge contributions of volunteers and partners. Volunteers are incredibly important and increase our capacity to improve the community forest.
- Identify new partnerships with cities and organizations and continue to grow and foster existing relationships. Partners are critical to increasing our reach and expanding our ability to do meaningful work.
- Explore public-private partnerships and identify creative funding sources. Private-public partnerships can be facilitated through ongoing efforts such as carbon credits or on a project by-project basis.
- Establish an interpretive trail.
- Continue to maintain and expand staff relationships with external community partners and internal Town of Butte Falls partners.

### **3. *Protect and enhance the city and upper watershed's water resources***

#### **Strategies:**

- Complement ongoing land management efforts by the Medford Water Commission on watershed holdings.
- Collaborate with private residents, BLM, Lone Rock Timber Company, and the Forest Service for work in the upper watershed reaches
- Obtain additional in-stream water allocation to increase spawning habitat for spring Chinook salmon (Conservation Opportunity Area recommendation)
- Focus on water quality and instream and near stream habitats for the benefit of native fish and wildfire, the communities in the region, and recreationists.
- Protect water temperatures, enhance riparian habitats, increase instream habitat complexity and improve fish passage.
- Treat acres in the Big Butte Springs and Little Butte Creek watersheds to protect drinking water supply, water quality and community safety.

### **4. *Promote climate resilience***

**Objective 4.1:** Conserve and enhance carbon stocks over time through sustainable land management

**Strategies:**

- Protect mature trees
- Integrate current scientific research into management decisions and current regional realities
- Implement alternatives to pile burning where feasible. (Examples include biochar, biomass, and air burners)

**5. Promote and enhance soil productivity**

**Strategies:**

- Identify site-specific conditions such as erosion or drainage issues
- Identify recommended areas for conservation (limited or no development, or restoration)

## PUBLIC ACCESS & RECREATION

**6. Promote and enhance local infrastructure, insure safe access to forests, the falls and other community assets**

**Objective 6.1:** Develop a recreation and trails plan to provide the town of Butte Falls miles of new multi-use trails.

**Strategies:**

- Work with the stakeholders and general public to develop a program of activities desired as part of the recreational plan.
- Assess the “The Butte Falls Mill Site Development Feasibility Study” to gauge public interest and see if any elements of the plan are still relevant and desired for the community forest moving forward.
- Hold a public meeting to present and review the existing conditions and present preliminary program and conceptual layout.
- Integrate public comment into the existing conditions, program and plan
- Overlay recreation planning information with an analysis of the management and environmental constraints.
- Consider trail accessibility in the planning phase to make access available to those with disabilities.
- Determine guidelines for development of certain locations (trail widths, user rules, size of facilities, amenities recommended, etc.)
- Develop a prioritization methodology to promote logical and efficient development of the recreation plan and facilities. The prioritization methodology can take into account criteria such as public support, ease of implementation, cost, and importance to community benefit. Evaluate proposed improvements based upon the prioritization methodology and establish a phased implementation plan including near-term projects (1-2 years), medium-term projects (3–5 years), and long-term projects (5+ years).
- Connect a trail system to adjacent federal and industry lands to provide recreation opportunities to the community

**Objective 6.2:** Develop estimated capital, operations, and maintenance costs for the development of the recreation plan and supporting infrastructure. This will include estimates for items such as

trail construction, decommissioning efforts, trail maintenance, and maintenance of amenities such as trash receptacles, restrooms, and signage.

**Strategies:**

- The goal would be to secure funding for a recreation plan addressing these opportunities, costs and barriers to implementation as well as work with connecting land ownership both industrial and public lands to develop a cohesive phased approach trail plan
- It estimated that funding would be secured to complete a trails and recreation plan with initial work (on the Community Forest only) to install trails and infrastructure taking place in years 3-5 following the acquisition.
- Establish a monitoring and security program/resources for safety purposes. Consider opportunities to work with the county. A security presence is recommended. Assess needs down the road. Engage citizens in monitoring.
- When in extreme fire risk, follow the protocols of industrial neighbors and prohibit all activity and travel in recreational areas. Engage the public and post information in respective areas (e.g., website, Facebook, etc.) about these conditions. Engage ODF Guard Station with education.
- Display signage to indicate property ownership, any closures (for extreme fire risk), or regulations (no camping).

