

Kara Baylog Ep. 71

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Introduction to In the Woods Podcast

[00:00:00] Lauren Grand: From the Oregon State University's Extension Service, you are listening to In the Woods with the Forestry and Natural Resources Program. This podcast brings the forest to listeners by sharing the stories and voices of forest scientists, land managers, and enthusiastic members of the public. Each episode, we will bring you research and science-based information that aims to offer some insight into what we know and are still learning about forest science and management.

Stick around to discover a new topic related to forests on each episode.

Overview of Today's Episode: Post-Wildfire Restoration

[00:00:32] Jake Barker: Thank you for joining us on another episode of In the Woods. I'm Jake Barker, Oregon State University, extension Forester and Associate Professor of Practice, and I'll be your host for today's episode. In today's episode, we are going to explore restoration on private forest lands following wildfire based on a survey that OSU conducted in response to the 2020 labor day fires.

The landowner experience after fire, or LEAF survey, asked respondents about post wildfire recovery between 2017 and 2023. The post-fire window is a crucial time in forest management and stewardship and can be an overwhelming and complex process with responses from over 200 landowners across Oregon.

The study explored various restoration activities, barriers to success, and resources landowners utilize to overcome those barriers. Participants were also asked about their emotional state following the fire and interactions with agencies and organizations. The findings of the study highlight the essential role of local capacity and coordination in driving effective post wildfire recovery, and suggest strengthening support for landowners through investment in local networks, technical assistance, and accessible funding pathways.

This episode will set the stage for a later episode that explores a specific program that has emerged after 2020 to support landowners in post-fire recovery. So stay tuned.

Introducing Kara Baylog and the LEAF Survey

[00:02:02] Jake Barker: Joining us on the podcast today is Kara Baylog. Kara is a program coordinator with Oregon State University Forestry and Natural Resources extension based in Jackson County.

Kara's career has focused mostly on helping non-industrial private forest land owners and fire prone communities prepare for and develop resilience against disturbance, particularly wildfire.

So Kara, thank you so much for joining us today. We're so excited to talk with you.

Details of the LEAF Survey

[00:02:31] Jake Barker: And first off, I was hoping that you could tell us a little bit about the LEAF survey and its origins.

[00:02:38] Kara Baylog: Well, thanks so much, Jake, for having me on this podcast. Yeah the LEAF survey really started a few years back particularly after the 2020 Labor Day wildfires, as you mentioned.

Wildfires not a new thing. Forest landowners, having to deal with the aftermath of wildfire is not a new thing. But after the Labor Day wildfires, we, OSU extension as a whole, forestry natural resources had to come to face with the fact that suddenly so many people were being affected by wildfire, had so many loss of trees, mortality as a result of wildfire and so many questions on where do we go from here.

It was an overwhelming experience. And OSU extension, we wanted to figure out how is the best way that we can serve this population. What we always do in OSU extension, when we have a problem, we figure out a needs assessment. The LEAF survey is basically a big needs assessment about the needs of landowners going through this process.

So when we developed the survey, we developed it for a statewide audience. We mostly focused on outreach to people who were in fact affected by those 2020 labor day fires. But we weren't exclusive. We definitely looked out to within 10 year span. About fires from about 2014 to 2023 were all included in the survey.

And yeah, we ended up getting over 200 respondents from across the state.

[00:04:00] Jake Barker: How did you distribute the survey? Was it done via the internet? Was it done via email? Was it done via print and sent out in the mail?

[00:04:12] Kara Baylog: We threw the kitchen sink at our outreach efforts.

So luckily the fact that we have forestry agents all throughout the state was very helpful because we could tie into people's existing mailing lists. So we sent it out that way. We sent it to our partners, especially the soil water conservation districts in different counties. We also, we put it up online, of course, on our social media platforms, and we did offer a paper copy for anyone who was interested.

And we did have some takers on that. We also offered the survey in Spanish.

[00:04:39] Jake Barker: Well, thank you so much for that background. That's really helpful. What all did the survey include in terms of what did you ask people?

[00:04:46] Kara Baylog: So it, it was a survey that took maybe about 20, 25 minutes to complete. We asked them basic questions like what fire were they a part of?

