

Public Perceptions of AFR and Forest Restoration

Results from an Opinion Survey of Ashland Residents

SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTER

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Executive Summary

This report summarizes results from a public opinion survey measuring beliefs and attitudes about forest conditions and management practices in the Ashland Creek watershed. Based on a random sample of residents in Ashland and the surrounding area, this study is part of the multiparty monitoring effort to track public support for the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project (AFR). The survey was made possible by a grant from the Collins Trust Northwest Conservation Fund, which supports work seeking to restore frequent-fire adapted forests in southern Oregon, and funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Here are the key findings:

1. Compared to other amenities in Ashland, the natural environment is what residents value most about their local community, and many have a special connection to the Ashland Creek watershed, visiting the forests there often.
2. Residents place a high value on the aesthetic beauty and perceived naturalness of the Ashland Creek watershed. They see it primarily as a source of beauty, sustenance, and recreation.
3. Residents are fairly knowledgeable about fire ecology and are very concerned about the risk of high-severity fire in the watershed, though they do not view forests in the watershed as unhealthy.
4. Most residents had not heard of AFR, though there is very strong support for AFR's fuel reduction goals and tools, including the careful use of commercial thinning and prescribed fire. There is also strong support for public involvement in monitoring AFR.
5. Among AFR partners and potential interest groups, The Nature Conservancy is seen by residents as the most trustworthy, the Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association the least so. The US Forest Service has more public trust than the City of Ashland. Though less well known, KS Wild and Lomakatsi Restoration Project have substantial public trust.
6. Residents are not sure that National Forest land in the region needs large scale restoration.
7. Residents are unfamiliar with some key terms related to restoration used commonly by resource professionals (e.g., legacy tree; ecological reference condition), and restoration is not seen as merely fuel reduction, though fuel reduction is central to restoration.
8. Where restoration is needed, residents believe the goals should be more ecological (functional integrity) than historical (returning to pre-settlement conditions).
9. There is little support among residents for allowing forests in the region to evolve without any more human intervention.

Introduction

This report summarizes the results from a public opinion survey measuring beliefs and attitudes about forest conditions and management practices in the Ashland Creek watershed. Based on a random sample of residents in Ashland and the surrounding area, this study is part of the multiparty monitoring effort to track public support for the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project (AFR). In addition, we measured public support for various forest restoration goals in southwest Oregon. These results will serve as baseline data for a longitudinal study of changes over time in public opinion about fuel reduction and forest restoration as AFR is implemented. The survey was made possible by a grant from the Collins Trust Northwest Conservation Fund, which supports work seeking to restore frequent-fire adapted forests in southern Oregon, and funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Research Methodology

Study Design: A cross-sectional mail survey, using Dillman's (2007) Tailored Design Method, was administered by Southern Oregon University Research Center during February and March 2012. Subjects were contacted by mail up to four times (see Appendix C for survey mailings). A sub-sample of respondents was recruited to serve as a panel for subsequent online surveys that will measure change in public opinion over time.

Sample: The study population was adult residents of Ashland, Oregon and the surrounding area. Our sampling frame was the list of all registered voters in voter precincts 2, 4, 7, 10, 13 and 18 in Jackson County, Oregon in October 2011. We drew a simple random sample of 1,800 and achieved a 34 percent response rate (36 unusable returns; 597 usable returns). Our margin of error for sample statistics is +/-4% at the 95% confidence level.

Non-response bias: Recent research has shown that nearly 10% of voter registration records nationwide are invalid (Ansolabehere & Hersh, 2010), so the sampling frame itself accounts for some non-response. Three known types of non-response bias in this sample are these: 1) infirm elderly who were unwilling or unable to participate; 2) absent young adults still registered in Jackson Co. but who have recently moved away from the area to take jobs or attend college; and 3) people who refused to participate in a study they view as a waste of government resources. A comparison of sample results to population parameters (see Appendix A) shows no significant bias by gender and residence, some bias by income, and significant bias by age and education. In short, our sample somewhat under-represents low income residents, and it over-represents older and more highly educated residents. Because

weighting the data to compensate for this bias affected the results very little, the findings we report are based on unweighted data.

Research Goals: This survey was designed to achieve two objectives of the AFR Monitoring Plan (AFR Multiparty Monitoring Committee, 2011). First, we measure the effectiveness of public outreach on AFR, and second, we measure the level of public support for AFR. These baseline measures will allow subsequent surveys to measure change in public perceptions of AFR over time. The survey was also designed to evaluate the assumption that the use of ecological references, and the perception that AFR is promoting a resilient forest, will build public support for forest restoration more broadly. This last goal is Action Item #6 in the TNC's Collins Trust grant (Borgias & Metlen, 2011).

Questionnaire Design: The instrument mailed to respondents included both open and closed-ended questions (see Appendix C), exploring these topics:

- Forest values and beliefs about the Ashland Creek watershed.
- Knowledge of AFR and attitudes toward management.
- Meaning of forest restoration and support for the use of ecological references.
- Sense of place.

Many items in our questionnaire are tied to the literature measuring public opinion on forest issues: forest values (Brown & Reed, 2000; Clement & Cheng, 2011); attitudes toward fuels management (Shindler, Toman, & McCaffrey, 2009; Toman, Stidham, Shindler, & Sarah, 2011); public perceptions of restoration (Ostergren, Abrams, & Lowe, 2008; Ecological Restoration Institute, 2006); sense of place (Semken & Freeman, 2008).

Data Coding and Entry: A team of four SOURCE research assistants was trained for coding and data entry, and data were entered into SPSSv.19 in the SOURCE lab in March and April 2012 as completed questionnaires were returned. The senior research assistant independently verified all data entered (10-20% verification rate) and systematically cleaned the data set.

Findings¹ -- Forest Values

Underlying forest values provide context for understanding attitudes toward fuel reduction and forest restoration. Before questions about AFR and restoration goals, respondents were asked in an open-ended question what they value most about forests in the Ashland Creek watershed. This allowed respondents to describe what they value in their own terms. Table 1 presents recurring themes in response to this question.² The three most common themes were *natural beauty, recreation, and source of water*.

Table 1: Frequently mentioned forest values³

Question 1.1 – What do you value most about the forests in the Ashland Creek watershed?		
Recurring Themes	Percent (n=550)	Count
Natural Beauty	54.5	303
Recreational Use	32.9	181
Source of Water	30.7	169
Undeveloped Conditions	16.0	88
Wildlife	12.4	68
Proximity/Accessibility	10.7	59
Ecosystem/Bio Diversity	10.2	56
Clean Air	9.8	54
Experience Quiet/Privacy	2.9	16
Prevents Erosion/Good for soil	2.9	16
Timber Resource	1.5	8

Many respondents said they value forests in the watershed because they are aesthetically pleasing, often attributing that beauty to a lack of human intervention –“unspoiled” nature, and many respondents value the close proximity of the forested watershed because it provides a convenient place for recreation. The forested watershed is also valued as a source of clean air, water, and soil and as an ecosystem where a variety of life can flourish. The following comments from respondents illustrate these common themes:

- “The naturalness; the beauty of the environment; the insulation from development; the peacefulness. Separately, I value the water supplied by the watershed, the recreation potential. The lack of intense logging or road building effects visible from the city.”

¹ Appendix B reports frequency distributions for all closed-ended questions, and a supplemental document reports responses to all open-ended questions, verbatim.

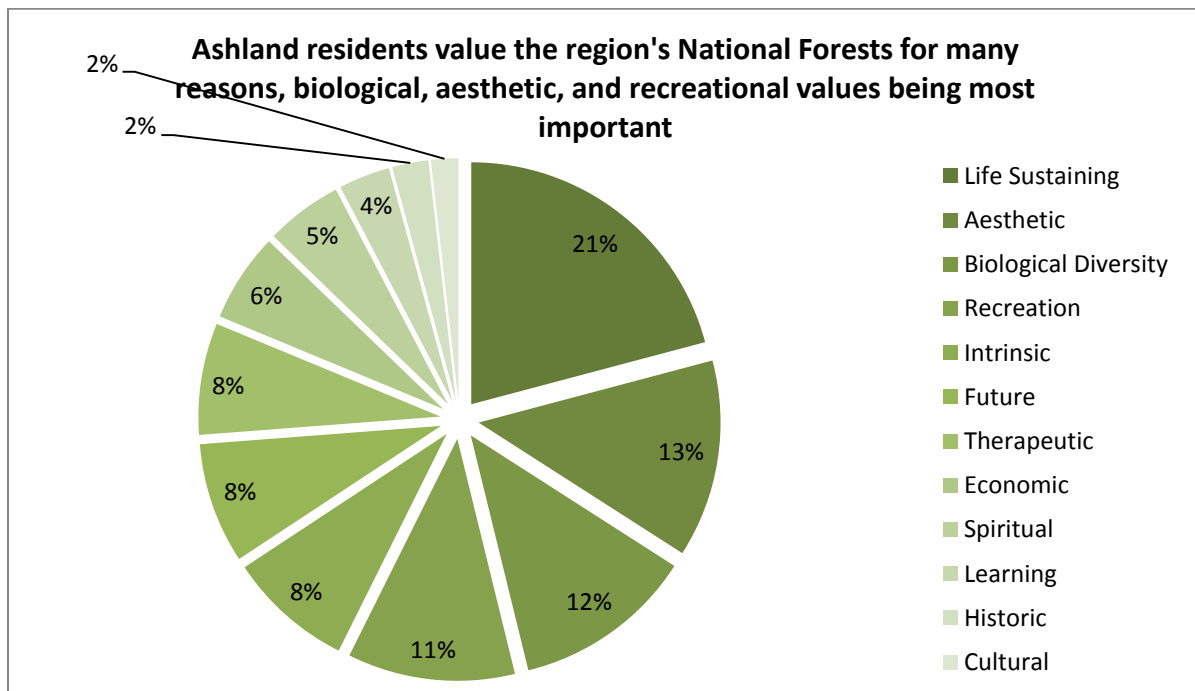
² Each theme that occurred in at least one percent of the responses is included.

³ Unless noted in the tables summarizing responses to open-end questions, percent does not equal 100 because a single response could be coded for more than one theme.

- “The beauty and the close proximity to town. I can be in the woods running just 10 minutes from my home or I can drive 10-15 minutes and really be in the woods, just my dogs and me and no one else. It is beautiful and wild and accessible. Plus, I can be skiing in 30 minutes!”
- “The most obvious value is the beauty. But the terrain, providing we maintain the terrain and cleanliness, contributes to our water supply. And there is an ecosystem I would prefer not to disturb any more than I have to.”
- “I like the view. I think it is somewhat irrelevant that it is a watershed. It is that but also a timber resource and should be harvested or replanted. We need to complete the waterline connection with Medford's source.”

After the open-ended question about the value of forests in the watershed, respondents were asked what they would spend to maintain various values regarding National Forests in southwest Oregon. This question is based on an empirically validated typology for measuring forest values (Brown & Reed, 2000; Clement & Cheng, 2011). It allows us to quantify and rank-order the values Ashland residents attach to public forests in the region. Figure 1 summarizes this result. In short, Ashland residents value the region's National Forests for many reasons, biological, aesthetic, and recreational values being most important; historical and cultural values are the least important. The literature suggests that values, and deeper ethical orientations, shape attitudes toward forest management.

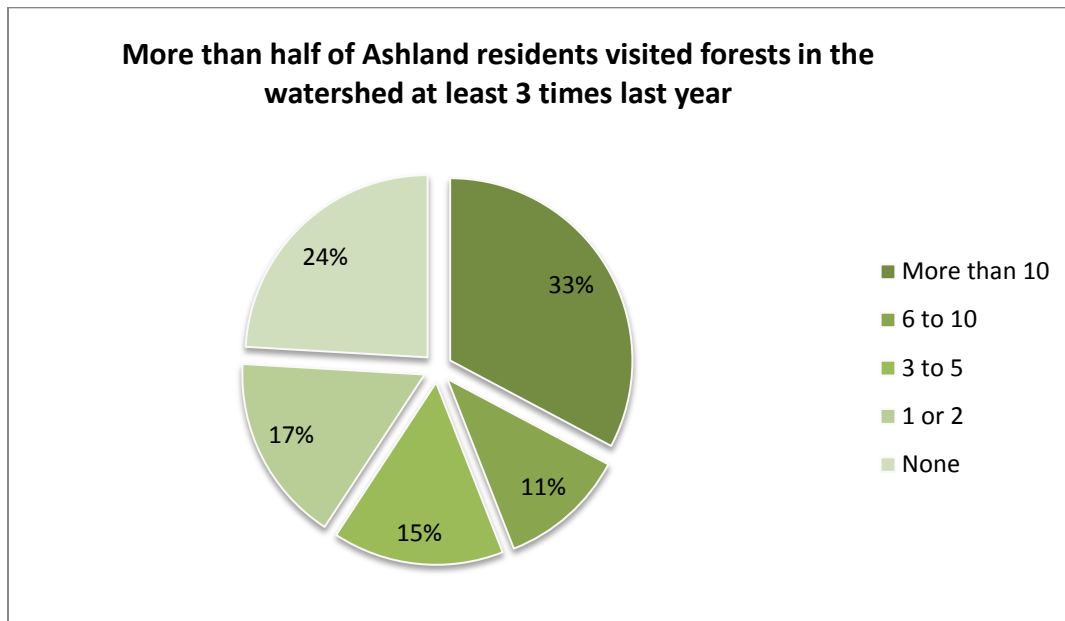
Figure 1: Percent of \$100 allocated to maintain various forest values



Findings – Visits to and Beliefs about Forests in the Watershed

Most Ashland residents visited the forests in the Ashland Creek watershed last year. One-third did so ten or more times; twenty-five percent visited between 3 and 10 times; and another one-quarter did not enter forests in the watershed at all last year. Figure 2 shows this result.

Figure 2: Number of visits to watershed forests in the last year



The overwhelming majority of respondents who used the forests in the watershed did so for recreation (see Table 2), particularly walking and hiking, and many respondents said they enter the watershed simply to observe and experience nature. The following comments illustrate these activities:

- “In the summer we go on very long hikes. I harvest some St. Johns Wort flowers up there. In the winter we go snow shoeing and cross country skiing.”
- “Walk, feel renewal, breathe deep, talk with a friend, listen for sounds of nature, watch light through trees.”
- “Walk and enjoy wilderness--peace and quiet. Enjoy natural world of plants, trees, birds, animals.”
- “Enjoy the peacefulness of the area. It rejuvenates my soul.”

- “Hike and forage for food! Looking for wild edibles.”
- “I stop going because joggers, bikes, horses, trails are small hard to get out of the way! The walk near T.I.D to Park Street is nice if all trails were this wide and maintained then you could walk anywhere. Bike, horses destroy walking trails.”