## ECONOMIC HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

### *7. Promote economic opportunities and living wage jobs*

**Objective 7.1:** Create jobs by sustainable timber harvesting; utilizing small, low-value tree products (firewood, Christmas trees, wood carving) and engaging in non-wood forest product gathering like mushroom and berries. Forest activities could provide modest incomes and local jobs.

**Objective 7.2:** Prioritize workforce development and continuous improvement among community businesses. Staff should continue to build on their existing knowledge and attend trainings and workshops to increase their technical expertise.

**Objective 7.3:** Job creation and to increase the economic growth of the community through an innovative all lands forestry approach to land management. create new jobs in forest and watershed restoration. The hope is to create a model that provides living-wage jobs to members of the community and region.

Develop an overarching economic development strategy for the town

**Strategies:**

- Use an economic consultant to evaluate the economic impact to the community. This will include a cost benefit analysis of the cost to implement and maintain vs the value of the dollars that will come into the community from visitors using the new recreation facilities.
- For any forest related management jobs, hire and contract with local individuals and entities when possible.

- The development of recreational trails can strengthen the local economy by promoting tourism, attracting new residents and workers, and diversifying economic opportunities.
- It is anticipated that sometime during the initial 5-year restoration work that a strategy and business plan would be developed.
- Fire resilience and contracting - regional projects to potentially bring crews into town
- Focus on supporting, expanding, and complementing existing businesses (both home-based as well as brick and mortar)
- Engage Rogue Valley businesses (bike store, brewery, etc) to do a pop-up or destination event
- Work with Southern Oregon Historical Society to market the region as a filming location and share the history and legacy of the community and falls. Talent and Ashland have done this and engaged public works staff for filming support.
- Get familiar with RVMBA and Travel Oregon visitor profiles.
- Ask residents to survey relatives from out of the area to see what would get them to come visit more often and bring friends
- Consider opportunities to connect with Cycle Oregon in the longer term, as a potential overnight stay in Butte Falls.
- The Stihl Timberjacks logging sports event could be something to consider bringing to Butte Falls.
- Consider developing a ‘Butte Falls Days’ that is uniquely attributed to community

**Objective 7.4:** In partnership with the Southern Oregon Railway Historical Society develop an historic railway tourist train from the Landing to the cemetery and create a railroad logging museum. The community has been developing a cohesive strategy to connect a tourism feature using the past railroad spurs. This new railway would take sightseers from town approximately 1.5 miles to the tax lot #800 on the Community Forest and back and would bring tourism and historical education to the town

## EDUCATION & RESEARCH

### 8. *Expand educational opportunities in cooperation with local schools*

**Objective 8.1:** Create a land lab for Butte Falls Charter School’s natural resources education program.

**Strategies:**

- Assist in the development of forestry education programming in schools. Youth are critical advocates to engage in protecting and enhancing the community forest.

### 9. *Use the community forest as an outdoor classroom*

**Objective 9.1:** Develop the skills, research and knowledge to engage in long-term stewardship of our forests.

**Objective 9.2:** Offer a series of field trips for schools and colleges in the region.

**Objective 9.3:** Provide research opportunities in woodland management, non-timber forest product development and marketing, stream fisheries management and carbon retention

**Strategies:**

- Continue engaging with Southern Oregon University to provide opportunities to develop different projects with the Natural Resources Center, and connect for research, internships and capstone projects.
- Prioritize opportunities for the NRCS, and identify potential intersection with the USFS programs, as well as early forestry programs and trade schools.