Was this how much, how many acres were affected on their properties, things like that. But then we also asked them about the things that they had done on the property since the wildfire to recover, to restore their forest on their property. We asked them what they wanted to do. We asked them what they wanted to do and were successful in doing, and then we also asked them what they wanted to do and they were unsuccessful in doing thus far.

We asked them what roadblocks were they facing? So what were the things that were preventing them from getting from point A to point B of where they wanted to be? We asked them with whom did they work with. So if they worked with OSU extension, if they worked with a soil water conservation district in the process of restoring their woodlands we asked if they got any resources.

So financial resources, of course, come to the top of your head or other programs like Oregon, a Department of Forestry Crews coming in and doing fuels reduction. But then we also made sure to include in the survey a mental state following wildfire. We asked folks how they felt following the wildfire, just in general.

So things like, did they experience anger? Did they experience stress? But then we also asked them how they viewed their forest following the wildfire. Going into that, my thought would be that, after a wildfire, you see this maybe devastating result. Maybe you have less interest in your forest afterwards.

So we wanted to really tease that out. How were people viewing their forest after wildfire? Did they have more interest? Did they have less interest? Were they feeling stressed? Did they have other priorities on the table that they were more inclined to focus on following that wildfire?

Survey Findings: Emotional and Practical Responses

[00:06:32] Jake Barker: So what were some of the patterns that you saw in terms of that, like more emotional response to fire?

[00:06:39] Kara Baylog: It was a really interesting response. We asked folks what the severity of fire was on their property. So it could be a low severity, where it's just crawling through the forest. It could be a medium severity where you're starting to see more mortality or it could be a higher severity where you've got mass mortality and maybe entire stands lost.

We also asked them if they had lost their house, so we analyzed emotional responses based on those four different categories, whether low, medium, high, or if they lost their house. And interestingly, all of the emotional responses really tracked regardless of what box they were put in. So it didn't matter if they lost their house or if they had a low severity fire or anywhere in between there.

They all reported an elevated state of stress. They all reported a decently high state of anger and sadness. But what was most interesting to me was in the two questions, did you have more interest in your woodlands or did you have less interest in your woodlands after. It also tracked there, and overwhelmingly like two to one, people were more interested in their woodlands following wildfire than less interested.

So where I thought maybe people would've lost motivation, they actually increased motivation to be working on their woodlands. And what that tells me is that it's not the people that's the problem. The landowners, they want to restore their forests. And that included even when they lost their house, maybe it wasn't the first priority right after they lost their house, but it was always on their minds to go back, maybe replant, remove some hazard trees whatever they had to do.

They want to do this work.

[00:08:18] Jake Barker: Yeah.

Challenges and Barriers in Post-Wildfire Restoration

[00:08:18] Jake Barker: And just even from that, the shortlist that you that you just provided, there are a lot of steps that a landowner might have to take simply to support the recovery of their forest, let alone recovering and rebuilding other components of their property, whether it's infrastructure or homes or roads or whatnot.

We talked a lot about these obstacles that folks face. Could you describe in more detail, those obstacles and what patterns emerged as well coming from the survey in terms of what people were hoping to do and were able to do or were not able to do.

[00:08:57] Kara Baylog: So it was interesting that what people found that they were able to do on their property.

There was, there were definitely some patterns that came out, what they said they wanted to do. Again, there was some significant patterns across the state. And we asked questions about what was stopping them from doing these things. So the top three actions that were taken, most people did some kind of site preparation: either mechanical or chemical of getting the property prepared for a new replanting of seedlings. Removing hazard trees was number two, and then actually planting trees. So really talking about getting rid of dead trees and putting in new live trees is the work that people were really focusing on and getting done. The things that they wanted to do and were unable to do were invasive species management. This shouldn't be too surprising. After wildfire disturbance, whatever's latent in the ground is gonna be able to come back if it's not treated. And then on the other hand, native plantings of shrubs and trees, so maybe not commercial species or even in areas where commercial timbers not really a part of woodland management anyway. Still not conifers but even just the shrubs, the understory plants, the and even just seeding. And then number three, the things that they wanted to do that they weren't able to do were erosion planting.

So again, more planting, but now we're talking more about like in order to stabilize the landscape. When we asked them about the top three barriers for restoration, again, this was labor day fires for the most part. And I think that colors our responses here because number one was high tree seedling mortality.

