

Agenda Item No.:	B
Work Plan:	Fire Protection Work Plan
Topic:	Ongoing Topic: Rangeland Protection Association Formation
Presentation Title:	Hearing Request for a Rangeland Protection Association in Umatilla County
Date of Presentation:	January 7, 2026
Contact Information:	Levi Hopkins, Wildfire Prevention and Policy Manager (503) 949-3572, Levi.a.hopkins@odf.oregon.gov

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 Umatilla County to form the North Pendleton RFPA.

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.

Landowners from Umatilla County provided a letter (Attachment 1) requesting the Board to hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in the vicinity of Pendleton, Oregon. (Attachment 2).

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 Ashwood-Antelope, Bakeoven-Shaniko, Blue Mountain, Brothers Hampton, Burnt River, Crane, Fields-Andrews, Frenchglen, Gateway, Greater Pine Valley, High Desert, Ironside, Jordan Valley, Juntura, Lone Pine, Lookout Glasgow, North Harney, Post Paulina, Silver Creek, Twickenham, Vale, Wagontire, Warner Valley, WC Ranches, and Wheeler County Fire & Rescue.

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 landowners' request to hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in Umatilla County.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will hold a public hearing and determine the support for providing fire protection in Umatilla County, 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

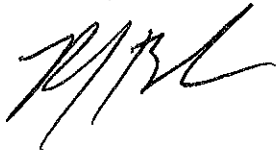
- (1) Letter from representatives of the proposed North Pendleton RFPA.
- (2) Map of Proposed North Pendleton RFPA

Dear Ms. Kate Skinner,

I have been working with Allison Rayburn and Steve McKay to form a new Rangeland Fire Protection Association in Umatilla County. Enclosed is the notice for public hearing. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via email at randy@bracherfarms.com or my phone is 541-379-6946.

Respectfully,

Randy Bracher

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R/Br' or similar, written in a cursive style.

80318 S. Cold Springs Rd.
Pendleton, OR 97801

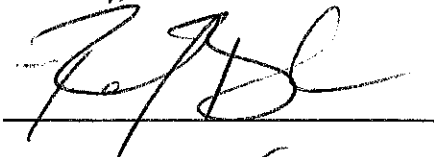
October 6, 2025

Ms. Kate Skinner, State Forester
Oregon Board of Forestry
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

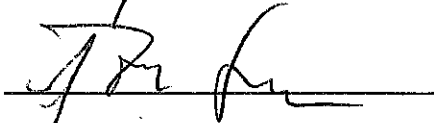
Dear Ms. Skinner,

As the designated representatives of rangeland/crop landowners in Umatilla County, we request that the Oregon Board of Forestry hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for 115,000 acres of private rangeland/crop lands in the vicinity of Juniper Canyon, South Cold Springs Road and Highway 37 in Umatilla County pursuant to ORS 477.320.


Sincerely,



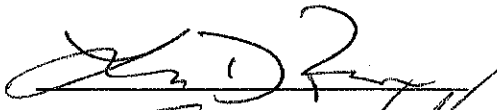
Randy Bracher



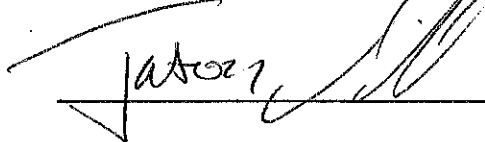
Tom Sorey



Tanner Hawkins

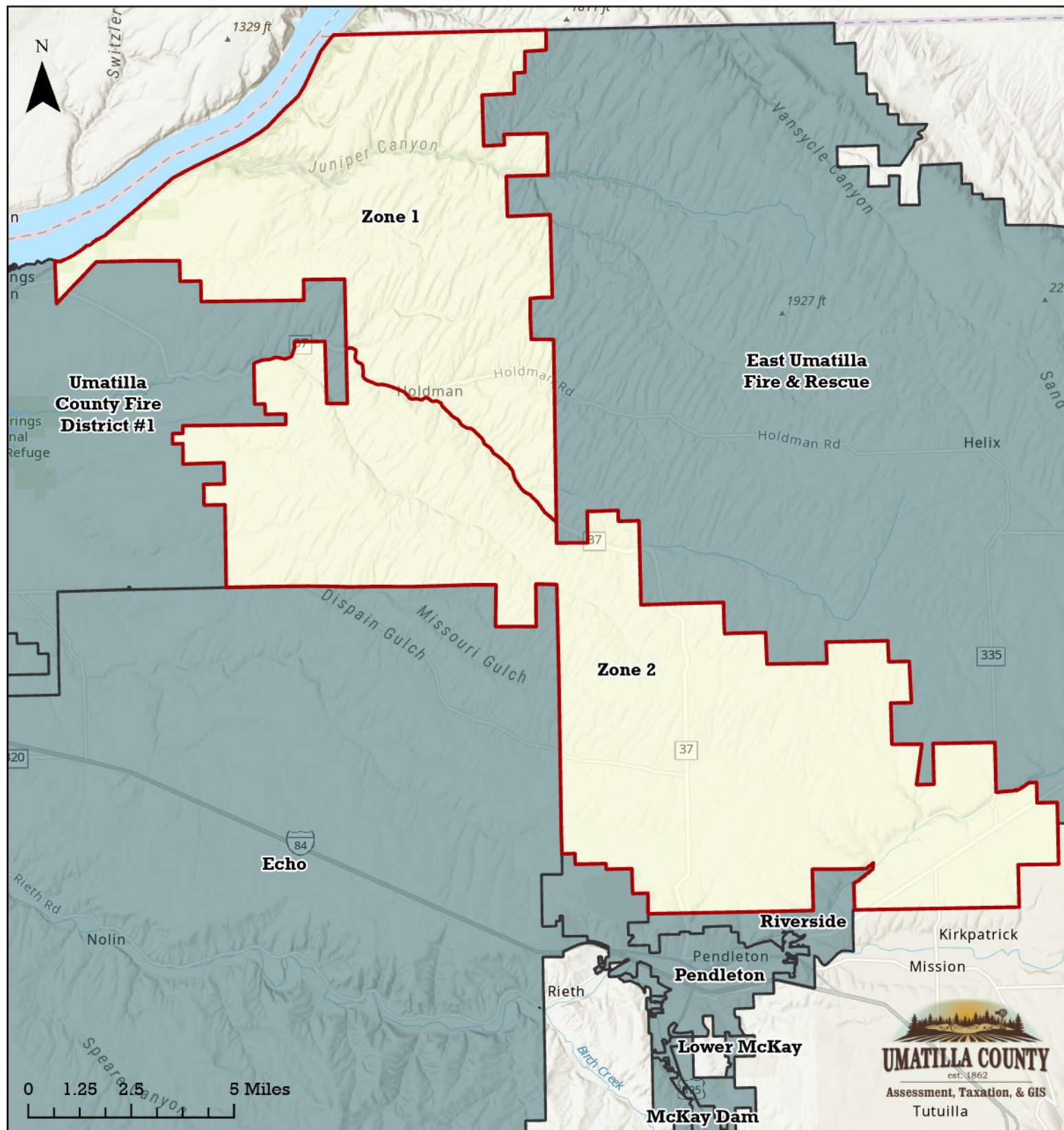


Larry Parker



Jason Hill

Proposed Rangeland Fire Protection Association Boundary



- RFPA Proposal
- Existing Fire Districts

This map was prepared for Assessment & Taxation purposes only and was NOT prepared nor is suitable for legal, engineering, or surveying purposes

Map created by M. Bowey 10/08/2025

