

Oregon Wildland Urban Interface



A Brief History

Wildland Urban Interface

WUI

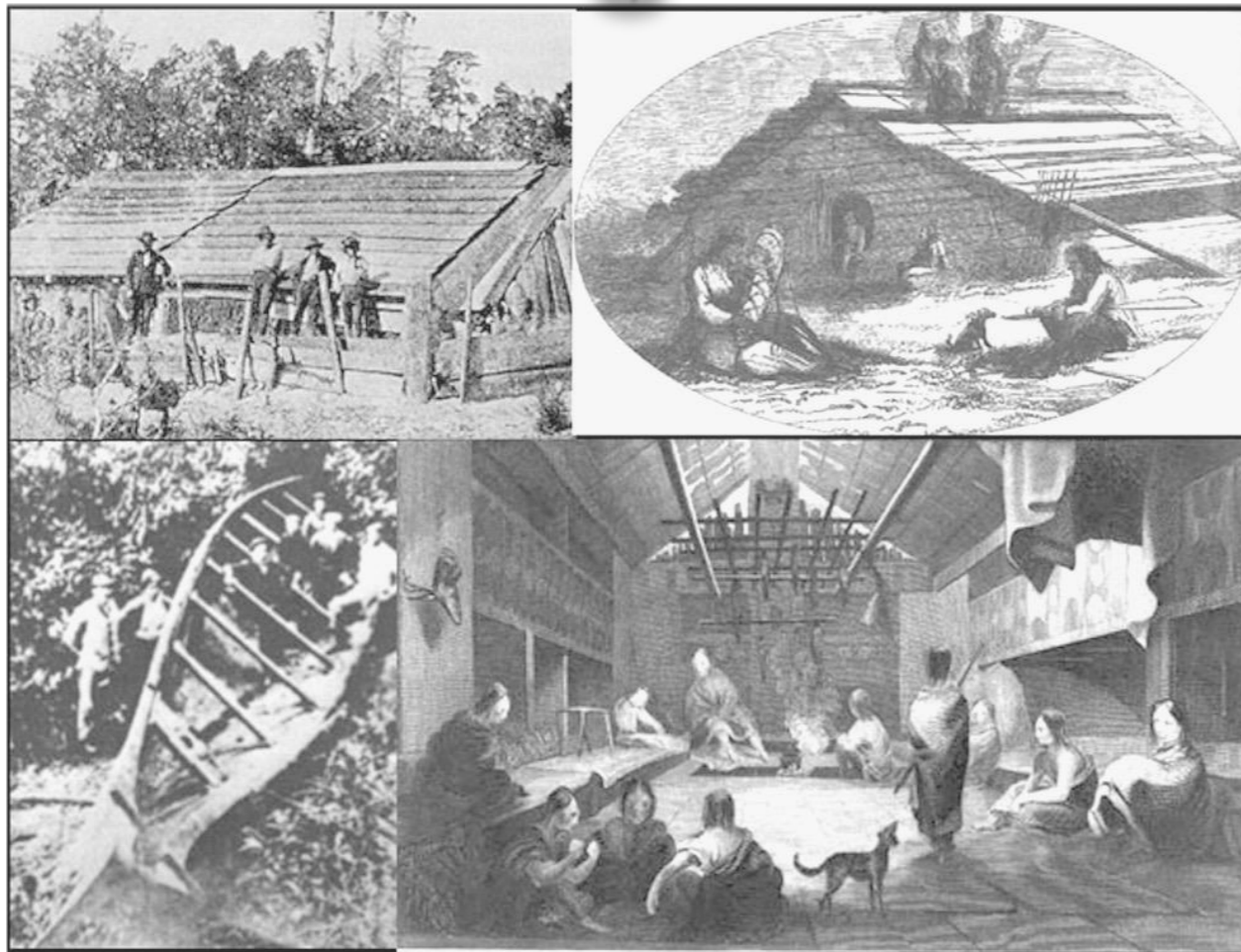
Area where structures and other human development meet or intermingle with natural vegetative fuels



At its peak a forest fire can consume
200 acres/min and create hurricane
force winds