So if I can turn back the clock and go back to 2020, 2021, we really had a one-two in the entire state of Oregon with the Labor day fires in September of 2020. And really beyond that as well. But then after this huge impact to so many woodland land owners, in 2021, we had that heat dome that occurred across the state where we saw higher temperatures down here in southern Oregon. We were up at 117. We will get to like 108 sometimes in the middle of the summer, so it's not as much of a difference maybe as some other parts of the state.

But the result of that is, so you had a lot of landowners who were more proactive, who knew exactly what they wanted to do following the wildfires in 2020. They went out there, they got their seedlings in the ground like they were supposed to in early spring, mid-spring. Only to have in June the, this extended period of time of triple digits very dry.

And in some places people had a hundred percent mortality of trees. So how relevant is that to other wildfires? I think more research needs to be done on that. Certainly tree mortality, seedling mortality is always going to be an issue, but maybe not quite as much of an issue as we saw after the labor day fires.

But it's definitely something to think about. How do we best prepare landowners to get the best value out of their time and effort when they actually go out there and put trees in the ground to make sure that those trees are surviving. Number two for the barrier was lacking financial resources to get the work done. Again, this could be specifically exacerbated by the 2020 Labor Day fires because you had so many people who needed so much help at that point in time. Whereas maybe on a lower fire year where there's fewer land debtors, perhaps there's gonna be more resources available. But I would encourage further research on that.

The fact of the matter is even folks who were not part of the 2020 Labor Day Fire experience, who experienced fire during other years, often noted that financial resources were a barrier. And then number three, and this is probably most important for OSU extension, where we sit in the landscape, they weren't sure who to turn to for help.

Given our situation, given our position in our communities, in our counties where we are a source of educational assistance, this is something that we can really help on. We can help landowners figure out where they need to go, or even give them the information just so that they know what to do.

Maybe they don't actually need financial resources or technical resources. Maybe they just need someone to help them interpret their landscape. And that's something that we can really help out with. Helping people, helping landowners connect the dots of where they can go to post wildfire.

Importance of Management Planning

[00:13:11] Jake Barker: So in all these really complex processes, which take multiple years, it seems like planning is a really important component, and especially in that post disturbance, post-fire, there's a very narrow window of time to do a lot of this

activity, whether it's salvaging any timber on the property or getting in there doing site prep and actually getting seedlings or shrubs into the ground.

Can you talk a little bit about management planning and questions that you asked in the survey around that component?

[00:13:47] Kara Baylog: Yeah. That's a great question. You are spot on. There's a very limited window of time for certain activities for post wildfire restoration.

Certainly salvage logging, but even things like replanting, it's not that there's a hard window on when you can plant, but the longer you wait, particularly in some areas, the more likely you're going to see undesirable species come back, maybe shrubs instead of trees. And so the process of getting trees into the ground that survive becomes harder and you require more site prep.

One of the things that we found through the survey though is that when people had done something beforehand, before the fire, it was more likely to be successfully done after the fire. So management planning is probably the biggest place where this happened where, when landowners had a forest management plan in place already, they were more likely to also have a recovery plan for post wildfire.

So these are landowners who have already been thinking about where they wanna see their forest go, and that's almost the first step to recovery, is really understanding where you want your forest to be at. So when they have done the work of figuring out how they're gonna get it there before the fire you'd think that the wildfire might throw a monkey wrench at it, and it does, but they're better situated to revise those plans to include post wildfire restoration in that completed recovery plan. The other thing that's more likely to occur successfully is salvage logging. So if a landowner had already logged beforehand, and this doesn't matter if they're selling timber because that's the whole purpose of why they own that property, or if they're just selling timber in order to be able to pay for fuel reduction treatments, or pay the mortgage for a couple of years.

It didn't matter if they had done any logging previously, they were more likely to successfully do salvage logging. So they know who to work with when it comes to fellers, and contractors and selling their logs. They've been through the process before, so they're really well situated to be able to get that work done in that two year span that you have to remove dead and dying trees where they are still merchantable. 'Cause after that two year window, the dead trees no longer are worth anything.

[00:16:07] Jake Barker: Yeah. So it sounds like it's really important not only to have a written plan for your forest management activities,

but also be prepared to have a contingency plan in place for post-fire recovery, but also that familiarity and having some experience with active management provides framework and foundation so that if something more severe happens, like a big fire that a landowner is already prepared and knows the processes.

