

Agenda Item No.:	B
Work Plan:	Fire Protection Work Plan
Topic:	Ongoing Topic: Rangeland Protection Association Formation
Presentation Title:	Approval to Form High Desert Rangeland Protection Association
Date of Presentation:	March 07, 2018
Contact Information:	Tim Holschbach, Fire Prevention and Policy Manager (503) 945-7434, tim.j.holschbach@oregon.gov

SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to obtain Board approval to proceed with bringing a specific area of Lake 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 21 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 22. 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 northern Lake County have requested the Board hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for rangelands in the vicinity of Valley Falls, Paisley, Summer Lake, Silver Lake, Fort Rock, and Christmas Valley. The Board, on November 1, 2017, authorized a public hearing on the formation request, pursuant to ORS 477.320. A hearing was held at Summer Lake Lodge in Summer Lake, Oregon on January 11, 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 07, 2018:

Approve the inclusion of rangeland in portions of northern Lake County into a rangeland protection association and direct the Department to assist with the formation of the High Desert Rangeland Protection Association, pursuant to ORS 477.320.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will work with local landowners in the area to form the High Desert Rangeland Protection Association. This 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) High Desert Rangeland Association boundary map
- (2) High Desert Rangeland Association formation Public Hearing sign-in sheet
- (3) High Desert Rangeland Association formation Public Hearing Report