



Sunset View Estates
From High Density Extreme
To
Fire Adapted Community

Bend, OR - As Deschutes County began implementing the *Oregon Forestland Urban Interface Fire Protection Act of 1997*, also known as Senate Bill 360, Sunset View Estates was identified as “High Density Extreme,” which was the highest rating possible, it also meant that the chances for a devastating wildland fire were the highest than any other neighborhood in the County. This rating alarmed both residences and the homeowner association and work began in earnest to correct not only the wildland fire risk, but to begin a process of education for the property owners.

With a grant awarded by Deschutes County and Project Wildfire, mowing, pruning, limbing and removal of defensible space debris began in earnest. The residences and homeowners association recognized the benefit and began a process to both lower the “high density extreme” rating and make their neighborhood safe from wildland fire. Since the inception, there is an annual budget to maintain that initial investment and now annual maintenance is performed on commons, vacant lots, golf course property and residences, entirely supported by the homeowner association budget.

This sustained effort resulted in Sunset View Estates being recognized as a Firewise USA® Site in 2012 and this continued commitment has maintained the currency as Firewise USA® Site in subsequent years. As a result of this sustained effort, Sunset View Estates will receive the National Wildland Fire Mitigation Award in 2019. Only seven awards were offered in the United States. These individuals and organizations have earned the highest commendation for innovation and leadership in wildfire mitigation for their outstanding dedication to solving many of the most complex challenges posed by wildfire.

This accomplishment would not be possible without the dedication of the homeowners association and several individuals that live in Sunset View Estates. These individuals continually look for opportunities to protect their investments and are a great example of how one neighborhood can make the cultural shift from “high density extreme” to becoming a Fire Adapted Community in Central Oregon.

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