And that seems important. Right? It's a super stressful time. It's really scary and a huge process. And so having a little bit of experience going into it sounds very important.

[00:16:47] Kara Baylog: I think this is a great advertisement for why you should have a forest management plan on your property so that you can have that longer term outlook that can adjust to real time disturbances and in particular, wildfire.

So let this be my advertisement for land management planning

[00:17:03] Jake Barker: No compensation is received for saying that. Right.

Role of Agencies and Organizations in Recovery

[00:17:08] Jake Barker: Beyond writing a management plan or having that in place on your property, I know that working with agencies and organizations is also a huge component of post-fire recovery for landowners, but also for counties or, for entire landscapes.

So can you talk a little bit about the support networks that exist or the interactions that landowners had with agencies or organizations?

[00:17:32] Kara Baylog: You make a really good point. And maybe there's some correlation too to the fact that maybe people who have gone through land management plans and salvage logging have already been involved with organizations beforehand, because afterwards, people working with organizations made a huge difference in the correlation between whether or not they had gotten anything done on their property for post wildfire forest restoration or not.

So we asked everyone if they had worked with anyone at all. So this would be, organizations like OSU Extension, Oregon Department of Forestry, Soil Water Conservation District. And those were the top three responses as far as who they worked with. But even beyond that, watershed councils worked with long-term recovery groups. So certainly anybody who received funding through the Emergency Forest Restoration Plan had to work with the Farm Service Agency or people who received funding from EQUIP, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, had to work with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, NRCS as we love to call it. But even people sought help from federal agencies

like the Bureau of Land Management or the US Forest Service to some degree. And even this would include where they're talking with even smaller organizations or even just their neighbors.

They are reaching out to find help. What we found is that on a 2:1 ratio, people were more likely to have completed work on their property if they had engaged with any organization whatsoever. There was no difference between if they engaged with more than one organization or not. But they were more likely to get their work done, something on their property done, if they had worked with an organization of some sort.

So basically we had about two thirds of respondents say yes, I worked with at least one, and of them, almost 94% of them had gotten work done on their property. On the other hand, we about one third of respondents who hadn't worked with anybody and they had under 50%, so closer to 40% that had actually been able to get any work done on their property.

What this says is, reaching out and engaging really changes. We've got people who wanna get work done, they need help. Those organizations are providing them and allowing them to make it to that next step over. And then if we look at those top three that had responded, so Oregon State University Extension, and again, this is people who'd be working with the county offices. They're not reaching out to Corvallis if they're somewhere out in the northeast or down here in the south or Oregon Department of Forestry.

Again, they're not reaching out to Salem, they're reaching out to their local Oregon Department of Forestry Office or Soil Water Conservation districts, which are county based. So they are more likely to be working with either a local organization or a locally engaged office of a state organization.

So what that tells us is, where there's already these connections, people are familiar, there's a sense of trust because a lot of times they've worked with them before. People are more likely to reach out to them and more likely to get the work done. I will say one gap in this research, which I'd really like to see covered maybe in future research.

We did not ask people how they found the organization they worked with. So it would be very interesting to me to figure out if people were talking with these organizations for the first time, how they learned about it. Was it a neighbor who brought them over to Oregon State University extension? Was there some kind of advertisement? Was there an outreach campaign? Who was really responsible for making that initial connection? I'm hoping future research can look into that.

[00:21:11] Jake Barker: So you were talking there about the importance

of local agencies, county-based agencies, are there other groups or organizations that folks worked closely with?

[00:21:23] Kara Baylog: So the cool thing about being in, Oregon is that everybody kind of does their things a little bit differently depending on where you go.

And what we found was that, in some areas, certain organizations that maybe had no relevance to wildfire or post wildfire previously or maybe had some kind of tangential relevance but weren't really deep into that world were able to change their focus at least for a period of time to respond to those post wildfire situations.

So in particular, I'm thinking about Glide Revitalization which of course is in Douglas County, who responded to Archie Creek, which was a Labor day fire and really took on a lot of work helping landowners with recovery and replanting. Another, of course, Pure Water Partners up there in Lane County.

And then we also looked at Klamath Watershed Partnership, which is on the east side where they came and they ended up developing programs for landowners to do replanting on their post wildfire affected properties. So depending on where you go, it, it wasn't a one size fits all for every area.