Oregon Historic Wildfires

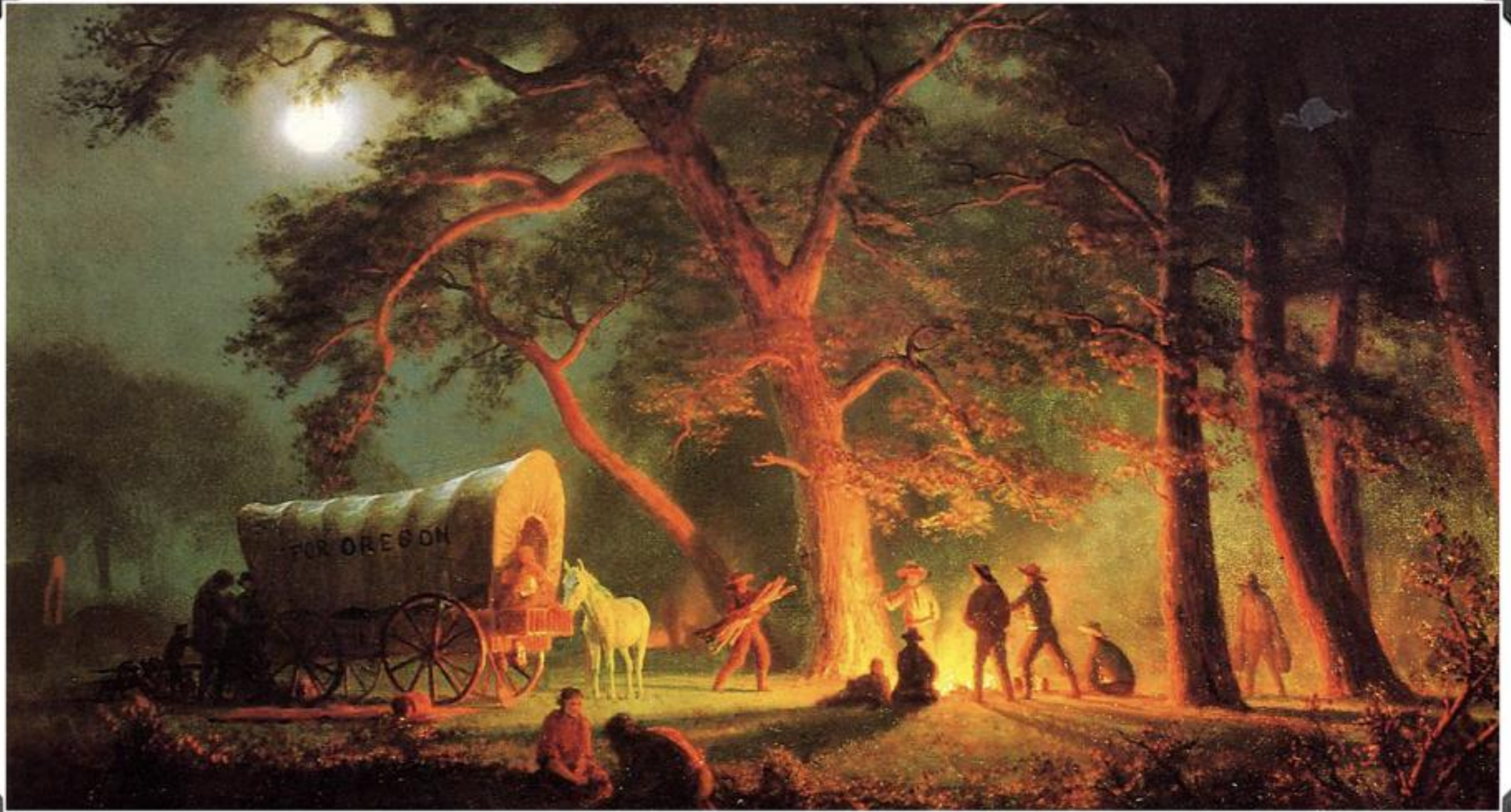
Native Americans



Lightning



Blue Mountains



1840-1900

Fires started by settlers burned over 2 million acres



1865 Silverton Fire

988,000 acres



1902 Columbia Fire

Also known as the Yacolt Burn

170,000 acres in Oregon and 604,000 acres total

Destroyed town of Palmer



September 1910 Big Burn

Regions largest fire

3 million acres across Washington, Idaho and Montana

Burned 3 million acres in 2 days most of it in 6 hours

78 firefighters lost



1936 Bandon Fire

Wildfire outside of town

Wind shift changed fire direction

*Fed by "Gorse" or Irish hedge brought by George Bennett who
established Bandon*

Tillamook Burns

- ❖ Total of 4 Burns
- ❖ 1933 - 239,695 acres
- ❖ 1939 - 217,000 acres
- ❖ 1945 - 180,130 acres
- ❖ 1951 - 32,000 acres



Prevention / Suppression

- ❖ US Forest Service 1905
- ❖ Oregon Department of Forestry 1911
- ❖ Organized Firefighters post World War II



Conflagration Act

- ❖ A state legal authority established as a civil defense measure to mobilize structural fire suppression resources for massive urban fires
- ❖ “Conflagration” Governor declared fire with an imminent threat to life or structures that have exhausted local and mutual aid suppression resources
