

# Oregon's Wildfire Cleanup Response

## House Special Committee on Wildfire Recovery

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Friday, April 30, 2021

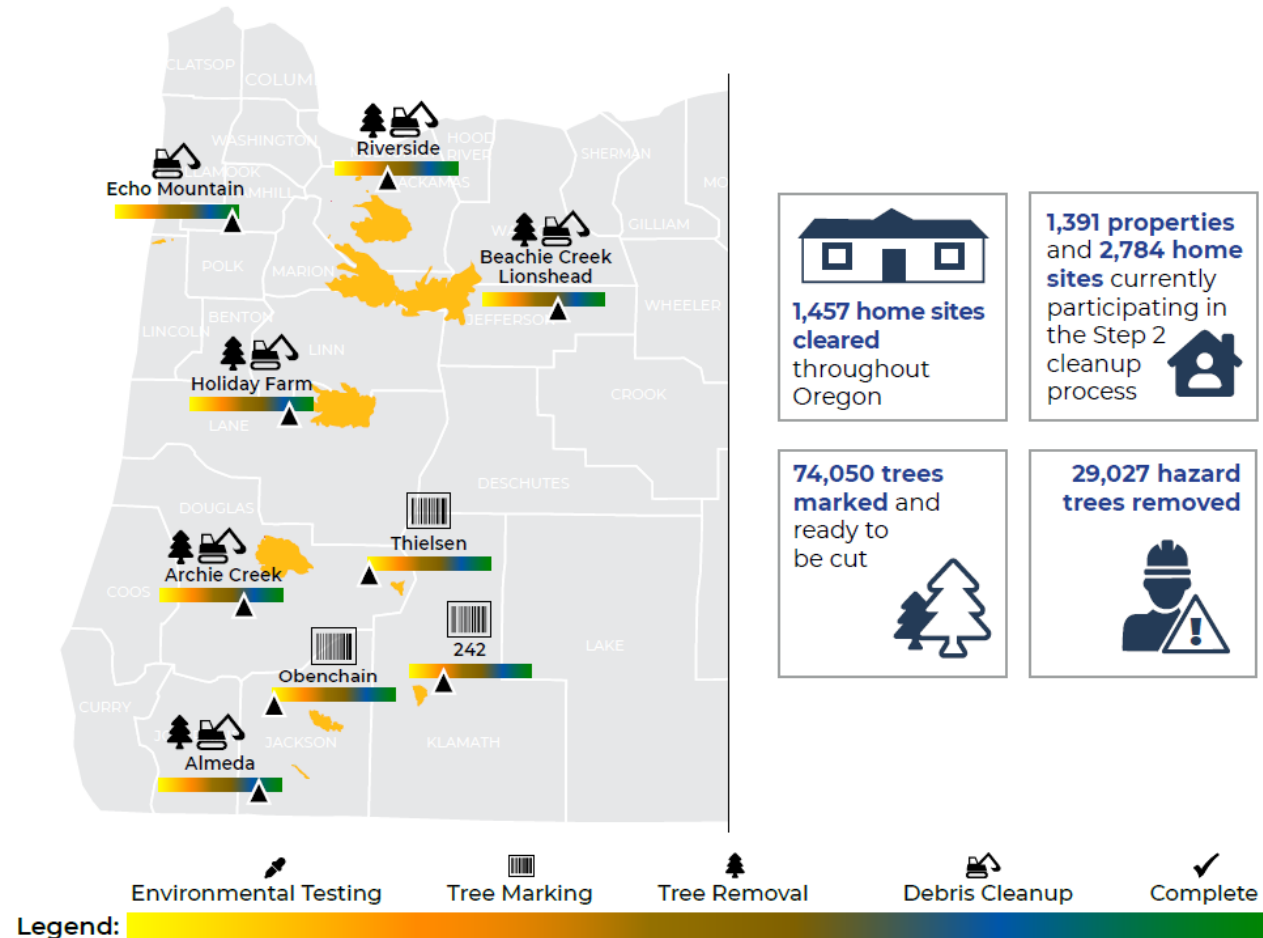


OREGON  
Debris Management  
Task Force



# SCOPE & SCALE

Debris and hazard tree removal work is underway in 8 fire-impacted Oregon counties. Total ODOT/Task Force **tree removal work, however, accounts for only ~4,500 of the total 1.1 million acres burned (or 1%).**



# ALL HANDS ON DECK

Many are working in fire-damaged corridors. **ODOT/Task Force work accounts for less than 1% of fire burn area only along state highways and near destroyed home sites.**