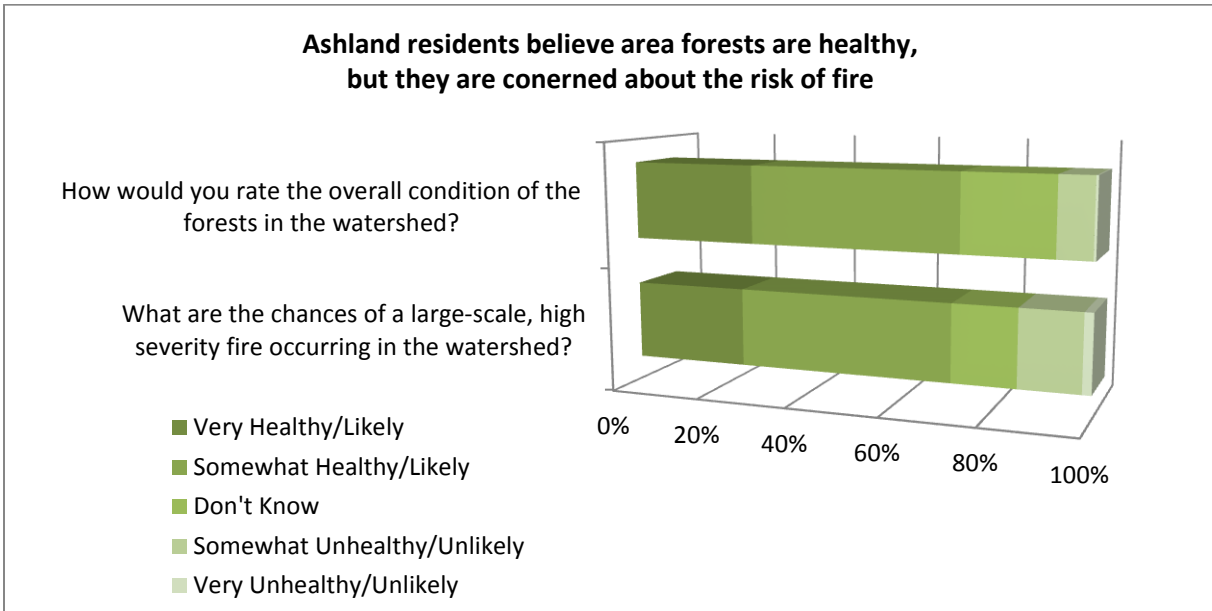
Table 2: Frequency of various activities in watershed forest

Question 1.3 -- What do you do, primarily, when you enter the forest in the Ashland watershed, beyond Lithia park?		
Recurring Themes	Percent (n=455)	Count
Walk/Hike	83.1	378
Sport (cycling, cross-country skiing, etc.)	24.8	113
Experience/Observe Nature	20.9	95
Socialize (spend time with friends or family)	8.1	37
Art/Photography	4.6	21
Drive Through	4.2	19
Meditate/Spiritual	3.3	15
Picnic	3.3	15
Fish/Hunt	2.2	10
Forage/Harvest	1.8	8
Work	1.1	5

Most Ashland residents have direct, personal experience with forests in the watershed, so what is their perception of forest health in the watershed?

While nearly three-quarters of Ashland residents believe the chance of a large-scale, high severity fire occurring in the Ashland Creek watershed in the next five years is *somewhat* or *very likely*, less than 10 percent believe forests in the watershed are *somewhat* or *very unhealthy* (see Figure 3). This finding contrasts with a study of AFR stakeholders and natural resource professionals who similarly think the fire risk is high but who view forests in the watershed, overwhelmingly, as unhealthy (Shibley, 2009). Perhaps it is difficult for residents to think of the watershed as “unhealthy” when they see primarily “natural beauty” in the forest.

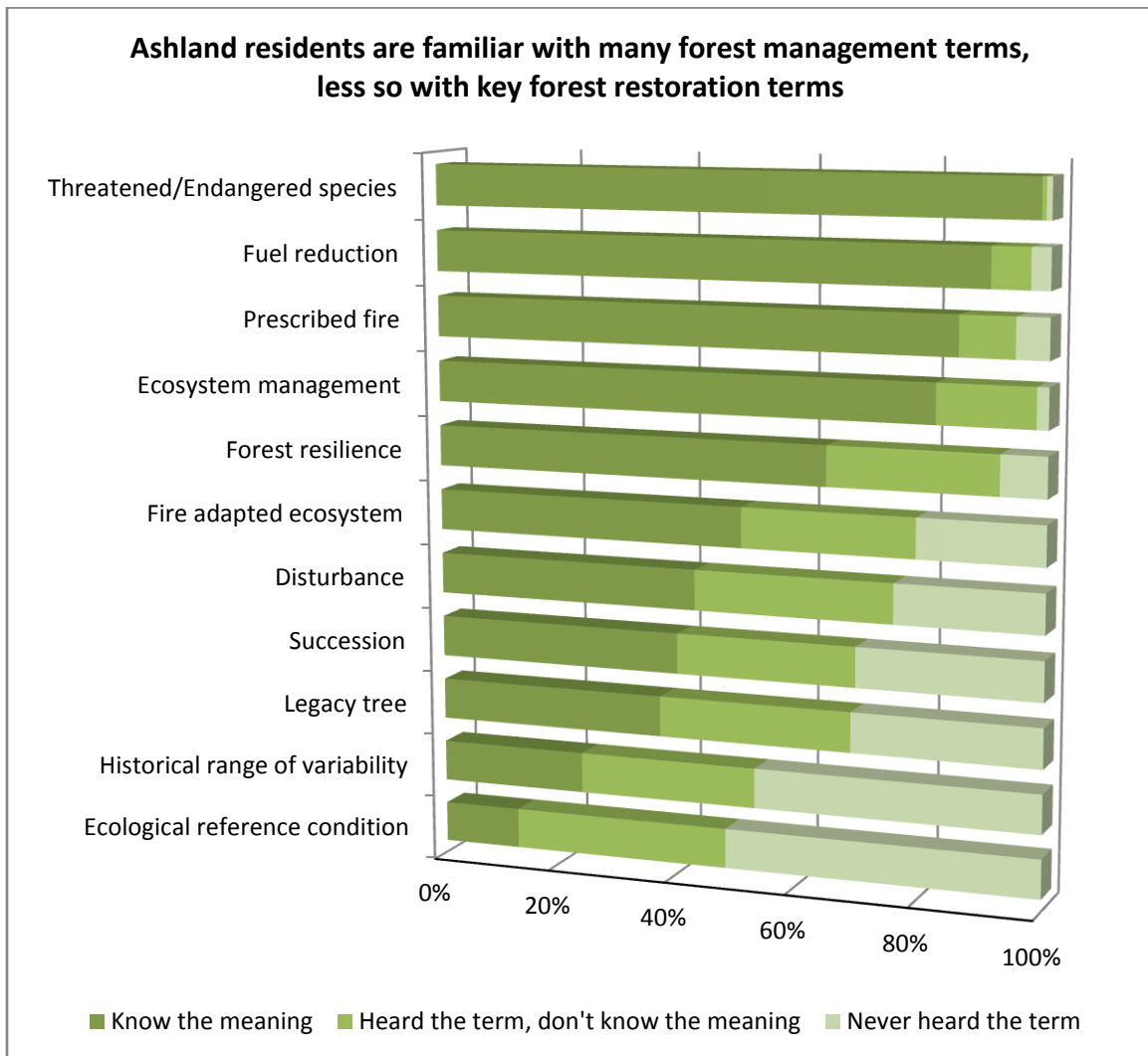
AFR partners engaged in public outreach need to carefully consider this orienting assumption, which is dramatically different from the perspective of many natural resource professionals in the region.

Figure 3: Opinion about forest conditions and fire risk in the watershed

Findings -- Knowledge of Fire Ecology

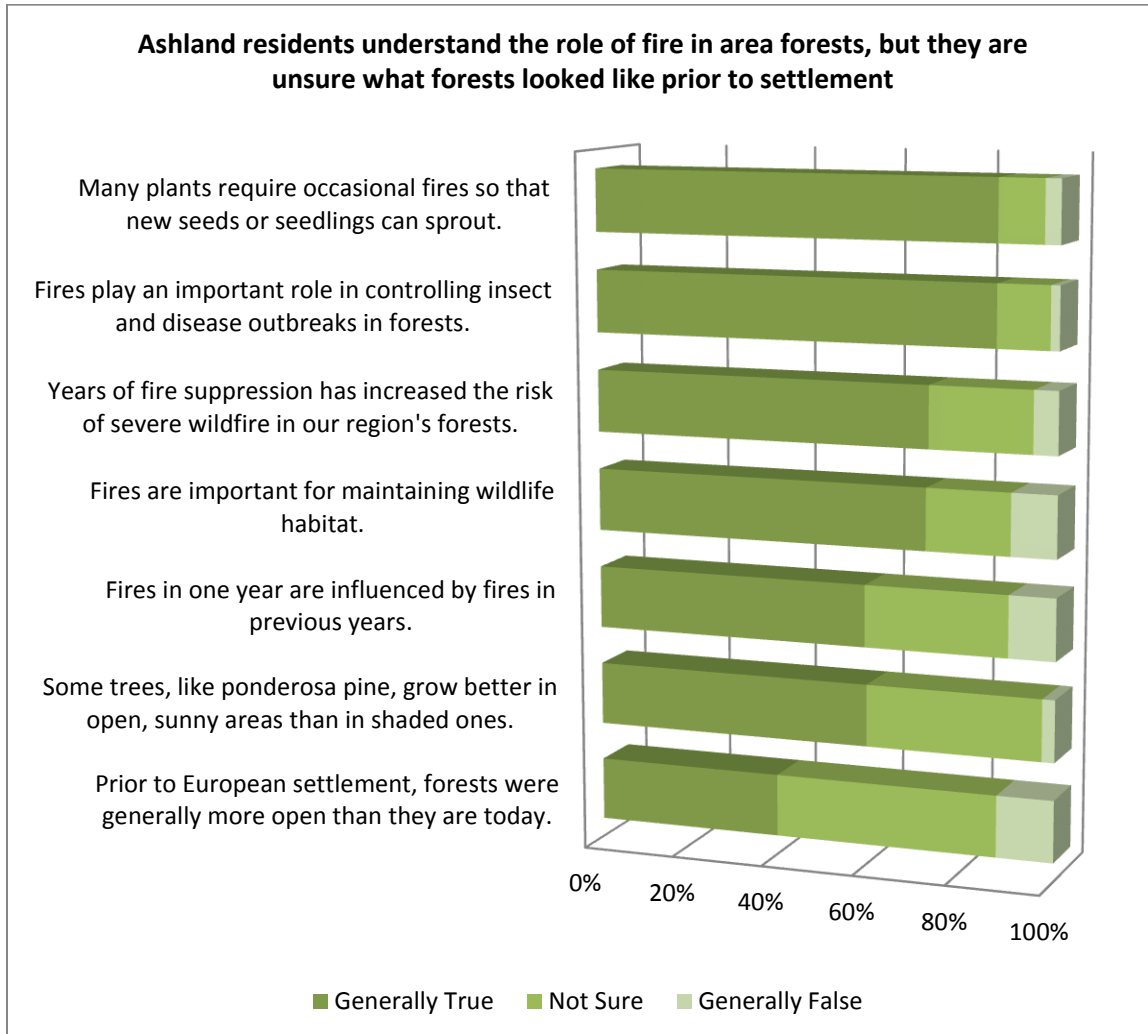
There has been much public discussion lately about forest ecology and management in the Ashland Creek watershed, but not all terms used by natural resource professionals are known to the public. Before asking about management preferences, the questionnaire measured familiarity with natural resource terminology and respondents' basic understanding of fire ecology in the region. These results are shown in Figure 4 and Figure 5, respectively.

While terms like “fuel reduction”, “prescribed fire”, and “forest resilience” are widely understood, Ashland residents are less familiar with terms describing ecosystem change (i.e., “disturbance” and “succession”), and they are unfamiliar with key terms used to discuss forest restoration (i.e., “legacy tree”, “historic range of variability”, and “ecological reference condition”). Figure 4 shows these results.

Figure 4: Familiarity with natural resource management terminology

As shown in Figure 5, Ashland residents understand the role of fire in southwest Oregon forests, but they are unsure what forests looked like prior to European settlement. More than two-thirds believe that years of fire suppression has increased the risk of severe wildfire in our region's forests. However, nearly half were not sure that forests prior to settlement were generally more open than they are today. In general, a sizable majority of residents understand some of the specific ecological functions of fire in the region (e.g., reproduction and insect/disease control). In this light, what do Ashland residents think about forest management priorities, fuel reduction goals and the tools available for achieving those goals?

Figure 5: Knowledge of fire ecology in southwest Oregon forests

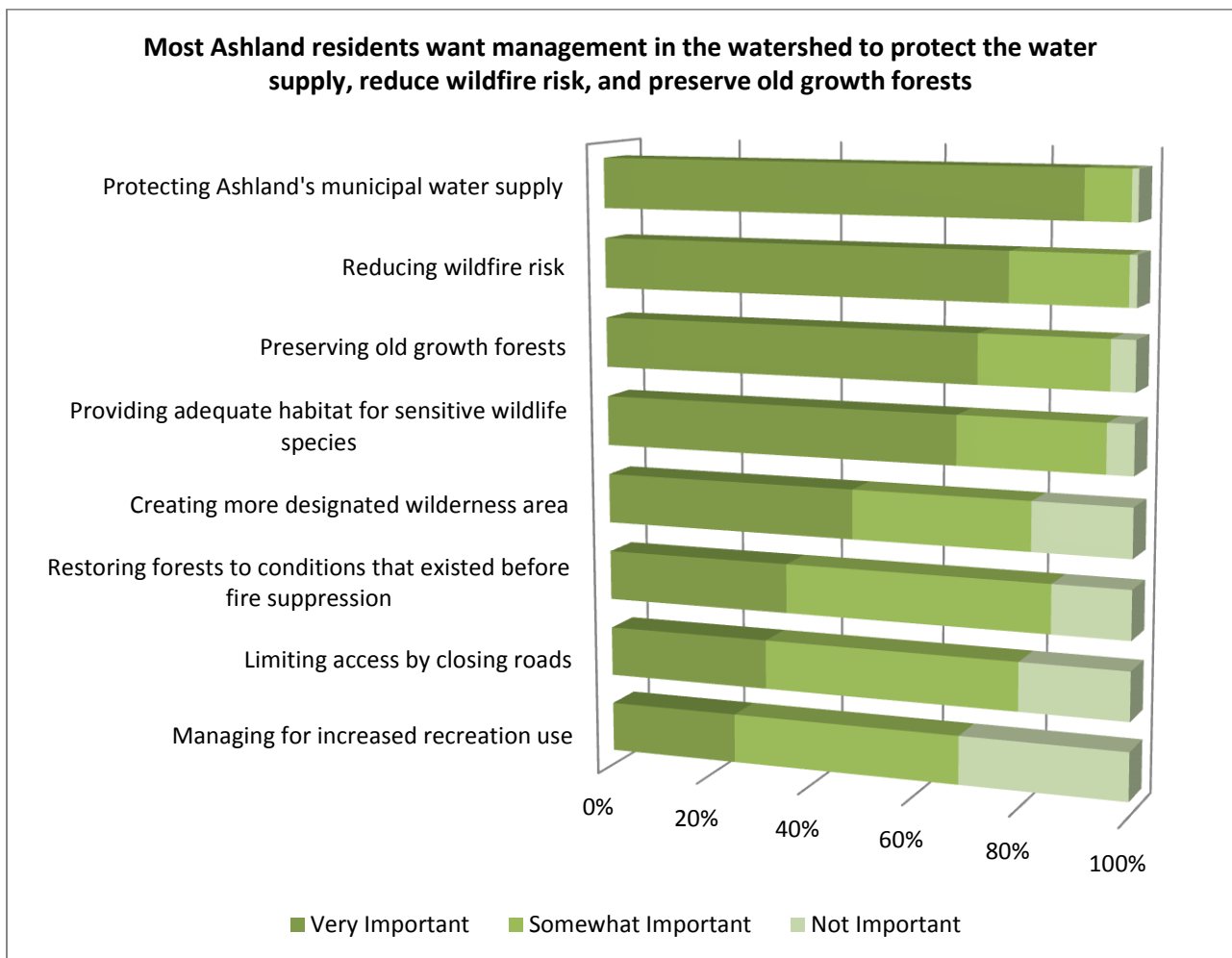


Findings -- Attitudes about Forest and Fuel Management

Protecting Ashland's municipal water supply and reducing wildfire risk are residents' top management priorities for forests in the Ashland Creek watershed, followed by preserving old growth and protecting wildlife habitat (see Figure 6). Creating more designated wilderness and limiting road access are also important, but less so. Paradoxically, given residents' recreational interests, managing for increased recreation is the least important priority. While 35 percent of residents say that restoring forests to conditions that existed before fire suppression is *very important*, and another 50 percent say it is *somewhat important*, that goal ranks only sixth among eight management priorities. In sum, while there is widespread and strong support for

conservation (i.e., habitat protection and forest restoration) and preservation (i.e., saving old growth, designating wilderness and road closure) goals, those priorities are less important to residents than reducing fire risk and protecting their water supply.