- ❖ Allows Oregon State Fire Marshal to assign firefighting resources outside of mutual aid agreements

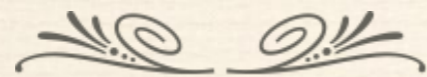


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First used in 1959 to coordinate aid to an explosion and fire in downtown Roseburg

6.5 tons of explosives

WUI increased in
1970's with
increased
suburban growth



Conflagration Act

- ❖ Not invoked again until 1972 for a WUI in Yamhill County
- ❖ Amended after 9/11 to include “All Hazard” response

1996-2016

- ❖ Conflagrations declared: 70
- ❖ Most in one year: 11 in 2002
- ❖ Most in one week: 5 in 1996 / 5 in 2002
- ❖ Most in one day: 3 in 1996

- ❖ # of fires vary year to year
- ❖ Usually 1 or 2 large fires drive acreage totals up
- ❖ Stronger mitigation efforts and Community Wildfire Protection Plans pushed after busy 2002 fire season

Silver Complex Fire

- ❖ August 30, 1987
- ❖ First recorded catastrophic scale fire in Klamath Siskiyou Mountains
- ❖ 150,000 acres
- ❖ 1,659 lightning strikes hit southern Oregon and Northern California



Skeleton Fire 1996

- ❖ Bend
- ❖ 19 homes lost
- ❖ 13 outbuildings





Biscuit Fire 2002

500,000 acres
Same area as Silver Complex

Canyon Creek Complex 2015

John Day



Canyon Creek Complex

- ❖ Lightning caused
- ❖ Wind driven
- ❖ Two fires into one
- ❖ 53 structures lost





