

STAFF REPORT

Agenda Item No.:	B
Work Plan:	Fire Protection Work Plan
Topic:	Ongoing Topic: Rangeland Protection Association Formation
Presentation Title:	Hearing request to Expand Fields-Andrews RFPA Boundary
Date of Presentation:	January 3, 2024
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 expanding the current boundary for the Fields-Andrews Rangeland Protection Association to include additional rangeland not currently protected.

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.

Rangeland owners in Harney County have provided a letter (Attachment 1) requesting the Board to hold a public hearing about providing protection from fire for rangelands by expanding the current boundary of the Fields-Andrews Rangeland Protection Association (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, Grizzly, High Desert, Ironside, Jordan Valley, Juntura, Lone Pine, Lookout Glasgow, Lower Bridge, North Harney, Petersburg, Post Paulina, Silver Creek, Twickenham, Vale, Wagontire, Warner Valley, WC Ranches, and Wheeler County.

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 Harney County, Oregon.

NEXT STEPS

The Department will hold a public hearing and determine the support for providing fire protection in Harney 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.

ATTACHMENT

- (1) Letter from Fields-Andrews Rangeland Protection Association
- (2) Map of current and proposed boundary of the Fields-Andrews Rangeland Protection Association

Oregon Department of Forestry
Salem Headquarters
2600 State Street
Salem, OR 97310

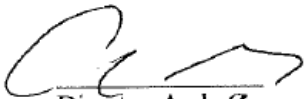
October 27, 2023

Fields-Andrews Rangeland Fire Protection Association

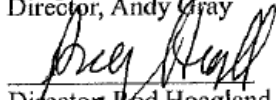
Dear Mr. Mukumoto and the Board of Forestry

The Fields-Andrews Fire Protection Association would like to hold a public hearing to expand our protection boundary to the north to include approximately 4500 additional acres. 3600 acres is BLM, 715 is a private ranch, Folly Farm, and 160 acres is Division of State Lands. The private and state lands are currently unprotected.

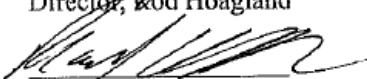
Please find the attached map and signature page of interested landowners. Thank you in advance for your consideration.



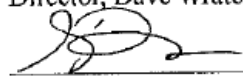
Director, Andy Gray



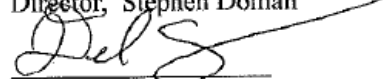
Director, Rod Hoagland



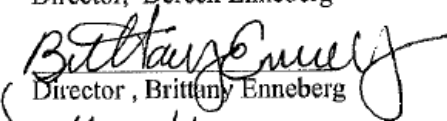
Director, Dave Wratchford



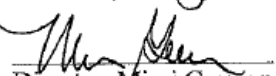
Director, Stephen Doman



Director, Dereck Enneberg



Director, Brittany Enneberg



Director, Mimi German



Land Owner, Ron Atkinson

Signature

CC: Allison Rayburn, ODF Rangeland Fire Program Coordinator

Fields-Andrews Expansion