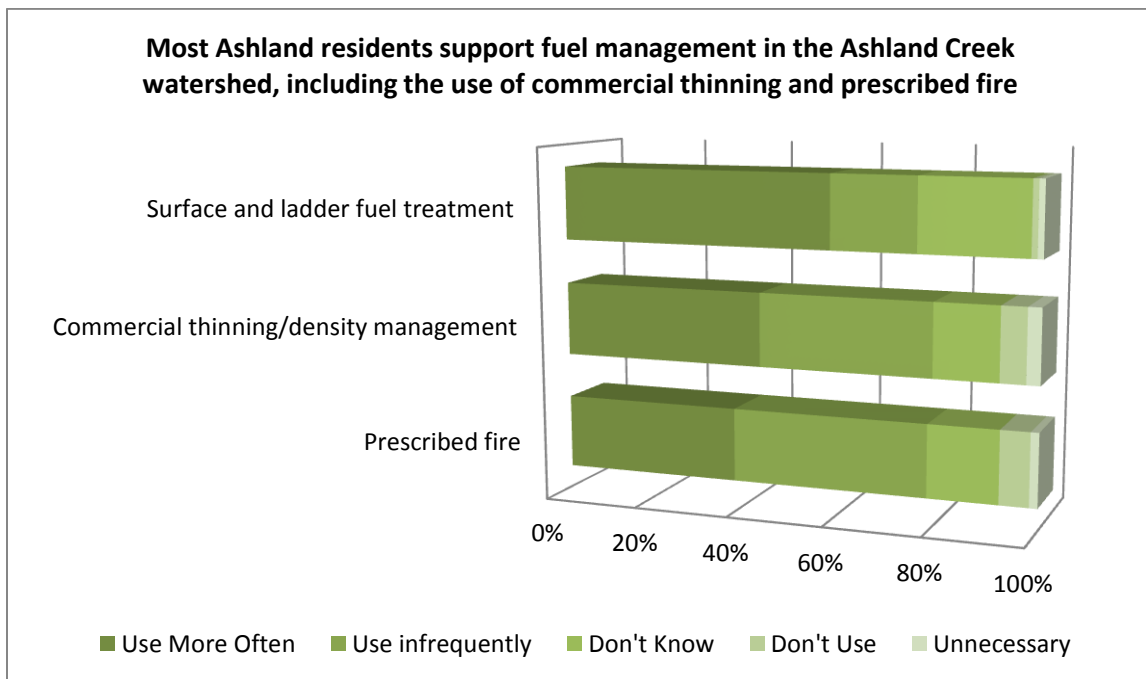
Figure 6: Management priorities for the Ashland Creek watershed, rank-ordered



Next we asked for people's opinion about the specific practices natural resource managers should use to reduce fuel and change environmental conditions in the Ashland watershed, given current fuel loads and risk of wildfire. Respondents were specifically asked about their support for the use of three practices: 1) surface and ladder fuel treatment, 2) commercial thinning and density management, and 3) prescribed fire. (These tools were explicitly defined in the questionnaire, see Appendix C, questions 2.6 – 2.8).

Figure 7 shows that most Ashland residents support practices to reduce fuels in the Ashland Creek watershed, including the careful use of commercial thinning and prescribed fire. A majority of residents (58 percent) support more frequent use of surface and ladder fuel treatments in the watershed, and while commercial thinning and prescribed fire had less support (43 and 37 percent, respectively said they should be used more often), very few residents (less than one in ten) said that commercial thinning and prescribed fire were unnecessary or undesirable because they had too many negative effects. Carefully planned and infrequent use of all three practices, in selected areas of the Ashland Creek watershed, is widely supported by Ashland residents.

Figure 7: Attitude toward fuel management tools

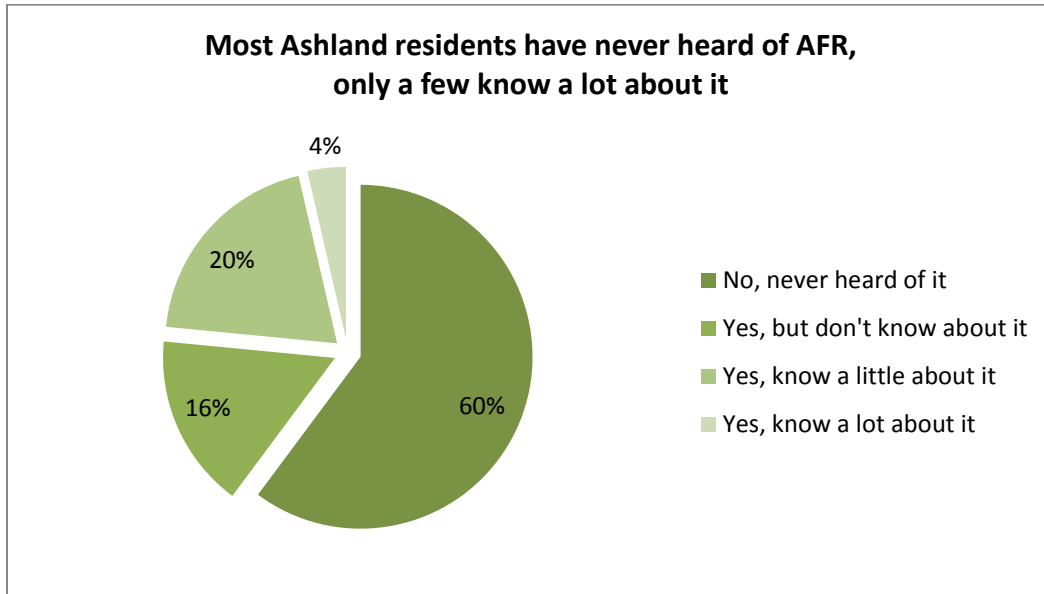


Findings – Knowledge of and Support for AFR

What do Ashland residents know, specifically, about the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project, and do they support AFR goals?

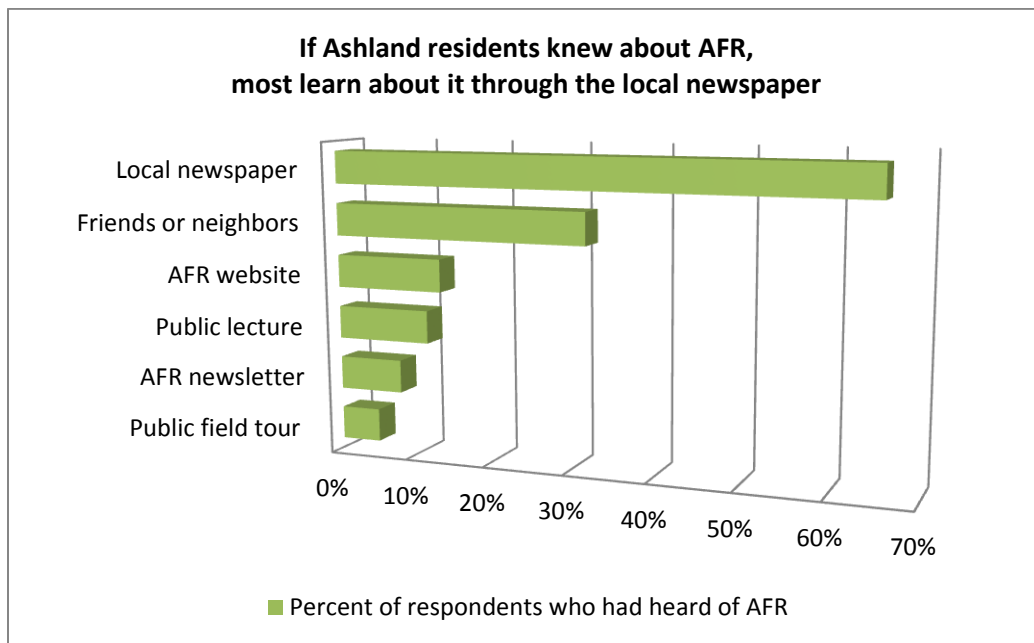
Most residents of Ashland and the surrounding area (60 percent) had never heard of AFR prior to receiving the mail questionnaire. Twenty percent said they knew a little about AFR goals, and only 4 percent knew a lot about AFR (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Percent that knew about AFR prior to the survey



As shown in Figure 9, most people who did know about AFR prior to the survey (66 percent) learned about it through the local newspaper. One-third also said friends and neighbors were an important source of information. Only about 14 percent have visited the AFR website. Relatively few people learned about AFR through a public lecture or field tour.

Figure 9: Sources of knowledge about AFR



Those people with prior knowledge of AFR were asked their opinion about project goals as they understand them. The following comments illustrate the range of opinion they expressed.

- “To reduce the risk of wildfire mainly, with secondary goals being ensuring the forest is being managed for optimal wildlife health/habitat as well as keeping our water supply safe. I think recreational opportunities...are also being addressed but I'm not sure to what extent.”
- “The goals, as I understand, primarily involve reducing wildfire risk. I obviously support this goal. To the extent that the goals include selling commercial "timber" I am not as supportive.”
- “I think it is important to engage all of the concerned parties in the decision making process but sometimes the talk goes on too long and nothing gets accomplished.”
- “Well-intended, but some members may wish to over-"manage", muckin around in there too much thinking they know what they are doing...”
- “Pretty well understood - yet it should not be managed for water supply for Ashland--as this city increases in size, water piped to Ashland from Butte Falls>Medford>Phoenix>Talent must continue to Ashland!”
- “Newest studies show the key to home protection is perimeter reduction around interface area no matter how loaded the fuels are in forests. Forest service fire science is stuck in the 1950's. Don't allow any more homes in the interface, make sure the ones there are clear and let nature take its course!”
- “It's good that forest resiliency is being addressed. Active management of wild lands is the only logical policy that can allow natural areas to thrive, given the proximity of man and our works. 'Let nature take its course' is naive and shortsighted. I was in Yellowstone in 1988.”
- “I like their goals and believe all the effort underway is appropriate and timely (better late than never). I hope what AFR accomplishes can be a successful model for other communities to use.”

Table 3 summarizes the degree of support/no support among respondents with some knowledge of AFR prior to receiving the questionnaire, based on this open-ended question.

Table 3: Informed Opinion about AFR in Open-ended Comments

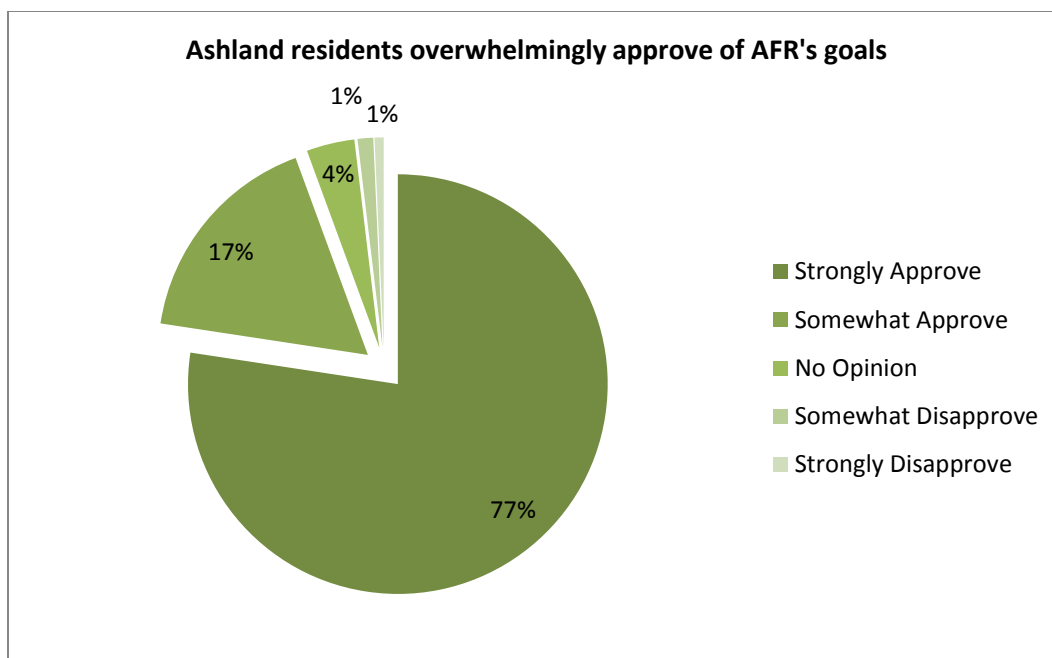
Question 3.3 -- If you do know something about AFR, what is your opinion about the project goals as you understand them?		
Recurring Support/Don't Support Sentiment	Percent	Count
Support	56.6	73
Support goals, but do not trust the people implementing them	5.4	7
Do not support	4.7	6
Needs more planning	2.3	3
Don't know/No opinion given	31.0	40
Total	100	129

All respondents, regardless of prior knowledge were given the following description of AFR and asked whether or not they approve of AFR goals:

Ashland Forest Resilience Stewardship Project is a fire hazard reduction plan, developed jointly by the Forest Service and the community of Ashland, to reduce the potential for large-scale, high severity fire in the Ashland watershed. The plan is designed to protect the City's water supply and to protect and enhance old growth forest ecosystems by creating a more fire resilient landscape. Along with the U.S. Forest Service, AFR partners include City of Ashland, The Nature Conservancy, and Lomakatsi Restoration Project.

Figure 10 shows that overwhelmingly Ashland residents approve of AFR's goals (94 percent), as described above.

Figure 10: Opinion about AFR goals



After this question, respondents were invited to express any concerns they have about AFR in an open-ended format. Based on an initial review, there were no particular concerns that stood out, but the following comments illustrate the range of concerns articulated.

- “Preservation of old growth forest ecosystems is not necessarily a worthy goal. Overall forest health, along with human benefit, is a better starting point. Cost-benefit analysis belongs in there as well, along with a concern for public dollars being spent.”