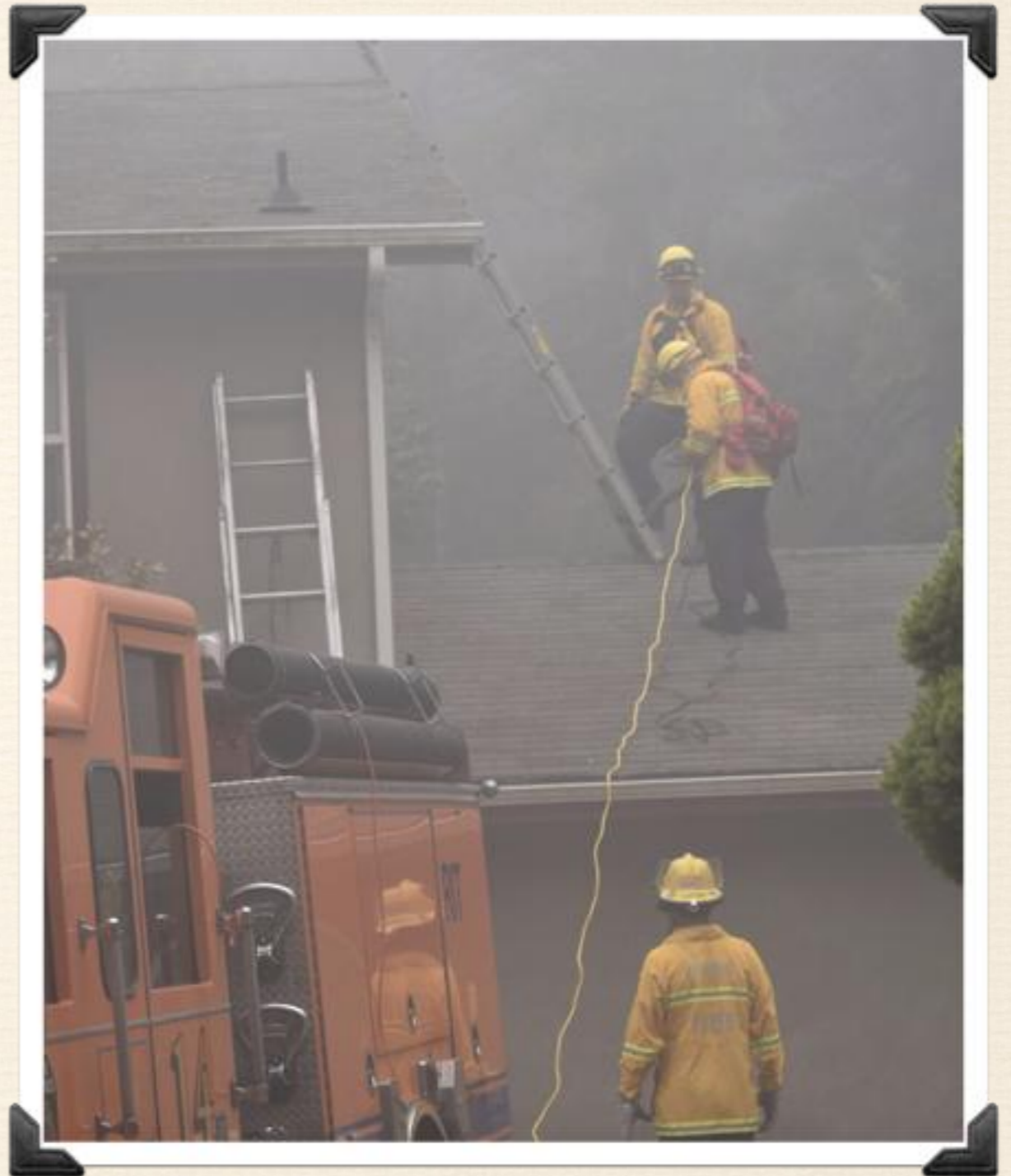
Chetco Bar Fire

- ❖ 2017
- ❖ Brookings
- ❖ Started July 12
- ❖ Chetco winds August 15th
- ❖ 45 mph winds
- ❖ 18 miles in 80 hours



Chetco Bar Fire

- ❖ August 19 48,825 acres
- ❖ Burned 6 homes east of Brookings
- ❖ August 22 fire at 100,000 acres
- ❖ Outpaced predicted fire growth
- ❖ Conflagration increased firefighters from 280 to 1,174 in 2 days



Eagle Creek Fire

- ❖ Fireworks
- ❖ 50,000 acres
- ❖ Started September 2, 2017
- ❖ Grew 3000 acres overnight
- ❖ Grew to 20,000 acres by September 5







Santa Rosa California

- ❖ Tubbs Fire
- ❖ 14 different fires
- ❖ 5200 structures lost
- ❖ 2800 in City of Santa Rosa
- ❖ 22 fatalities
- ❖ Winds exceeding 50 mph
- ❖ Downed power lines







Thomas Fire

- ❖ Santa Barbara
- ❖ 281,893 acres
- ❖ 1063 structures lost
- ❖ 8,500 firefighters
- ❖ Santa Ana winds and 1% humidity



Thomas Fire

- ❖ January 21, 2018
- ❖ .54" rain in 5 minutes
- ❖ Mudslides
- ❖ 129 structures lost
- ❖ 307 damaged
- ❖ 21 fatalities

