

Date: January 12, 2018
To: Oregon Board of Forestry
From: Marvin J. Vetter, Rangeland Fire Protection Coordinator
Subject: Hearing Officer's Report on High Desert Landowner Hearing ORS 477.320(1)

Hearing Information

Proposed Area: Northern Lake County
Hearing Date & Time: January 11th 6:00 PM
Hearing Location: Summer Lake Lodge, Summer Lake Oregon
Written Comments Due: January 11th 2018
Hearing Authorized: Board of Forestry meeting, *November 7th 2017*
Hearing Officer: Marvin J. Vetter, Rangeland Fire Protection Coordinator

The Public Hearing on the proposal to bring the High Desert area into the Oregon Protection System was formally convened at 6:13 p.m. in the Summer Lake Lodge after a discussion regarding the proposal. Registration forms were available for people who wished to provide oral comments on the proposed formation. The hearing was closed at 6:20 p.m.

There were 23 people in attendance and 12 of them were local landowners, 3 landowners signed up to provide oral comments on the participation record. There were 10 people from the surrounding fire agencies and 1 person from the USDA Forest Service provided oral testimony in support of bringing the area into the Oregon Protection System. One county commissioner provided testimony on behalf of the County Court in support of the High Desert RFPA being brought into the Oregon Protection System.

Summary of Oral Comments

Community interest in the formation of the proposed High Desert Rangeland Protection Association is high and is strongly supported by landowners and County Court in Northern Lake County. There is also support from the local wildland fire agencies (Local, State, and Federal). A Board of Directors has been established. Additionally, a set of by-laws has been established, corporate legal status has been applied for and received, a bank account has been established, funds have been raised, and commitments of time and equipment have been received for them to be ready by the 2018 fire season.

Landowners and residents of the area are increasingly worried about the incidence of rangeland fire. This is due, in part, to the number of arson fires and large fires in their area, more specifically the Withers fire of 2016 and the Ana Fire of 2017. These landowners want a way to protect their private property and actively take part in the protection of their lands. The High Desert RFPA has set a date of February 3rd and 4th to receive basic firefighting training in preparation of the 2018 fire season. The increased level of protection for this area can be achieved by bringing it into the Oregon Protection System and forming a Rangeland Protection Association.

No local residents opposed the proposed RPA formation. Oral testimony was in full support of bringing these lands into the Rangeland Protection System and forming a Rangeland Protection Association.

Summary of Written Comments

No formal written comments were received.

/s/ Marvin J. Vetter
Marvin J. Vetter
Rangeland Fire Protection Coordinator
Eastern Oregon Area