

Comment Points

Oregon State Board of Forest

Salem

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by Lyle Defrees

- A large share of private lands in Eastern Oregon are livestock ranches. These ranches are businesses expected to show a profit. The Fire Patrol Assessment is one of many expenses.
- Assessments were paid by me on a tax lot with 893 acres and produced 102.2 animal unit months (AUMs) of pasture in 2007. (In the simplest terms, one AUM is pasture used by one 1000 pound cow for 30 days)
 - a. Year 2000 the assessment was \$1,089. Assessment cost per AUM was \$10.66
 - b. Year 2008 the assessment was \$1,411. Assessment cost per AUM was \$13.70
 - c. Year 2009 the proposed budget assessment would be \$1,693. Proposed assessment cost per AUM would be \$16.57.
A 64 percent increase in eight years.
- The Fire Patrol Assessment cost greatly increases the chance that there will be a net income loss.
- Increasingly, the only option for landowners is to sell or convert their forest and grazing lands to other uses.
- The relationship between the ranch landowners and the ODF people is positive.
- The cost of protection must be shared more evenly with the public who also benefits from the valuable resources that private lands provide. Not only does the cost of protection need to be shared, but the added cost of additional resources to address the increasing risk of large fires, suppression cost, and resource loss during peak danger periods and multiple fire events need to be shared. Lightning or the general public cause two-thirds of the fires Statewide.
- It will take the leadership, with private landowners help, from the Board of Forestry to get legislation where the public more equally and fairly share the cost of forest protection.