In some cases, working with the watershed councils or existing groups out there was enough. And in other cases, new ways of responding to wildfire had to develop. And each area across the state had its own way.

[00:22:46] Jake Barker: So it seems like there's the core pillars, which are the local agencies.

Those are the folks who are there present doing the forestry work, providing technical assistance, providing resources and education. But then in the wake of something as widespread as the 2020 Labor Day fires that we see these nimble organizations or partnerships filling in the gaps and providing additional support because there was such an overwhelming need from landowners who were impacted.

So it's good to emphasize the importance of the community driven support that emerges in the wake of disaster.

[00:23:27] Kara Baylog: I think you described it really well. Nimble. When you talk about a big organization, a state organization, there's a lot of bureaucracy to get through. There's fewer ties to the people on the ground, and as a result there's less responsiveness to what needs to get done. But it's those local organizations, so local offices of Oregon Department of Forestry, Soil Water Conservation districts who have had these existing ties that are able to more

understand what the needs on the ground are.

And in some cases there's not enough resources, but I think it's something to think about beforehand. How do we make sure that these local organizations that are more nimble have the capacity to take on these wide reaching events where a lot of people are impacted, that they are able to take the trust and the capacity they had before the event and translate that into providing meaningful resources post wildfire after the event.

Types of Assistance Provided to Landowners

[00:24:23] Jake Barker: Can you describe some more specifics about the types of assistance that people provided? I mean, you and I as OSU extension people, we think a lot about resources. We think a lot about education, and I'm just curious what types of assistance people reported seeking in the wake of the fires to support recovery.

[00:24:46] Kara Baylog: I mean, the first thing that everybody always thinks about when they think about, oh, an organization needs to help landowners, so they think about grants and loans. So we ended up breaking up what assistance was offered by organizations actually into five different categories because it really does go beyond just pure dollars.

So we do have that direct financial aid. So that would be your grants, your loans, basically where money is going from one organization into the pockets of a landowner for the express purpose of doing some activity or another. But the other four we have so there's work on the ground. So this is where there's no money exchange between the organization and the landowner, but there is a value of services provided.

So this would be, for example, when Oregon Department of Forestry brings their crews out to do fuels reduction or as in the case, post labor day fires to do some planting or site. So that we call that a work on the ground type of assistance. And then the other three types of assistance are less direct, but it turns out no less important.

In fact, in some ways, equally important or even more important depending on who you are as a landowner and what your needs are. So the first of those is logistical. So as we saw in the barriers to people doing work, one of those things was not knowing who to turn to. So this could be to be able to apply to a financial program, but it also could just be knowing if you wanted to do salvage log, who do I go to do the logging?

If you need to do some site prep, what kind of contractors are out

there? If you're trying to do a post wildfire restoration plan, where are the foresters that I can hire to come out and do that? So that's connecting people with contractors, financial options. And then especially important post wildfire is seedling.

So finding seedlings that are appropriate to your landscape, appropriate to your eco region. And which was proved to be very difficult after the labor day fires, especially 'cause so many people were buying up seedlings. And you wanted to make sure that you got those appropriate seedlings because otherwise you get a large mortality.

So that was the third type of assistance. The fourth type we classified as technical assistance. So OSU extension does a little bit of this, but especially at the soil Water conservation districts your ODF stewardship foresters will do this where they're going out on a property and they're providing like real actions that you can do on the ground.

Helping to interpret the landscape, identifying priorities, and then saying, okay, based on what you wanna do here, you can do, you could do X, Y, and Z. Technical assistance was a very important one. And then the last one was education. And this is really the OSU extensions, bread and butter. So this is less direct to a person's specific landscape, but instead trying to figure out more of these overarching themes of, what would I do post wildfire?

What are some of the options that exist? Like when I'm looking at site preparation, what's the difference between mechanical and chemical and how would I manage that? Just understanding these more broad themes and then that landowners can then take home and apply individually to their to their properties.

We call, we put that in as educational assistance. So it turns out in all five of those types of assistance, the vast majority of people who said, yes, I received this, did work on their property. The only two, in fact, the only two that where there were people who received assistance and didn't do anything were technical assistance and education.

But even then, those were single digits approaching zero. So they, they're not even very statistically significant. And I will say that overwhelmingly the most important thing people sought out was that technical assistance. So people were looking for technical assistance by and large almost a hundred percent.