- **Local jurisdictions** working on local and county roadways and public areas
- **Utility companies** working to maintain current and future electricity access
- **Private property and forestland owners**
- **Public land managers:** USFS, BLM, state partners
- **Fire-resilience and restoration efforts,** and other secondary benefits of removing hazard trees



# OVERSIGHT STRUCTURE

**ODOT/DMTF: lead contracting agency**

**CDR: independent monitoring firm**

## **MBG**

Environmental lead  
Arborists/Foresters  
Tree evaluations

## **PRIME CONTRACTORS**

*Ash and debris removal*  
K&E  
AshBritt  
ECC

*Hazard tree removal*  
Suulutaaq  
Ceres  
ECC

## **SUBCONTRACTORS**

Tree service companies

# Steps of Hazard Tree Identification and Removal



## 2020 LABOR DAY FIRES

Thousands of trees are critically damaged or killed by wildfire, impacting major roadways and creating safety threats for Oregon communities and travelers



## EVALUATION/ASSESSMENT

Professional and certified arborists and foresters thoroughly [classify trees individually based on established criteria](#) rooted in science and safety



## TREE MARKING

Crews evaluate and mark dead/dying trees posing a threat to travelers, work crews and community



## DOUBLE-CHECK, TRIPLE CHECK, FINAL SIGN-OFF

A second set of arborists and foresters review and confirm trees marked for removal; A monitoring firm provides third review; A field incident commander often provides fourth review to ensure accuracy/quality



## TREE CUTTING/REMOVAL

An independent contractor not connected to the arborists cuts and removes only marked trees



## WORK MONITORING

A separate team of contractors monitors work for accuracy and safety



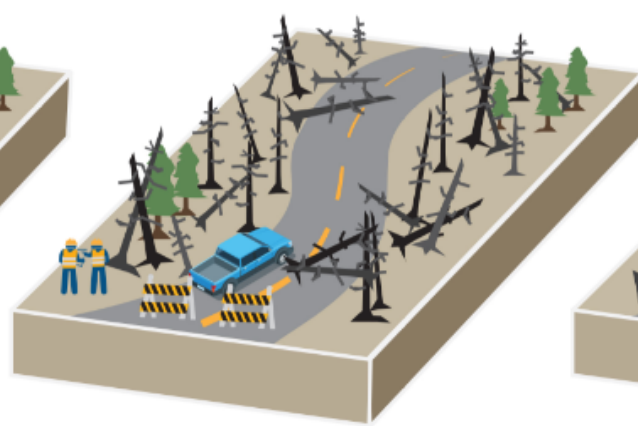
## TREES SAFELY REMOVED

Following strict environmental guidelines, cleared roads and home sites keep Oregon communities and travelers safe



## CUT TREES

- Donated for restoration and conservation projects
- Chipped and used for erosion control, forest floor
- Left as wildlife habitat on the forest floor
- Transported to biomass facilities to be converted into energy
- Stacked in staging areas for future use



# CRITERIA SNAPSHOT

FEMA reimbursement requirements define hazard trees as fire-damaged, dead or dying trees presenting an eminent threat within a **five-year timeframe**.



- ✓ Crown more than 50% damaged. Many will be monitored over time

- ✓ Evaluating how the tree is leaning

- ✓ Exposed hardwood. Damaged cambium layer. Many broken or fallen branches

- ✓ Tree has a diameter of 6+ inches, 4.5 feet above the ground

- ✓ Tree has a split, hollowed, or critically damaged trunk

- ✓ Dead or dying 1.5x – 2x the height from roadways and home sites

- ✓ Assessment of the structural integrity, root system, and survivability of each tree







# LESSONS LEARNED

- This work is about **helping people** and impacted Oregonians.
- Dramatically altered and changing post-fire landscapes are highly **traumatic experiences**.
- Because this work is so new, **education** about what this work is, looks like, and who's doing it must happen in real-time.
- With any workforce, some have different or **more experience than others**.
- **We're always adapting**. To be successful, this work must be flexible and evolving. There is no playbook for wildfire cleanup.
- **Urgency and immediate action**, while difficult, has proven to provide the best long-term outcomes nationally.
- **Unprecedented, quality work is happening** to get Oregon fire-impacted communities rebuild-ready.



# STAY CONNECTED

A photograph showing the aftermath of a wildfire. In the foreground, there is a large pile of charred debris and a stone sculpture of a figure with a raised arm. To the left, a concrete structure with two windows remains. In the background, a house is partially visible, and a utility pole stands on the right. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

**HOTLINE 503-934-1700**

[wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup](https://wildfire.oregon.gov/cleanup)  
[www.DebrisCleanupNews.com](http://www.DebrisCleanupNews.com)  
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