- “Only that AFR be done according to the best science, independently determined outside of the US Forest Service. The Forest Service cannot always be trusted to make the best decisions on its own without independent review.”
- “To “create” a fire resilient landscape could alter the natural settings and ecosystems. “Creating” anything in the forest is usually man made and self-serving with little thought of the whole picture.”
- “There are too many people with variable inputs, therefore it will be very expensive to create a consensus that is financially feasible. The U.S.F.S. does a fine job w/o all the rest of the people's input.”
- “The city of Ashland is incompetent. However, the other organizations are respectful - without city of Ashland, I'd strongly approve.”
- “We should not allow commercial interests to take a strong hold for the sake of suppressing wildfire. Careful thinning is ok, but not for the sake of profit. With forest management, profit interest & public interest seem to compete.”
- “The ‘community of Ashland’ is vague. How are citizens appointed to work with the Forest Service? I'm opposed to much input from those standing to monetarily gain from their involvement.”
- “The commercial logging component seems to be missing. It is a viable, cost effective way to manage renewable resources, contributes to the local economy, tax base and forest management.”

One respondent raised this concern about AFR goals:

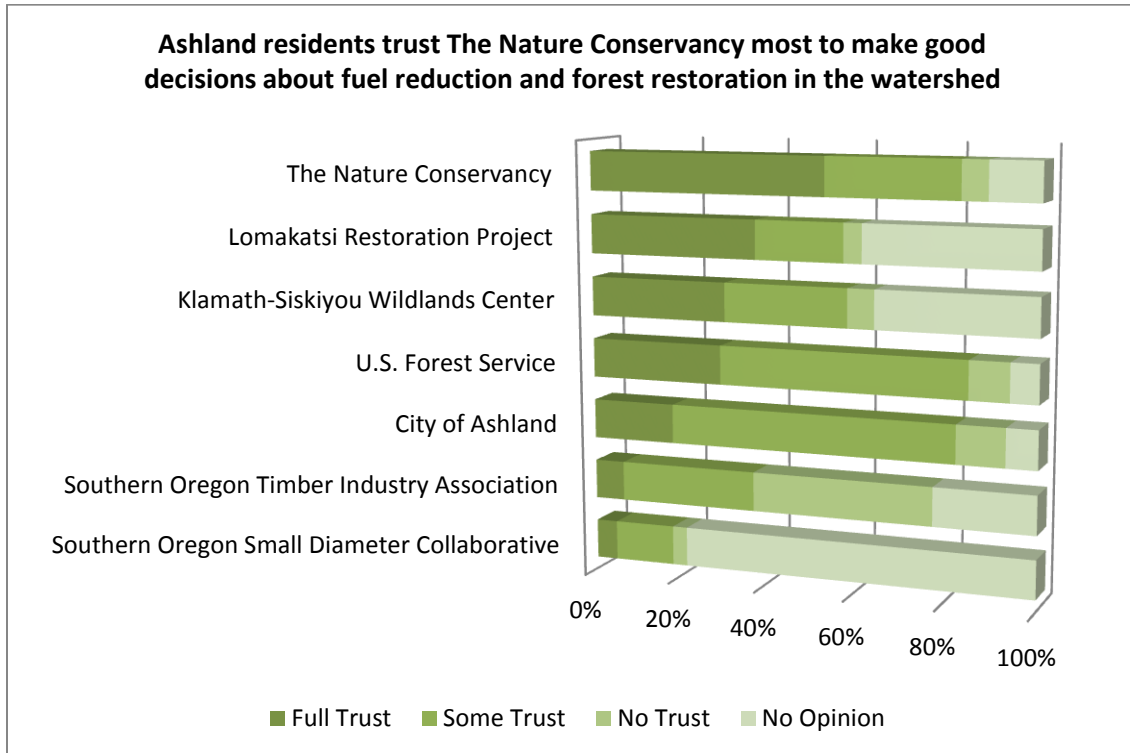
“There seems to be many varied and controversial opinions regarding this project. In the current political and economic climate it is difficult for the average citizen to discern which goals are motivated by special interests of various groups and which goals are truly made for the good of the environment and citizens.”

How much trust do residents of Ashland and surrounding area have in AFR interest groups?

Findings -- Trust in AFR Collaboration

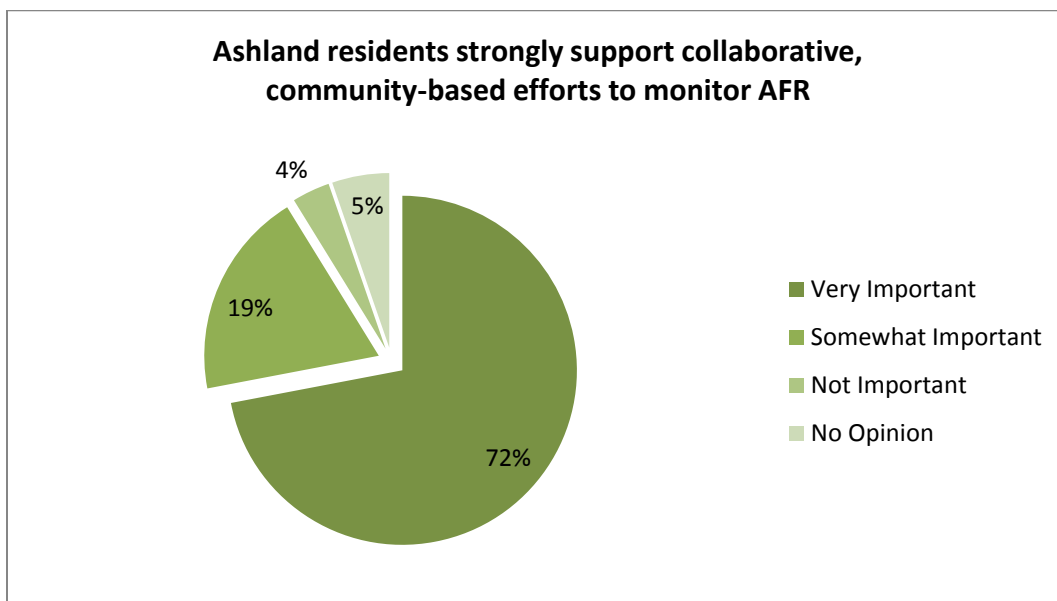
A majority of residents have at least some trust in the four AFR partners (USFS, CofA, TNC and Lomakatsi) and KS Wild to make good decisions about fuel reduction and forest restoration in the watershed. As shown in Figure 11, people trust The Nature Conservancy the most (54 percent have full trust in them) and Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association the least (only 6 percent give them full trust, 40 percent no trust at all). Most residents do not fully trust the Forest Service or the City of Ashland, but the Forest Service enjoys somewhat stronger support than the City of Ashland (30 percent full trust compared to 19 percent).

Figure 11: Level of Trust in AFR Interest Groups



As shown in Figure 12, the vast majority of Ashland residents (91%) believe that collaborative, community-based efforts to monitor fuel reduction in the watershed are important.

Figure 12: Attitude toward multi-party monitoring of AFR



Findings – Support for Forest Restoration

Finally, respondents were asked their opinion about forest restoration in southwest Oregon more broadly, not just in the Ashland Creek watershed. Two-thirds said they had heard or read about forest restoration prior to this survey. Of those people, one-third described what the concept of forest restoration means to them, as illustrated by these comments:

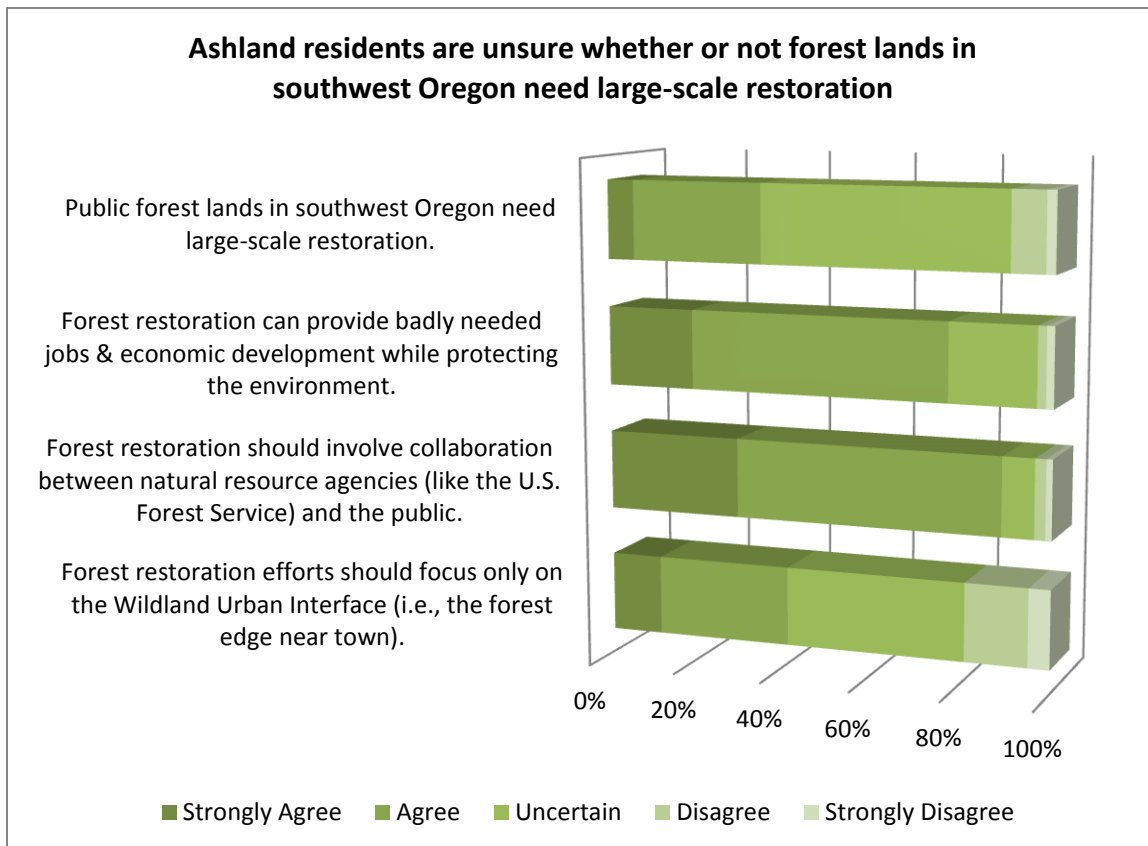
- “It means returning the forest to a condition more like before fire suppression and development/extraction activities.”
- “It sounds like it’s an effort to restore logged areas to a more or less original forested condition.”
- “I understand the concept to mean: ‘Sustainable forestry practices.’ However, I’ve also heard of more radical practices that concern me.”

Table 4 shows common meanings respondents associate with forest restoration, as reported in question 4.1.

Table 4: Meaning of forest restoration, common themes

Question 4.1 – What does the concept of forest restoration mean to you?		
Recurring Themes	Percent (n=132)	Count
Restoring to previous, “natural” conditions	23.5	31
Replanting	16.7	22
Thinning/Fuel Reduction	9.1	12
Preserving Healthy Environment	6.8	9
Preserve Old Growth	2.3	3
Prevent Big Fires	2.3	3

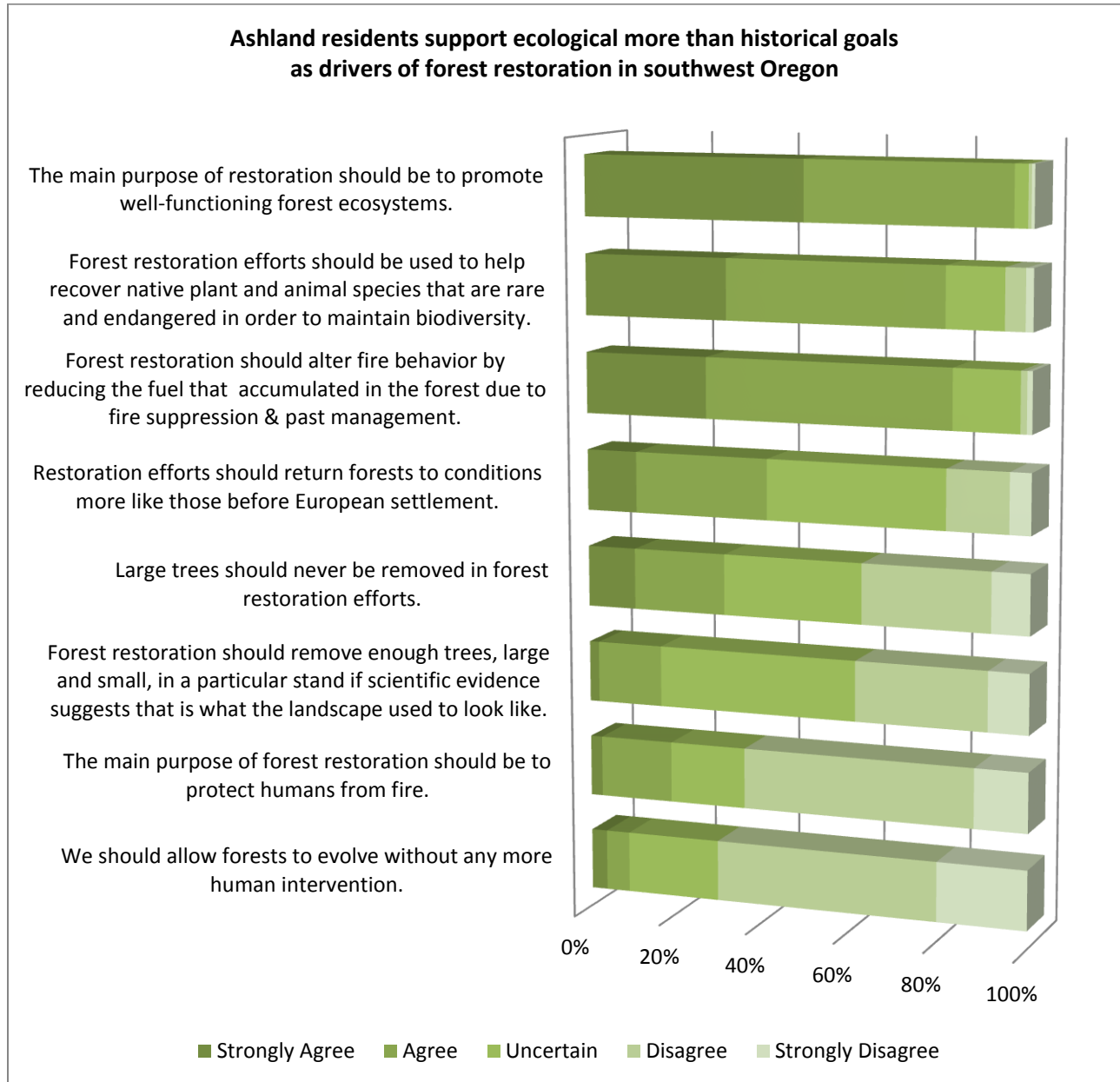
Figure 13 shows respondents’ general attitudes toward forest restoration. A majority of Ashland residents are unsure whether or not forest lands in southwest Oregon need large-scale restoration (55 percent are uncertain). They agree, however, that forest restoration can both provide jobs and protect the environment (76 percent), and they agree that it should involve collaboration between natural resource agencies and the public (90 percent). Fewer than half (41 percent) agree that restoration should focus only on the Wildland-Urban Interface.