Once they got that technical assistance, they were able to do work on the ground. And of course it makes sense, like if you're getting work on the ground if you're getting work on the ground assistance work on the ground's gonna get done. If you're getting financial aid, you are

contractually obliged to get work on the ground.

So it's not surprising that those were 100% resulting in working on the ground. It was interesting that logistical help also resulted in a 100% work done on the ground as well. But that could just be, the nuances of this particular survey.

So we took these different buckets of assistance that people receive from organizations and then we compared them with those questions that I mentioned earlier where we asked what had they done on their property, what did they want to do but something stopped them from doing it, and then was there a way to get over it?

And interestingly, organizational support via technical information was overwhelmingly correlated with landowners saying I was able to get over the thing that was stopping me from doing work. Saying that if they received technical information, they were more likely not to be in the category of, this thing stopped me dead in my tracks and I couldn't continue and more likely to say I was able to get the thing that I wanted to get done.

So there's a correlation between organizations providing technical assistance and actually getting work done on the ground.

[00:30:04] Jake Barker: And I think that often when we're thinking about recovery restoration, our instinct is to think about the dollars and the grants and getting the funding. But this really drives home that importance of even if you have the funding, it's essential to have the guidance and the assistance provided by the soil water conservation districts, by ODF, to lower those barriers or to help people get over them.

[00:30:37] Kara Baylog: You really opened up the second point that I wanted to make was that even though technical assistance was correlated with people getting over barriers, financial assistance was not.

So people would receive financial assistance and then still have barriers saying that they couldn't go any further. In plenty of cases, that barrier was still financial assistance. Even though they're receiving financial assistance, it's still stopping them from doing what they want to do, they're not getting enough financial assistance or they're getting financial assistance for one thing, but not another thing that they really need to get done. But there are landowners who maybe don't need financial assistance at all.

They just need to know what to do. And so for those people, technical assistance is gonna get them there. But even for those who want to have that technical information, maybe the financial barriers are not being overcome. What does that say?

There needs to be more funding for people to be able to get this work done. It could also be that, a lot of these cost share programs require landowners to contribute their own money, so even if they were approved for a program they had to reject it because they couldn't come up with that 25% or whatever percent it might be.

And the funding sources are often taxed. So even if they were able to come up with 25%, they weren't able to deal with the taxes that resulted from this.

The last interesting fact that came out from doing this analysis between types of organizational support and obstacles to getting things done was organizational support did not significantly impact overcoming the obstacle of seedling mortality.

Labor day fires happened. People put trees in the ground in the spring of 2021. And then we had that heat dome. So that could be really impacting this finding.

Future Directions and Final Thoughts

[00:32:28] Jake Barker: What are a few things that you feel like were missing from the survey or from this study that you are curious about or that you think should be pursued in the future?

[00:32:43] Kara Baylog: Definitely trying to figure out what is the correlation of organizational interaction with landowners.

I'd like to understand a little bit more if organizations are more robust. If they are robust beforehand and post wildfire, they have the capacity to do things like outreach.

I think there's a lot more that can get teased out on the actual causality there, and on how we can do a better job of being present in the community. Basically, how are people learning about OSU extension? We have a lot of people that we are working with on a day-to-day basis, but we all know we have gaps in our audience, people who we could be working with, but for one reason they don't know about us.

I think OSU extension could be a lot more part of that conversation in our different areas because we have that on the ground understanding of the landscape. Those are all kind of questions that we can work on figuring out how can we change it so that organizational support is positively impacting when people have seedling mortality as an obstacle that they can't overcome.

[00:33:48] Jake Barker: So now that we have all this information, now

that the survey's complete, what do we do with it?

[00:33:55] Kara Baylog: That's a great question. The LEAP survey is a three year program and it's not just a survey, it's a three year project.

And this is our third year, and this is where we're putting the rubber to the road, so to speak. We're working on an educational post wildfire series on what people can do both before the fire ever hits and after the fire has already hit. And really what that educational series is including is.

Preparation as a landowner is gonna get you far. If you're thinking about, okay, if fire were to come through my forest, where are the areas I'd prioritize first, what's most important to me? Am I more interested in making sure that this property is able to produce timber again as soon as possible? Am I more interested in habitat? Is water of importance on my property? By thinking about those things before disaster has ever reached your property you're gonna be more equipped to think about it afterwards.

