

# The McKenzie Watershed Council's Firewood Program Aids Rural Oregon Residents

*Collaborative program that fills an unmet need in the community through assistance with home heating is seeking additional, sustainable support*

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[/EINPresswire.com/](https://www.einpresswire.com/) -- The [McKenzie Watershed Council's Firewood Program](#)

is helping rural Lane County residents with their heating needs this winter. The program began in December of 2021, spurred in part to help those affected by the Holiday Farm Fire. It has now expanded to include more of the McKenzie River area communities, helping residents in need with firewood harvested from private properties in the burn zone.



The McKenzie Watershed Council's Firewood Program reclaims wood to help individuals heat their homes

Lara Colley, Watershed Restoration Specialist at McKenzie Watershed Council mentioned, "We heard about a fuels firewood program in Wallowa County that was reclaiming wood on private

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We believe this is an approach that could be replicated to help families across Oregon, especially where major fires have occurred.”

*Lara Colley, Watershed Restoration Specialist*

and public land - wood that would otherwise be burned or chipped - to help socioeconomic disadvantaged individuals to heat their homes during the winter. We thought a similar approach could really help out our community, and it is! We believe this is an approach that could be replicated to help families across Oregon, especially where major fires have occurred.”

The Holiday Farm Fire burned over 173,000 acres causing mass destruction to the surrounding communities. Focused on the post-ecological effects of the fire and

inspired by other programs in Wallowa and Jackson counties, the McKenzie Watershed Council's

Firewood Program was developed as an offshoot of the Pure Water Partners forest fuels reduction work with landowners. It not only helps those that were directly affected by the fire but also helps area residents who are not able to afford heating bills and rely on heating their homes with firewood.

With a goal of distributing 300 cords of wood this year, the Firewood Program has received some grant funding from organizations like [The Roundhouse Foundation](#), United Way Wildfire Response Fund, International Paper and is currently seeking support in order to make the program sustainable and continue providing aid to the community. Those interested in supporting this initiative can visit the organization's [website](#) to donate and see additional ways to get involved.

The Firewood Program is a collaborative effort led by the McKenzie Watershed Council, and including partners such as EWEB, Brinks Land Improvement, McKenzie River Trust, McKenzie Community Land Trust, Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District, Suulutaaq, local contractors and private landowners participating in the Pure Water Partners (PWP) Program.

#### About MWC

The McKenzie Watershed Council is a group of volunteers representing the diverse stakeholders and interests in the watershed. Their mission is to foster better stewardship of the McKenzie River watershed resources, deal with issues in advance of resource degradation, and ensure sustainable watershed health, function, and use. The Council's vision is that through collaborative projects and voluntary approaches the McKenzie River watershed supports exceptional water quality and habitats in balance with human livelihood and quality of life.

#### About PWP

The Pure Water Partners (PWP) Program is an voluntary program that supports the protection and restoration of private and non-federal public lands in the McKenzie Watershed. The protection of lands along the river and restoration of riparian forest helps protect drinking water and avoiding future water treatment costs for EWEB. The PWP program also provides technical assistance for landowners who need restoration work on their properties, particularly following the 2020 Holiday Farm Fire.

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