

Agenda Item No.:	B
Work Plan:	Fire Protection Work Plan
Topic:	Ongoing Topic: Rangeland Protection Association Formation
Presentation Title:	Approval to Form Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Protection Association
Date of Presentation:	March 6, 2019
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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda item is to obtain Board approval to proceed with bringing a specific area of south Wasco County, into the Oregon Protection System.

**CONTEXT**

Rangeland fire protection associations are non-profit, locally governed groups of landowners which have been organized to provide fire protection to rangeland in portions of eastern Oregon. These organizations are formed under the authority of the Board with assistance from the Department.

Currently, there are 22 Rangeland Protection Associations (RPA) that have previously been approved by the Board of Forestry, and one by the Wheeler County Court, bringing the total to 23. These RPAs protect over four million acres of private land and approximately 500,000 acres of state-owned lands. These lands, including federally owned land, combine to encompass over 15 million acres.

Several representatives of rangeland owners in south Wasco County have requested the Board hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in the vicinity of Bakeoven and Shaniko. The Board, on November 7, 2018, authorized a public hearing on the formation request, pursuant to ORS 477.320. A hearing was held at Shaniko Ranch in Shaniko, Oregon on December 5, 2018.

At the hearing, strong support for the formation of an association was evident in the immediate area. Testimony presented during the hearing indicated a need for organized fire protection, and the local landowners want to assist local wildland agencies with initial attack to prevent more large fires in the area.

These landowners want a way to protect their private property and actively take part in the protection of their lands. 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.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Board take the following action when it meets on March 6, 2019:

Approve the inclusion of rangeland in portions of south Wasco County into a rangeland protection association and direct the Department to assist with the formation of the Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Protection Association, pursuant to ORS 477.320.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Department will work with local landowners in the area to form the Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Protection Association. This work will include developing mutual aid agreements, providing training as requested, offering FEPP equipment as available, and any other assistance as requested and feasible.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- 1) Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Association Boundary Map
- 2) Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Association Formation Public Hearing Participation Record
- 3) Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Association Formation Hearing Officer's Report
- 4) Bakeoven-Shaniko Rangeland Association Formation Written Comments