Figure 13: Attitudes toward forest restoration in southwest Oregon

Beyond these perspectives, respondents were asked their opinion about the primary goals of forest restoration. As shown in Figure 14, there is widespread agreement among Ashland residents that forest restoration should promote well-functioning ecosystems (96 percent), recover native plant and animal species (81 percent), and reduce fuel accumulations (82 percent). There is far less agreement that restoration should return forests to conditions that existed before European settlement (41 percent) or focus primarily on protecting humans from fire (19 percent), and fewer than one in ten residents agreed that forests should simply be allowed to evolve without any more human intervention.

Ashland residents are ambivalent about removing large trees in forest restoration. While only one-third agree that large trees should never be removed in forest restoration (37 percent disagree and 31 percent are uncertain), only 17 percent agree that trees, large and small, should be removed in restoration efforts if scientific evidence suggests that is what the landscape used to look like (39 percent disagree). Apparently for many people, scientifically established references are not sufficient to justify tree removal in forest restoration.

Figure 14: Attitudes toward forest restoration goals



Findings -- Sense of Place

The last items in the questionnaire were designed to measure the importance of forests in the Ashland Creek watershed relative to other things people value about the local community. In fact, comments about Ashland’s “natural surroundings” were the most common theme in

response to an open-ended question about why people choose to live in Ashland. Those responses were coded for themes and summarized as a frequency distribution and in Table 5.

Table 5: Stated reasons for living in Ashland, rank-ordered

Question 5.3 -- What is most important to you about living in or around this community?		
Recurring Themes	Percent (n=136)	Count
Natural Surroundings	69.9	95
Cultural Values	35.3	48
Recreation Opportunities	32.4	44
Sense of Community	20.6	28
Weather	8.1	11
Small Town Atmosphere	7.4	10
Southern Oregon University	5.1	7
Close to Family	3.7	5
The public school system	2.9	4
Ability to walk anywhere	2.9	4

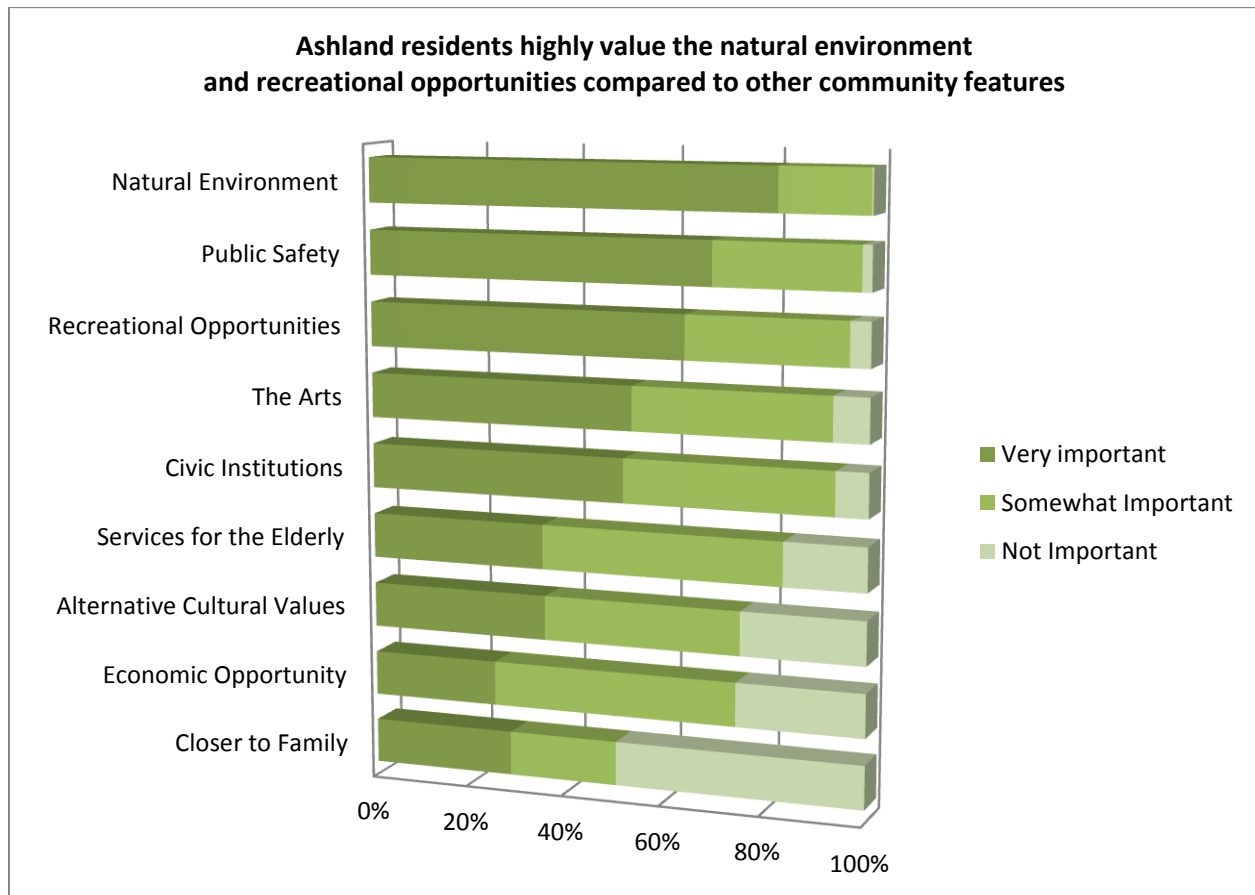
The following comments illustrate some of this sentiment:

- “When you look at a map of the US forested lands we are in the middle of a huge area of forests, mountains and rivers. I also like being in a town where the politics are liberal.”
- “The natural beauty of the area and what I’d term the generally “more evolved consciousness” of the population- I realize this term sounds elitist- I prefer to think of it as being “wisely discriminating”!”
- “The natural beauty and close proximity to incredibly diverse natural wonders. The concern of the community to protect the environment. I can walk from my backyard and be in the wilderness in 3 hours by foot.”
- “The collaborative atmosphere--residents clearly want to work together to make it the best possible place to live.”
- “The changing of this town and area from a lumber producing, cattle ranching and railroad town and culture to what we have now makes me unhappy about living here.”

Respondents were also asked to rank the importance of a set of common reasons why people value their local community (Question 5.4). Figure 15 rank-orders these reasons for contentment, and the responses confirm the importance of the natural environment and

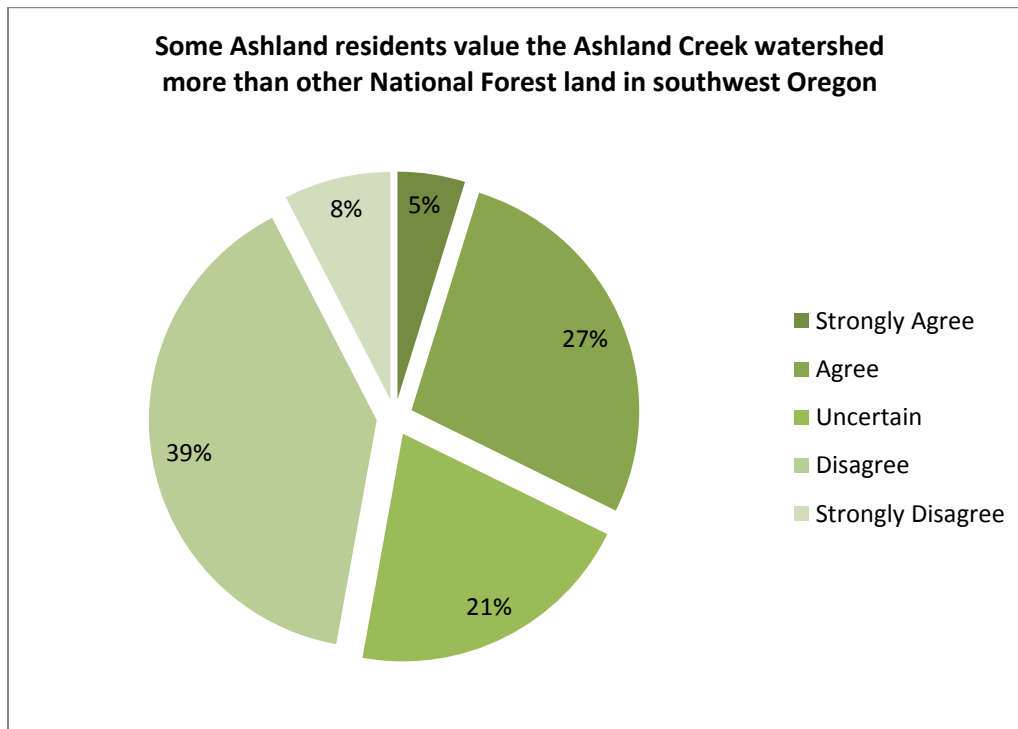
recreational opportunities to residents of Ashland. Those amenities are more important to people than the arts, civic institutions, and alternative cultural values.

Figure 15: Reasons for contentment in the local community



While the natural environment, including the Ashland Creek watershed, is clearly special to many residents, only one-third agree that it is *more important* than other National Forest land in southwest Oregon, and nearly half disagree with that statement (see Figure 16). Yet many respondents offered eloquent descriptions of their attachment to forests in the local watershed, such as this comment:

“I cannot believe how lucky we are to have natural areas like those on Mt. Ashland in our backyard. I have hiked in a lot of old growth areas up there, though I haven't yet visited all the places I hope to. I want my son (now 18 months) to grow up knowing what it feels like to sit, walk, play in an ancient forest. This is a very different feeling from being in a 2nd growth or otherwise managed forest and I think it makes us more human by helping us understand our place on the planet. Protecting the yet unmanaged wild places in our region is the most important goal of ‘forest management’ to me.”

Figure 16: Importance of the Ashland Creek watershed

Findings – Final Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to offer final comments after completing the questionnaire. Many did so, and the following comments illustrate some of the range of sentiment expressed.

- “I value and want to protect the native and natural beauty of our forests, and also balance the needs of the community to enjoy our forest for recreational activities (skiing, mountain biking, hiking etc.). In this way, when used appropriately, our forests enhance and are an integral part of our community.”
- “Our watershed needs to be protected and preserved in every way. The watershed and all areas surrounding it should never be even remotely put in jeopardy for any reason--especially for reasons as ridiculous as ski runs or ski area. There is a much bigger mind set to connect to for economic opportunities in Ashland. I DO NOT want MANAGED FORESTS--they can cease to be a forest and instead become landscaped. Leave what is wild--wild. Fire prevention is important and integrity and honesty should be used in actions taken for forest management for fire prevention when lumber company's or any private governmental body begins to benefit from the sale of the timber removed-things get muddy. A link free consumer watchdog group to oversee would be good.”

- “All our forest lands should be open and available to the public. Too often well-meaning agencies restrict or attempt to limit this availability by various means (closures, fees, etc.). I believe everyone has the right to access public lands. I strongly support supervision and enforcement when necessary. This land belongs to the people - not the US Forest Service. The US Forest Service needs to continue their guardianship, but the community-at-large should be allowed (and learn how) to protect this important and vital resource we are blessed with. Hopefully, there will be a time when conflicting views can be welcomed and everyone works to the good of the forest, wildlife and community.”
- “My hope is that all of the diverse interests and groups finally arrive at a good middle ground on forest restoration and we can move forward with action (sustained and uniformly applied). Funding will continue to be a huge hurdle. My other hope is that we get past the idea that it is "bad" to produce revenue from forest restoration projects.”

Summary and Implications for Management

Compared to other amenities, the “natural environment” is valued most by Ashland residents, and many have a special connection to the Ashland Creek watershed, visiting the forests there often. They particularly value the “natural beauty” and ecological integrity of forests in the region. While people do not view forests in the watershed as “unhealthy,” they are concerned about the risk of a large scale high-severity wildfire, and therefore, they support AFR’s fuel reduction goals and activities, including commercial thinning and use of prescribed fire.

Ashland residents are not sure that National Forest land in the broader region needs large scale restoration, but where restoration is needed, people believe the goals should be more ecological (functional integrity) than historical (returning to pre-settlement conditions). Given the history of fire suppression and current fuel loads, and despite treasuring wild forest landscapes, there is little support among residents for allowing National Forests in the region “to evolve without any more human intervention.”

In sum, there is strong support among Ashland residents for fuel reduction in the watershed and ecologically based forest restoration in the broader region, as long as there is community-based monitoring and the planning is collaborative. Fuel reduction and restoration projects with these features should enjoy broad public support in Ashland and the surrounding area.

