

Agenda Item No.:	Consent Agenda Item C
Work Plan Title & #:	Administrative Work Plan 0
IBI # & Title:	IBI 1 Administrative Processes
Presentation Title:	Request for Public Hearing on Formation of Rangeland Protection Association
Date of Presentation:	November 6, 2009
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## **SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda item is to obtain Board approval to proceed with a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in the vicinity of Gateway, Oregon.

## **CONTEXT**

This is part of the Department's ongoing effort, pursuant to ORS 477.320, to assist rural communities in eastern Oregon to develop wildland fire protection coverage in areas that are currently unprotected.

In a letter dated August 2, 2009, Lou Ann Cowsill, a representative of rangeland owners in northern Jefferson County, requested the Board hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in the vicinity of Gateway, Oregon.

## **BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

Rangelands in eastern Oregon present a concern to Forest Protection Districts because of the lack of fire protection. Fires starting on these lands, left uncontrolled, have frequently threatened or spread to forestlands protected by the Department. This creates a dilemma for the district and potential use of district resources on unprotected lands that do not financially support the protection district.

The 2004 Fire Program Review identified assisting local communities in developing fire protection on unprotected lands as a high priority. Rangeland Protective Associations have been formed in Post-Paulina, Burnt River, Vale, Jordan Valley, Juntura, Twickenham, Silver Creek, Crane, Field-Andrews, Ironside, Ash Butte and Brothers-Hampton.

The area the private landowners are considering for fire protection is interspersed with other land management agencies.

Although the emphasis is protection of private lands, opportunities will exist for partnerships and mutual aid agreements with other entities to strengthen wildland fire protection throughout the area.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Board approve the landowner's request to hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in the vicinity of Gateway, Oregon.

### **NEXT STEPS**

The Department will hold a public hearing and determine the support for providing fire protection in the vicinity of Gateway, Oregon. If there is sufficient support, a request will be made from the landowners to the Board, to determine whether the rangeland should be included within a protection system.

If the Board determines that the rangeland should be included in a rangeland protection system, the Board, in cooperation with interested persons, will establish the extent and type of protection to be provided. Such protection shall be commensurate with the values and uses of the rangeland to be protected.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

None