

Agenda Item No.:	C
Title and # of Issue:	Wildfire Risk Management – Issue 7
Presentation Title:	Ashwood, OR Rangeland Protective Association Formation
Date of Presentation:	September 3, 2008
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SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to obtain Board approval to proceed with a public hearing to provide protection from fire for private rangelands in the area of Ashwood, 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 fire protection coverage in unprotected areas.

In a letter dated May 24, 2008, Thomas Ledbetter, a representative of rangeland owners in eastern Jefferson County, requested the Board hold a public hearing about providing protection from fire for private rangelands in the vicinity of Ashwood, 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, 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 to strengthen 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 private rangelands in the vicinity of Ashwood, Oregon.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will hold a public hearing and determine the support for providing fire protection in the vicinity of Ashwood, 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.