Appendix A: Sample Demographics

Figure 15: Sample result compared to population data, Gender

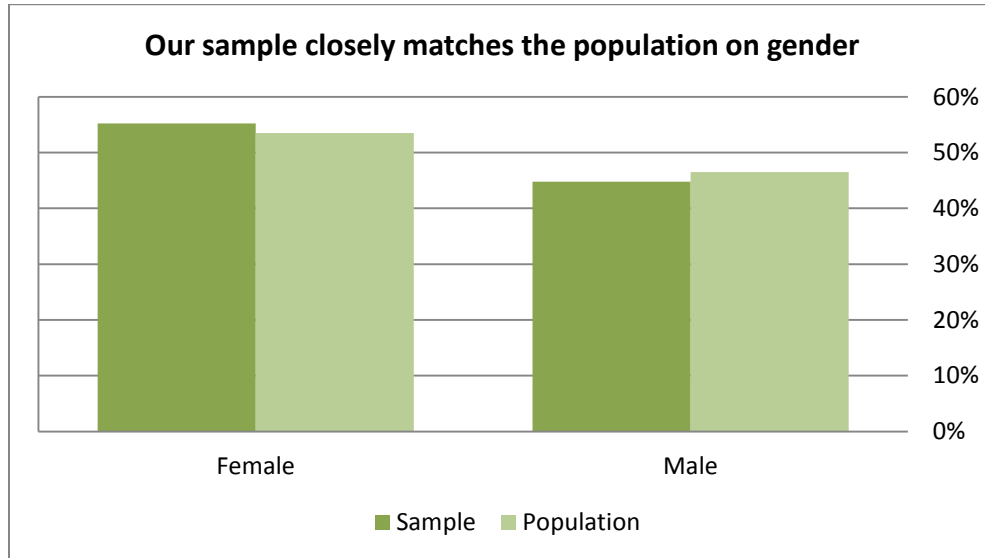


Figure 16: Sample result compared to population data, Age Cohort

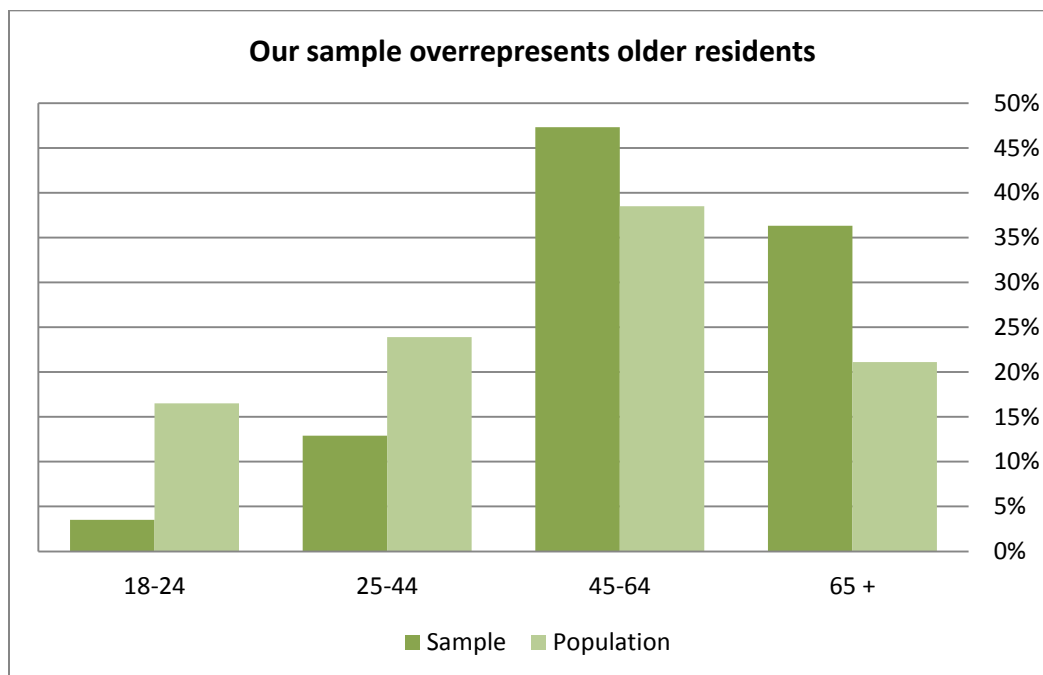


Figure 17: Sample result compared to population data, Household Income

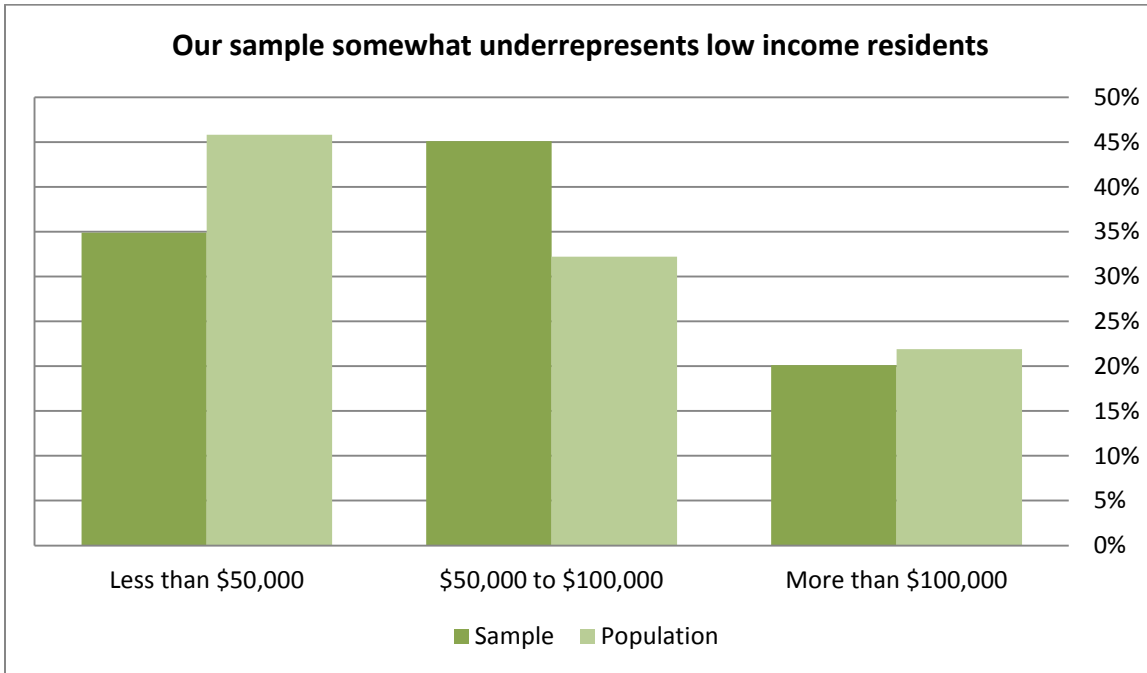


Figure 18: Sample result compared to population data, Residence

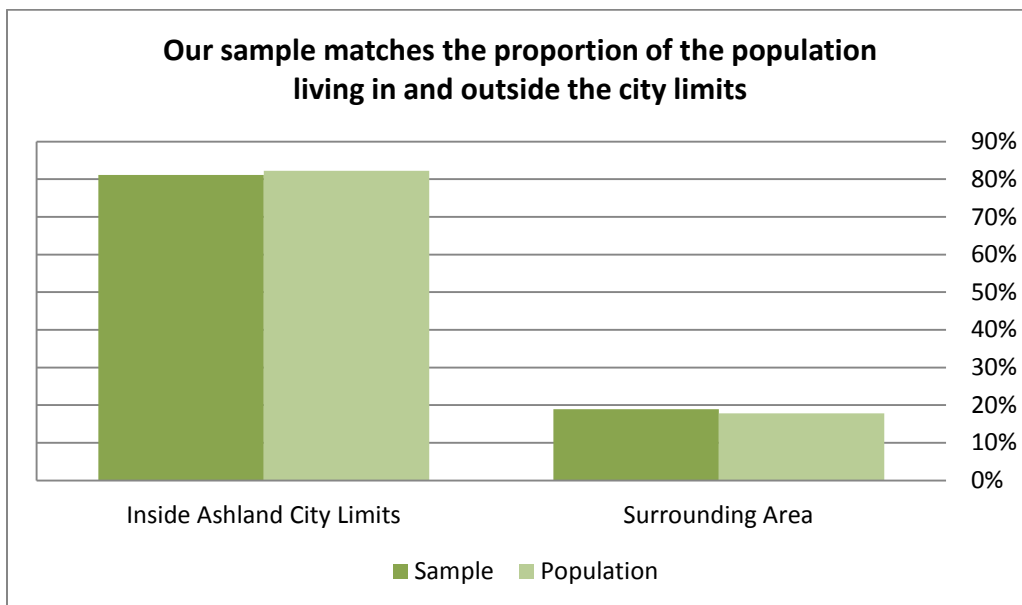
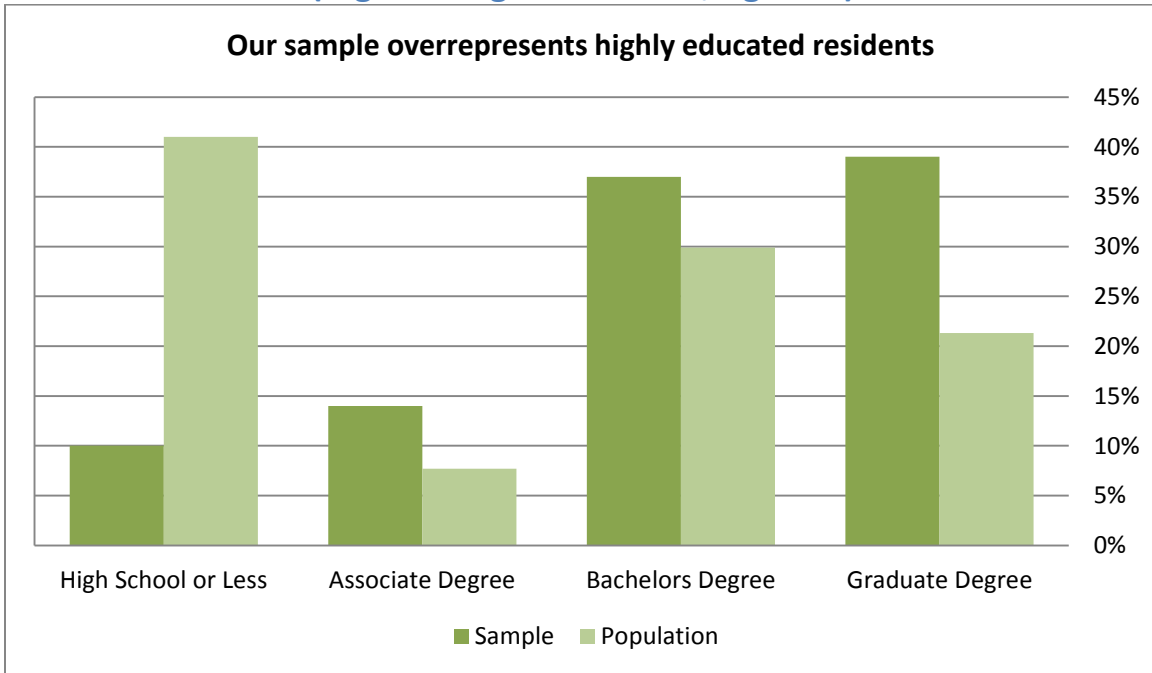


Figure 19: Sample result compared to population data, Education (Highest Degree Attained, Age >24)



Appendix B: Frequency Distributions for Closed-ended Survey Questions

Part 1: Visits to Ashland Watershed and Forest Values

Question 1.2 -- Visits to the Watershed		
About how many times during the last 12 months have you entered the forest in the Ashland watershed, beyond Lithia Park?	Percent	Count
None	24.1	141
1 or 2	16.7	98
3 to 5	15.2	89
6 to 10	11.3	66
Greater than 10	32.8	192
Total	100	586

Question 1.4 -- Percent of \$100 Allocated to Maintain Forest Values	
Imagine that you could "spend" \$100 to ensure that the National Forests in southwest Oregon are able to maintain their values. You may allocate the \$100 in any way you like . . .	Mean Percent Allocated (n=577)
Aesthetic – I value these forests because I enjoy the scenery, sights, sounds, smells, etc.	13.1
Biological Diversity – I value these forests because they provide a variety of fish, wildlife, plant life, etc.	12.0
Cultural – I value these forests because they are a place for me to continue to pass down the wisdom and knowledge, traditions, and way of life of my ancestors.	1.8
Economic – I value these forests because they provide timber, fisheries, minerals, or tourism opportunities such as outfitting and guiding.	5.9
Future – I value these forests because they allow future generations to know and experience the forests as they are now.	8.0
Historic – I value these forests because they have places and things of natural and human history that matter to me, others, or the nation.	2.4
Intrinsic – I value these forests in and of themselves, whether people are present or not.	8.3
Learning – I value these forests because we can learn about the environment through scientific observation or experimentation.	3.4
Life Sustaining – I value these forests because they help produce, preserve, clean, and renew air, soil, and water.	20.7
Recreation – I value these forests because they provide a place for my favorite outdoor recreation activities.	11.1
Spiritual – I value these forests because they are a sacred, religious, or spiritually special place to me or because I feel reverence and respect for nature there.	5.1
Therapeutic – I value these forests because they make me feel better, physically or mentally.	7.4
Total	100

Part 2: Forest Conditions and responsible Management in the Ashland Creek Watershed

Question 2.1 -- Overall Health of the Watershed		
In general, how would you rate the overall condition of the forests in the Ashland Creek watershed?	Percent	Count
Very unhealthy	0.5	3
Somewhat unhealthy	7.2	41
Somewhat healthy	45.2	256
Very healthy	27.4	155
Don't know	19.6	111
Total	100	566

Question 2.2 -- Chance of Fire in the Ashland Watershed		
In your opinion, what are the chances of a large-scale, high severity fire occurring in the Ashland watershed in the next five years?	Percent	Count
Very Unlikely	1.9	11
Somewhat Unlikely	13.0	75
Somewhat Likely	46.4	268
Very Likely	25.0	144
Don't Know	13.7	79
Total	100	577

Question 2.3 -- Knowledge of Terminology				
Please tell us how familiar you are with the following terms used to describe forest conditions and management.	I've never heard of the term	I've heard the term, but don't know the meaning	I know the meaning of the term	Total (n=584)
Threatened and Endangered Species	0.9	0.7	98.5	100%
Fuel Reduction	3.1	6.2	90.7	100%
Prescribed Fire	5.3	8.9	85.8	100%
Ecosystem Management	1.9	15.8	82.2	100%
Ecological reference condition	51.6	35.7	12.7	100%
Historic Range of Variability	46.7	29.3	24.0	100%
Forest Resilience	7.5	27.6	65.0	100%
Succession	30.2	29.4	40.4	100%
Disturbance	24.2	32.5	43.4	100%
Legacy Tree	30.9	31.6	37.4	100%
Fire Adapted Ecosystem	20.7	28.2	51.1	100%

Question 2.4 -- Opinion about Wildfires in Southwest Oregon Forests

Please respond to each statement to the best of your ability by indicating whether you believe it is generally false, generally true, or that you are not sure.	Generally False	Generally True	Not Sure	Total (n=584)
Years of fire suppression has increased the risk of severe wildfire in our regions forest.	5.2	72.9	22.0	100%
Fires play an important role in controlling insect and disease outbreaks in forests.	1.9	87.0	11.1	100%
Fires are not important for maintaining wildlife habitat.	72.4	9.7	18.0	100%
Some trees, like ponderosa pine, grow better in open, sunny areas than in shaded ones.	2.7	59.6	37.6	100%
Many plants require occasional fires so that new seeds or seedlings can sprout.	3.3	87.1	9.6	100%
Fires in one year are not influenced by fires in previous years.	59.2	10.0	30.8	100%
Prior to European settlement, forests were generally more open than they are today.	12.2	39.9	47.9	100%

Question 2.5 -- Importance of Management Issues

How important are the following management issues to you?	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total (n=583)
Protecting Ashland’s municipal water supply.	1.2	8.4	90.4	100%
Reducing wildfire risk.	1.4	21.6	77.0	100%
Limiting access by closing roads.	20.6	48.3	31.0	100%
Creating more designated wilderness area.	18.5	33.5	48.0	100%
Managing for increased recreation use	31.7	43.6	24.7	100%
Providing adequate habitat for sensitive wildlife species.	5.0	27.4	67.6	100%
Restoring forests to conditions that existed before fire suppression.	14.7	50.1	35.2	100%
Preserving old growth forests.	4.5	24.1	71.4	100%

Question 2.6 -- Surface and Ladder Fuel Treatment

In my opinion, surface and ladder fuel treatment in the Ashland watershed is:	Percent	Count
An unnecessary practice	1.2	7
A practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.	1.1	6
Something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.	17.7	100
A legitimate tool that resource managers should use more often.	57.8	327
I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.	22.3	126
Total	100.0	566

Question 2.7 -- Commercial Thinning and Density Management

In my opinion, commercial thinning and density management in the Ashland watershed is:	Percent	Count
An unnecessary practice	2.8	16
A practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.	5.2	30
Something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.	35.9	208
A legitimate tool that resource managers should use more often.	42.9	249
I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.	13.3	77
Total	100.0	580

Question 2.7 -- Prescribed Fire

In my opinion, setting prescribed fire in the Ashland watershed is:	Percent	Count
An unnecessary practice	1.7	10
A practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.	6.0	35
Something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.	40.5	235
A legitimate tool that resource managers should use more often.	37.2	216
I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.	14.5	84
Total	100.0	580