So you're thinking about it in a point in time where your emotions are not high, where you don't have these huge jumps in feelings of anger and helplessness and stress. So you can do that in a more rational mindset, and then you can apply that after. The data shows that after wildfire, overwhelmingly everybody feels negative emotion and everybody deals with that in a different way. But if you can have those thought processes done before you're experiencing those emotions, it's gonna be more likely that you can look through that and get back to what it is that you find important on the landscape.

Certainly having a forest management plan on your property is going to be a huge step in that direction. But even doing work on your property beforehand like fuels reduction is gonna make it easier for that when you come back after the wildfire. It's gonna be the same contractors. Active management beforehand, active management afterwards. The other thing is as a result of this survey, so the survey was year one. Year two, we developed a post wildfire site assessment template. We have it on our website OSU extension, but it is targeted more to service providers. If you're a landowner you wanna take a look at it and use it as that first look over of how to interpret what happened on your land and what opportunities exist and how can those opportunities be fulfilled.

It covers some immediate concerns you might have post wildfire. Looking at burn severity, looking at the likelihood of erosion, looking at the likelihood of brush regeneration.

And then for the site assessment, we also provide areas for an action plan and what resources exist. So if somebody's top priority is to get

trees in the ground it might have in the resources section where they can buy those seedlings. What funding sources exist that would pay for seedlings or pay for the planting of seedlings.

So you can find that on the OSU extension catalog.

[00:36:49] Jake Barker: We'll be sure to include that in our list of resources with this episode so people can check that out once they're done listening. I think that is gonna be really helpful for folks and create a framework and an approach that will make things feel a little bit easier as they come up with prioritization.

Conclusion and Lightning Round

[00:37:06] Jake Barker: So in summary today we have reviewed results and key takeaways from the LEAF assessment, and Kara talked about the challenges that landowners face after being impacted by wildfire. The findings from the survey are instrumental for natural resource agencies, organizations, companies, and landowners across the board.

So as you were listening today, if any questions came up or we didn't cover a specific topic related to today's conversation that you were interested in, please drop us a comment or send us a message on our website inthewoodspodcast.org

But don't leave us yet for next up is our lightning round.

[00:37:49] Jake Barker: Alright, Kara, as usual, we have a few final questions that we ask all of our guests.

And first off, what is your favorite tree?

[00:37:57] Kara Baylog: Hands down it's the Pacific Madrone. I just, I love how cool it feels to the touch in the middle of the summer and how often do you see broadleaf evergreens? And the other side of the coin, the Western Larch is another favorite because of the opposite reason you have a deciduous conifer.

It just stands out as just a cool tree.

[00:38:17] Jake Barker: Great. I love Pacific Madrone also and Larch. Next up, what is the most interesting thing that you bring in the field, whether that's in your cruiser vest, in your field kit, or in your vehicle?

[00:38:29] Kara Baylog: So originally I was thinking that this could

be like a, an equipment thing, but actually I think the most interesting thing I bring is the capacity for storytelling.

I bring high school students out to do environmental monitoring once a month, and to get them engaged I make sure to talk about the landscape, like it's a story. A restoration project like it's a story. This is how it was, this is the character arc that the landscape is going through.

And I think that helps them wrap around why they're out there, why they're doing this really important work what's the benefit that's coming out of it.

[00:39:04] Jake Barker: That's a great answer, and I think that is really important, especially if someone or a group of students is visiting a place that they're not familiar with.

I think telling a convincing and engaging story helps. People build a relationship with place quickly. We've talked a little bit about resources already, but what would you recommend to our listeners if they're interested in learning more about today's topic?

[00:39:27] Kara Baylog: I would definitely say take a look at our publication, the LEAF Site assessment. We'll also say we've got a journal publication in the works.

[00:39:35] Jake Barker: Alright, well, thank you so much for joining, Kara. We've learned a lot and I'm so excited about the LEAF survey and I really hope that folks take the template and can apply it on their property across the state.

And your work is really important. I think that the results from this are key as we think about being more prepared in the future for big wildfire. So we really appreciate your time and work. And with that, this concludes another episode of In the Woods. Join us in a couple weeks to explore another topic on Oregon's amazing Forests.

But until then, what's in your your woods??