Part 3: Knowledge of AFR Project

Question 3.1 --Knowledge of AFR		
Before this survey, had you heard or read about the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project (AFR)?	Percent	Count
No, I've never heard of it.	60.3	348
Yes, I've heard of it but don't know what it involves.	16.3	94
Yes, I've heard of it and know a little about the project goals.	19.8	114
Yes, I've heard of it and know a lot about the project goals.	3.6	21
Total	100.0	577

Question 3.2 -- Where Respondent Heard of AFR		
If you heard about AFR prior to this survey, where did you hear about it? (circle all that apply)	Percent (n=163)	Count
I attended a public tour about AFR in the watershed.	4.9	8
I attended a public lecture or meeting that discussed AFR.	11.7	19
I read about AFR on the City of Ashland's AFR website.	13.5	22
I read AFR newsletters circulated via email.	8.0	13
I read about AFR in the local newspaper.	65.6	107
I heard about AFR from friends or neighbors.	31.9	52
Other	20.2	33

Question 3.4 -- Approval of AFR's goals		
Do you approve or disapprove of AFR's goals?	Percent	Count
Strongly Disapprove	0.7	4
Somewhat Disapprove	1.2	7
Somewhat Approve	17.0	97
Strongly Approve	77.4	441
No Opinion	3.7	21
Total	100	570

Question 3.6 -- Trust in Organizations

Please indicate your level of trust in the following groups to make good decisions about fuel reduction and forest restoration in the Ashland watershed. If you have no basis for judgment, please mark "no opinion".	No Trust	Some Trust	Full Trust	No Opinion	Total n=580
U.S. Forest Service	8.8	55.1	29.9	6.2	100%
City of Ashland	10.7	63.8	18.6	6.9	100%
The Nature Conservancy	5.7	29.4	53.5	11.3	100%
Lomakatsi Restoration Project	4.0	19.7	38.1	38.3	100%
Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association	40.1	30.8	6.6	22.5	100%
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center	5.9	27.6	31.0	35.5	100%
Southern Oregon Small Diameter Collaborative	3.3	13.6	4.7	78.3	100%

Question 3.7 -- Importance of Public Oversight

We'd like to know how important it is to you that large-scale fuel reduction in the Ashland watershed has this type of public oversight.	Percent	Count
Not Important	3.5	20
Somewhat Important	19.2	109
Very Important	72.0	408
No Opinion	5.3	30
Total	100	567

Part 4: Meaning of Forest Restoration

Question 4.1 -- Knowledge of Forest Restoration		
Before this survey had you heard or read about forest restoration in Southwest Oregon?	Percent	Count
Yes	65.2	365
No	34.8	195
Total	100	560

Question 4.2 -- Opinion about AFR Goals						
Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements.	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total (n=579)
Restoration efforts should return forests to conditions more like those before European settlement.	4.8	14.0	39.9	30.0	11.3	100%
The main purpose of restoration should be to promote well-functioning forest ecosystems.	0.7	0.7	3.0	46.0	49.7	100%
Forest restoration should alter fire behavior by reducing the fuel that has accumulated in the forest due to fire suppression and past management.	1.2	1.4	14.9	54.9	27.5	100%
We should allow forests to evolve without any more human intervention.	20.4	49.9	20.9	5.3	3.5	100%
Forest restoration should remove enough trees, large and small, in a particular stand if scientific evidence suggests that is what the landscape used to look like.	9.2	29.6	44.5	14.6	2.1	100%
Forest restoration efforts should be used to help recover native plant and animal species that are rare and endangered in order to maintain biodiversity.	1.7	4.5	13.0	48.6	32.2	100%
The main purpose of forest restoration should be to protect humans from fire.	12.1	51.8	17.0	16.3	2.6	100%
Large trees should never be removed in forest restoration efforts.	8.6	28.8	31.1	20.7	10.8	100%
Public forest lands in southwest Oregon need large-scale restoration.	2.1	7.5	54.9	29.5	6.0	100%
Forest restoration efforts should focus only on the Wildland Urban Interface (i.e. the forest edge near town).	12.8	49.6	25.5	10.5	1.6	100%
Forest restoration can provide badly needed jobs and economic development while protecting the environment.	1.7	1.9	19.2	57.7	19.5	100%
Forest restoration should involve collaboration between natural resource agencies (like the U.S. Forest Service) and the public.	1.4	2.4	7.1	59.3	29.8	100%

Part 5: Sense of Place

Question 5.2 -- Affinity to the Ashland Watershed		
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The Ashland Creek watershed is more important to me than other National Forest land in southwest Oregon."	Percent	Count
Strongly Disagree	4.8	27
Disagree	27.5	156
Uncertain	20.6	117
Agree	39.6	225
Strongly Agree	7.6	43
Total	100	568

Question 5.4 – Reasons for contentment living in Ashland				
How important is each of these reasons to your contentment in the Ashland area?	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Total n=583
The arts (e.g., theater; music; galleries)	7.0	39.3	53.7	100%
Economic opportunities	25.4	49.2	25.4	100%
Civic institutions (e.g., schools; libraries; city government)	6.4	41.6	52.0	100%
Recreational opportunities	4.0	31.8	64.2	100%
Alternative Cultural Values	24.6	39.5	35.9	100%
Public safety (e.g., little congestion; low crime rates)	1.9	28.6	69.5	100%
Services for the elderly (e.g., medical and retirement facilities)	16.3	48.2	35.5	100%
Natural environment (e.g., forests; water; wildlife)	0.3	10.2	89.5	100%
To be closer to family	49.5	21.9	28.6	100%

Part 5: Demographics

P5.6 -- Length of Residence in Ashland		
How long have you lived in Ashland or the surrounding area?	Percent	Count
Less than 10 years	26.5	154
10 to 19 years	24.4	142
20 to 29 years	22.0	128
30 years or more	27.1	158
Total	100	582

P5.8 – Age		
What is your age?	Percent	Count
35 years or younger (Millennials)	7.9	45
36 to 51 years (X Generation)	18.7	107
52 to 66 years (Baby Boomers)	45.7	262
67 years or older (World War II Generation)	27.7	159
Total	100	573

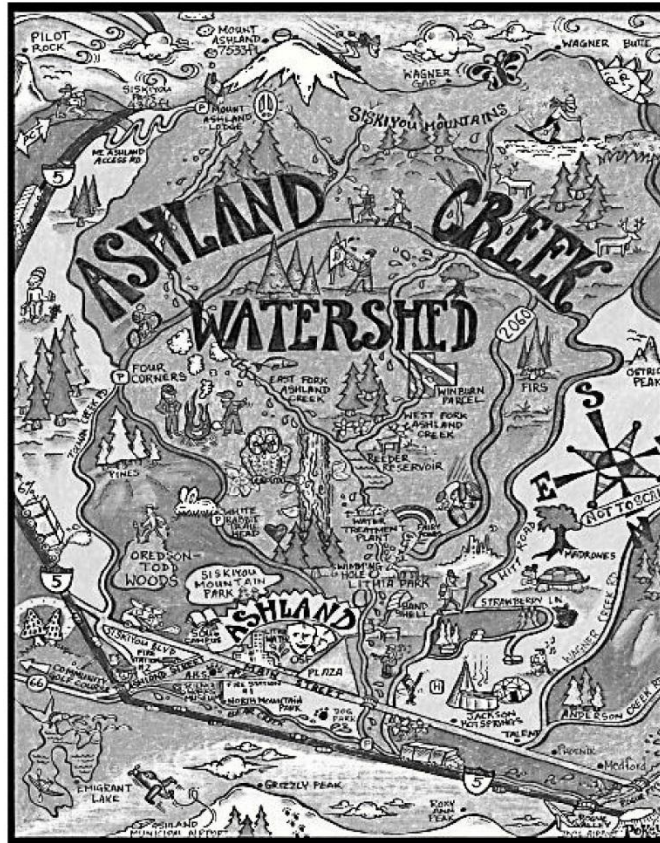
P5.9 -- Gender		
Are you?	Percent	Count
Male	44.8	259
Female	55.2	319
Total	100	578

P5.10 -- Education		
What is the highest level of education you have completed?	Percent	Count
Less than High school diploma	0.3	2
High school diploma or GED	10.3	59
2-year vocational or Associates degree	14.1	81
Bachelor's degree	36.2	208
Graduate degree	39.1	225
Total	100	575

P5.10 -- Household Income		
What is your approximate annual household income before taxes?	Percent	Count
Less than \$25,000	13.9	72
\$25,000 to \$49,999	21.0	109
\$50,000 to \$74,999	26.4	137
\$75,000 to \$99,999	18.7	97
\$100,000 to \$149,999	13.5	70
\$150,000 or more	6.6	34
Total	100	519

Appendix C: Survey Instrument

Forests in the Ashland Creek Watershed: A Public Opinion Survey



**What do you value about these forests?
Your response is important!**

Administered by Southern Oregon University Research Center, 2012

What is the purpose of the survey?

Purpose: This questionnaire has been developed by researchers at Southern Oregon University working with The Nature Conservancy, City of Ashland, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, and U.S. Forest Service. It is designed to learn what the citizens of Ashland, and the surrounding area, think about forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed (i.e., forests above town and below Mt. Ashland). We are also interested in your opinions about forest restoration in southwest Oregon more generally. The results from this survey will inform future management of forests in the region.

Questionnaire Instructions: It is important that the person to whom the survey was addressed complete the questionnaire. For each question, please choose the answer that most closely reflects your perspective and experience. Even if you are unfamiliar with certain issues, it is important that you tell us that as well. Your answers and comments will be kept confidential. If there are issues about the Ashland watershed and forest restoration not covered in this survey that are important to you, please share your thoughts at the end of the questionnaire. Please print clearly and circle the number that indicates your response for each item. Completing the survey will take about twenty minutes.

When you are finished, place the questionnaire in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope and mail it back to us. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful response to our survey. Your participation is very much appreciated.

Future Opportunity: We are also interested in how peoples' opinions change over the next several years as management efforts unfold and forest conditions change. If you would like to be included in future opinion research about forests in the region, then please provide your contact information on page 11 of this questionnaire.

If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact us by phone: (541) 552-6761 or Email: shibleym@sou.edu

Part 1: First we need to ask you a few questions specifically about the forests in the Ashland Creek watershed. By “watershed” we mean the forest landscape above town and below Mt. Ashland that drains into Ashland Creek. Most of this 15,000-acre watershed is federal land managed by the US Forest Service. The map on the front cover roughly illustrates this area, as does the picture below (photo by Sean Bagshaw).



P1.1 What do you value most about the forests in the Ashland Creek watershed (the forested area captured in the photo above, between the City of Ashland in the foreground and Mt. Ashland in the background)?

P1.2 About how many times during the last 12 months have you entered the forest in the Ashland watershed, beyond Lithia Park? *(Please circle one response.)*

- None
- 1 or 2 times
- 3 to 5 times
- 6 to 10 times
- 10 times or more

P1.3 What do you do, primarily, when you enter the forest in the Ashland watershed above town and beyond Lithia Park? If you haven't entered the forest in the last 12 months, then skip this question.

National Forests hold different values for different people. Some of these values are connected to direct use of the forest (such as recreation). Some people value the forest without setting foot in it (such as knowing that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy it as it is now). Listed below are some of the best known values of National Forests. We would like to know how important each of the following values is to you regarding National Forests in southwest Oregon.

P1.4 National Forests in southwest Oregon are able to maintain their values. You may allocate the \$100 in any way you like, but your total spending may not exceed \$100. You might spend all \$100 on one value (and \$0 on all the others), or you might spend \$50 on one value, \$25 on another value, and \$25 on yet another value. Remember, the total dollars you spend should equal \$100. (Reference to money is not made to actual money, your own or the Forest Service's.)

-
- \$ ____ **Aesthetic value** value these forests because I enjoy the scenery, sights, sounds, smells, etc.
 - \$ ____ **Biological diversity value** value these forests because they provide a variety of fish, wildlife, plant life, etc.
 - \$ ____ **Cultural value** value these forests because they are a place for me to continue to pass down the wisdom and knowledge, traditions and way of life of my ancestors.
 - \$ ____ **Economic value** value these forest because they provide timber, fisheries, minerals, or tourism opportunities such as outfitting and guiding.
 - \$ ____ **Future value** value these forests because they allow future generations to know and experience the forests as they are now.
 - \$ ____ **Historic value** value these forests because they have places and things of natural and human history that matter to me, others, or the nation.
 - \$ ____ **Intrinsic value** value these forests in and of themselves, whether people are present or not.
 - \$ ____ **Learning value** value these forests because we can learn about the environment through scientific observation or experimentation.
 - \$ ____ **Life sustaining value** value these forests because they help produce, preserve, clean, and renew air, soil, and water.
 - \$ ____ **Recreation value** value these forests because they provide a place for my favorite outdoor recreation activities.
 - \$ ____ **Spiritual value** value these forests because they are a sacred, religious, or spiritually special place to me or because I feel reverence and respect for nature there.
 - \$ ____ **Therapeutic value** value these forests because they make me feel better, physically or mentally.

\$ 100 Total Value Allocation

Part 2: Now we are interested in your opinions about forest conditions and responsible management in the Ashland Creek watershed specifically. Even if you are unfamiliar with certain items, it is important that you tell us that as well. For each question, please circle the answer that most closely reflects your opinion.

P2.1 In general, how would you rate the overall condition of the forests in the Ashland Creek watershed?

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Very
Unhealthy | Somewhat
Unhealthy | Somewhat
Healthy | Very
Healthy | Don't
Know |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------|

P2.2 In your opinion, what are the chances of a large-scale, high severity fire occurring in the Ashland watershed in the next five years?

Very Unlikely	Somewhat Unlikely	Somewhat Likely	Very Likely	Don't Know
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P2.3 There has been much public discussion lately about forest ecology and management in the Ashland watershed, but some terms used by resource professionals may not be familiar to many people. Please tell us how familiar you are with the following terms used to describe forest conditions and management. (*Circle one number for each term.*)

	I've never heard of the term	I've heard of the term , but don't know the meaning	I know the meaning of the term
Threatened & endangered species	1	2	3
Fuel reduction	1	2	3
Prescribed fire	1	2	3
Ecosystem management	1	2	3
Ecological reference condition	1	2	3
Historic range of variability	1	2	3
Forest resilience	1	2	3
Succession	1	2	3
Disturbance	1	2	3
Legacy tree	1	2	3
Fire adapted ecosystem	1	2	3

P2.4 We're interested in learning more about what you think about wildfires in southwest Oregon forests, including the Ashland Creek watershed. Please respond to each statement to the best of your ability by indicating whether you believe it is generally false, generally true, or that you are not sure. (*Circle one number for each statement.*)

	Generally false	Generally true	Not sure
Years of fire suppression has increased the risk of severe wildfire in our region's forests.	1	2	3
Fires play an important role in controlling insect and disease outbreaks in forests.	1	2	3
Fires are not important for maintaining wildlife habitat.	1	2	3
Some trees, like ponderosa pine, grow better in open, sunny areas than in shaded ones.	1	2	3
Many plants require occasional fires so that new seeds or seedlings can sprout.	1	2	3
Fires in one year are not influenced by fires in previous years.	1	2	3
Prior to European settlement, forests were generally more open than they are today.	1	2	3

P2.5 U.S. Forest Service managers are faced with numerous concerns in the Ashland Creek watershed. How important are the following management issues to you? (*Circle one number for each concern.*)

	Not important	Somewhat important	Very important
Protecting Ashland's municipal water supply	1	2	3
Reducing wildfire risk	1	2	3
Limiting access by closing roads	1	2	3
Creating more designated wilderness area	1	2	3
Managing for increased recreation use	1	2	3
Providing adequate habitat for sensitive wildlife species	1	2	3
Restoring forests to conditions that existed before fire suppression	1	2	3
Preserving old growth forests	1	2	3

The next few questions ask for your opinions about specific practices resource managers can use to change environmental conditions in the Ashland watershed. Please read the following paragraphs, and then answer the questions below. (*For each of the following questions, circle the answer that best matches your opinion.*)

For nearly a century, natural resource managers put out all wildfires. However, scientists have learned in recent years that wildfires are an important part of how nature works. Conditions in many forests, including the Ashland Creek watershed, now differ substantially from how they looked and functioned a century ago. Fire suppression has allowed leaves, dead branches, other debris, and small trees to build up over time, increasing "fuel" that promotes hotter and larger fires. In many parts of the Ashland watershed, trees are more numerous than before but also smaller, so they are more likely to burn in a fire. Public resource managers now promote ways to allow fires to burn more naturally and less dangerously in forests like those in the Ashland Creek watershed. To do this, they reduce the amount of fuel and abundance of smaller trees to return forests to conditions more like what existed before fire suppression. Some practices that can do this are:

Surface and ladder fuel treatment —Managers can use chainsaws or other tools to reduce the number of shrubs and small trees where they are so numerous that they increase the size and severity of wildfires. This cut material is typically dispersed or piled and burned since it has little or no commercial value.

Commercial thinning and density management – In overly dense forests, where competition threatens tree vigor, some smaller trees with commercial value (i.e., greater than 7 inches in diameter at the base) can be selected to be cut and removed using chainsaws and logging equipment. These sellable logs are a byproduct but not the goal of fuel reduction and restoration, which generally leaves the largest trees.

Prescribed fire – Also called controlled burning, this practice can involve 1) intentionally setting fires in ways that can be controlled to produce desired conditions; 2) letting a naturally caused fire burn within predetermined boundaries and conditions under close and careful watch.

P2.6 In my opinion, **surface and ladder fuel treatment** in the Ashland watershed is:

1. an unnecessary practice.
2. a practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.
3. something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.
4. a legitimate tool that resource managers should use more often.
5. I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.

P2.7 In my opinion, **commercial thinning and density management** in the Ashland watershed is:



1. an unnecessary practice.
2. a practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.
3. something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.
4. a legitimate tool that resource managers should use more often.
5. I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.

P2.8 In my opinion, intentionally setting **prescribed fire** in the Ashland watershed is:

1. an unnecessary practice.
2. a practice that should not be considered because it creates too many negative impacts.
3. something that should be done only infrequently, in carefully selected areas.
4. a legitimate tool that resource managers should use more often.
5. I know too little to make a judgment about this topic.

Part 3: Next we'd like to ask your opinion about current forest management efforts in the Ashland watershed.

P3.1 Before this survey, had you heard or read about the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project (AFR)?
(Please circle the one that best fits your experience.)

1. No, I've never heard of it.  **Skip to question P3.4**
2. Yes, I've heard of it but don't know what it involves. 
3. Yes, I've heard of it and know a little about the project goals.
4. Yes, I've heard of it and know a lot about the project goals.

P3.2 If you heard about AFR prior to this survey, where did you hear about it? *(Circle all that apply.)*

1. I attended a public tour about AFR in the watershed.
2. I attended a public lecture or meeting that discussed AFR.
3. I read about AFR on the City of Ashland's AFR website.
4. I read AFR newsletters circulated via email.
5. I read about AFR in the local newspaper.
6. I heard about AFR from friends or neighbors.
7. Other _____

P3.3 If you do know something about AFR, what is your opinion about the project goals as you understand them?

The next few questions ask for your opinion about specific issues related to the Ashland Forest Resilience Stewardship Project (AFR). Please read the following paragraph, and then answer the questions below.

Ashland Forest Resilience Stewardship Project is a fire hazard reduction plan, developed jointly by the Forest Service and the community of Ashland, to reduce the potential for large-scale, high severity fire in the Ashland watershed. The plan is designed to protect the City’s water supply and to protect and enhance old growth forest ecosystems by creating a more fire resilient landscape. Along with the U.S. Forest Service, AFR partners include City of Ashland, The Nature Conservancy, and Lomakatsi Restoration Project.

P3.4 We’d like to know your opinion about the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project as described in the paragraph above. Do you approve or disapprove of AFR’s goals. *(Circle the answer that best matches your opinion.)*

Strongly Disapprove	Somewhat Disapprove	Somewhat Approve	Strongly Approve	No Opinion
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P3.5 Please describe, briefly, any concerns that you have about AFR, as described above.

P3.6 Please indicate your level of trust in the following groups to make good decisions about fuel reduction and forest restoration in the Ashland watershed. If you have no basis for judgment, please mark “no opinion.” *(Circle one number for each organization.)*

	No Trust	Some Trust	Full Trust	No Opinion
U.S. Forest Service	1	2	3	4
City of Ashland	1	2	3	4
The Nature Conservancy	1	2	3	4
Lomakatsi Restoration Project	1	2	3	4
Southern Oregon Timber Industry Association	1	2	3	4
Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Center	1	2	3	4
Southern Oregon Small Diameter Collaborative	1	2	3	4

P3.7 Local groups, like those listed in the previous question, are working with the U.S. Forest Service to monitor AFR’s effectiveness in achieving project goals. This collaborative, community-based effort is gathering data to track AFR and inform future management decisions. We’d like to know how important it is to you that large-scale fuel reduction in the Ashland watershed has this type of public oversight. *(Circle the answer that best matches your opinion.)*

**Not
Important**
**Somewhat
Important**
**Very
Important**
**No
Opinion**

Part 4: Finally, we need to ask a few questions about forest management in the broader region, beyond the Ashland watershed. There are a variety of perspectives among resource managers, interest groups, and the public about forest restoration in southwest Oregon and the tools used to achieve restoration goals.

P4.1 Before this survey had you heard or read about **forest restoration** in southwest Oregon?
 ___ No
 ___ Yes If yes, then please tell us where you heard about it and what the concept of forest restoration means to you?

P4.2 We’d like to know your opinion about the broad goals of forest restoration on National Forest land in southwest Oregon. Please tell us your level of agreement with the following statements. *(Circle one number for each statement.)*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
Restoration efforts should return forests to conditions more like those before European settlement.	1	2	3	4	5
The main purpose of restoration should be to promote well-functioning forest ecosystems.	1	2	3	4	5
Forest restoration should alter fire behavior by reducing the fuel that has accumulated in the forest due to fire suppression and past management.	1	2	3	4	5
We should allow forests to evolve without any more human intervention.	1	2	3	4	5
Forest restoration should remove enough trees, large and small, in a particular stand if scientific evidence suggests that is what the landscape used to look like.	1	2	3	4	5
Forest restoration efforts should be used to help recover native plant and animal species that are rare and endangered in order to maintain biodiversity.	1	2	3	4	5
The main purpose of forest restoration should be to protect humans from fire.	1	2	3	4	5
Large trees should never be removed in forest restoration efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
Public forest lands in southwest Oregon need large-scale restoration.	1	2	3	4	5
Forest restoration efforts should focus only on the Wildland Urban Interface (i.e., the forest edge near town).	1	2	3	4	5
Forest restoration can provide badly needed jobs and economic development while protecting the environment.	1	2	3	4	5
Forest restoration should involve collaboration between natural resource agencies (like the U.S. Forest Service) and the public.	1	2	3	4	5

Part 5: In this last section, we would like to learn more about you and your connection to Ashland and the surrounding area. All your responses are strictly confidential.

P5.1 When you think of Ashland and the surrounding area, what do you consider to be the most special place in or near this community? Please be specific.

P5.2 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The Ashland Creek watershed is more important to me than other National Forest land in southwest Oregon." *(Circle the answer that best matches your opinion.)*

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly Agree
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P5.3 People choose to live in Ashland and the surrounding area for a variety of reasons. Briefly describe what is most important to you about living in or around this community.

P5.4 Here are some common reasons why people value their local community. How important is each of these reasons to your contentment in the Ashland area? *(Please circle one number for each reason.)*

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
The arts (e.g., theater; music; galleries)	1	2	3
Economic opportunities	1	2	3
Civic institutions (e.g., schools; library; city government)	1	2	3
Recreational opportunities	1	2	3
Alternative culture values	1	2	3
Public safety (e.g., little congestion; low crime rates)	1	2	3
Services for the elderly (e.g., medical and retirement facilities)	1	2	3
Natural environment (e.g., forests; water; wildlife)	1	2	3
To be closer to family	1	2	3

P5.5 Where do you currently live? *(Circle the answer that best describes your residence.)*

1. Inside the Ashland city limits, above Siskiyou Blvd (toward Mt. Ashland)
2. Inside the Ashland city limits, below Siskiyou Blvd (away from Mt. Ashland)
3. Near Ashland, but outside the city limits
4. I don't currently live in or near Ashland

P5.6 How long have you lived in Ashland or the surrounding area? _____ years

P5.7 Please list by name any organizations you belong to (as an employee, member or volunteer) that have a significant interest in the management of National Forests in southwest Oregon.

P5.8 What is your age? _____ years

P5.9 Are you? 1. Male 2. Female

P5.10 What is the highest level of education you have completed? *(Please circle one.)*

Less than High school diploma	High school diploma or GED	2-year vocational or Associates degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree
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P5.11 What is your approximate annual household income before taxes? *(Please circle one.)*

Less than \$25,000	\$25,000- 49,999	\$ 50,000- 74,999	\$75,000- 99,999	\$100,000- 149,999	\$150,000 or more
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******* Future Opportunity to Share Your Opinion about Forests in the Watershed *******

This survey was designed to learn what the citizens of Ashland and the surrounding area think about forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed, and what they think about forest restoration in southwest Oregon more generally. We are also very interested in how peoples' opinions change over the next several years as AFR (Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project) is implemented and forest conditions in the watershed begin to change.

In order to capture the broadest range of opinion about forest conditions and management in our region, it is crucial that as many people as possible who completed this initial survey also complete two brief follow-up surveys, scheduled for summer 2013 and summer 2015. **We will contact you for these important follow-up studies ONLY if you give us your name and contact information below.** That information will be kept confidential; no one other than the research team will have access to it; and you will only be contacted about the two follow-up surveys. If you agree to participate in this important work, then we will send you email in summer 2013 and ask you to complete a short, web-based questionnaire similar to this one. If you have any questions, we'd be happy to talk with you. Contact us by phone (541) 552-6761 or email shibleym@sou.edu.

Name: _____ Email: _____ Ph#: _____

In the space below, please provide any additional comments you have regarding forests in the Ashland Creek watershed, AFR, or forest restoration in the southwest Oregon.

Please mail the survey back to us in the self-addressed, pre-paid envelope. Your opinions will inform future management of the Ashland Creek watershed and forest restoration in our region. Thank you very much! For more information about the Ashland Forest Resiliency Stewardship Project, including the results of this survey, please visit <http://www.ashland.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=503>.

Cover Letter



February 16, 2012

Mark Shibley AFR3429
664 Windemar Dr
Ashland, OR 97520-9094

Dear Mark:

I am writing to ask for your help in a study of Ashland residents being conducted for the Ashland Forest Partnership. This study is part of an effort to learn what residents of Ashland, and the surrounding area, think about forests in the Ashland Creek watershed and what they think about forest restoration in southwest Oregon more generally.

We are contacting a random sample of local residents to ask what they value most about the forests in the watershed, what they think about the condition of those forests, and what their opinion is about forest restoration goals in the region. You have been chosen as part of that randomly selected group to participate in this survey by completing the enclosed questionnaire.

Results from the survey will be used to help the Ashland Forest Partnership better understand public perspectives on forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed. By better understanding public opinion, the Partnership can be more responsive to residents' concerns about management goals and activities.

Your answers are completely confidential and will be released only as summaries, in which no individual's answers can be identified. When you return your completed questionnaire, your name will be deleted from the mailing list and never connected to your answers in any way. The survey is voluntary. However, you can help us very much by taking a few minutes to share your values and opinions about forests in the Ashland Creek watershed and the broader region.

If you have any questions about this survey, please call me at (541) 552-6761 or send an email to shibleym@sou.edu. Thank you for helping with this important study.




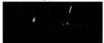




Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark A. Shibley

Mark A. Shibley
Professor of Sociology
Southern Oregon University Research Center

Southern Oregon University Research Center (SOURCE) • 1250 Siskiyou Boulevard • Ashland, Oregon 97520-5062
TEL 541-552-6278 • FAX 541-552-6439

Reminder Card

<p> February 28, 2012</p> <p>Thank you for completing the AFR Survey!</p> <p>Last week we sent you a questionnaire seeking your perspective on forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed. Your name was drawn randomly from a list of all registered voters in Ashland and the surrounding area.</p> <p>If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your opinion that we can accurately understand public perspectives on forests and forest restoration in our region.</p> <p>If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please contact us by phone or email and we will get another one in the mail to you today.</p> <p>Sincerely, </p> <p>Mark A. Shibley, Professor of Sociology shiblevm@sou.edu (541) 552-6761 Southern Oregon University Research Center</p>	<p> February 28, 2012</p> <p>Thank you for completing the AFR Survey!</p> <p>Last week we sent you a questionnaire seeking your perspective on forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed. Your name was drawn randomly from a list of all registered voters in Ashland and the surrounding area.</p> <p>If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your opinion that we can accurately understand public perspectives on forests and forest restoration in our region.</p> <p>If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please contact us by phone or email and we will get another one in the mail to you today.</p> <p>Sincerely, </p> <p>Mark A. Shibley, Professor of Sociology shiblevm@sou.edu (541) 552-6761 Southern Oregon University Research Center</p>
<p> February 28, 2012</p> <p>Thank you for completing the AFR Survey!</p> <p>Last week we sent you a questionnaire seeking your perspective on forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed. Your name was drawn randomly from a list of all registered voters in Ashland and the surrounding area.</p> <p>If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your opinion that we can accurately understand public perspectives on forests and forest restoration in our region.</p> <p>If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please contact us by phone or email and we will get another one in the mail to you today.</p> <p>Sincerely, </p> <p>Mark A. Shibley, Professor of Sociology shiblevm@sou.edu (541) 552-6761 Southern Oregon University Research Center</p>	<p> February 28, 2012</p> <p>Thank you for completing the AFR Survey!</p> <p>Last week we sent you a questionnaire seeking your perspective on forest conditions and management in the Ashland Creek watershed. Your name was drawn randomly from a list of all registered voters in Ashland and the surrounding area.</p> <p>If you have already completed and returned the questionnaire to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. We are especially grateful for your help because it is only by asking people like you to share your opinion that we can accurately understand public perspectives on forests and forest restoration in our region.</p> <p>If you did not receive a questionnaire, or if it was misplaced, please contact us by phone or email and we will get another one in the mail to you today.</p> <p>Sincerely, </p> <p>Mark A. Shibley, Professor of Sociology shiblevm@sou.edu (541) 552-6761 Southern Oregon University Research Center</p>

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