

Agenda Item No.:	G
Title and # of Issue:	Rangeland Protective Association Formation
Date of Presentation:	June 6, 2007
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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this agenda item is to obtain Board approval to proceed with a public hearing to provide protection from fire for private rangelands in the areas of Vale and Jordon Valley, Oregon.

**CONTEXT**

This is part of the Department’s ongoing effort, pursuant to ORS 477.320, to assist rural communities in eastern Oregon to develop fire protection coverage in unprotected areas.

In a letter dated February 26, 2007 Silas Skinner, a representative of rangeland owners in southern Malheur County, requested the Board hold a public hearing about providing protection from fire for private rangelands in the vicinity of Jordan Valley, Oregon.

In addition, a letter dated February 28, 2007 Toby McBride, a representative of rangeland owners in northern Malheur County, requested the hold a public hearing about providing protection from fire for private rangelands in the vicinity of Vale, Oregon.

**BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS**

Rangelands in eastern Oregon present a concern to Forest Protection Districts because of their 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. Since that time Rangeland Protective Associations have been formed in Post-Paulina, Burnt River and Brothers-Hampton.

The area the private landowners are considering for fire protection is interspersed with many land management agencies.

The total area included is approximately:

**Vale RFPA**

Private	= 305,380 acres
Federal Acres	= 597,586 acres
<u>Division of State Lands</u>	= 10,066 acres
Total Acres	= 913,032 acres

**Jordan Valley RFPA**

Private	= 293,555 acres
Federal Acres	= 2,024,118 acres
<u>Division of State Lands</u>	= 177,221 acres
Total Acres	= 2,494,894 acres

Although the emphasis is protection of private lands, opportunities will exist for partnerships and mutual aid agreements to strengthen fire protection throughout the area.

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Board approve the landowner's request to hold public hearings on the subject of providing protection from fire for private rangelands in the vicinity of Jordan Valley and Vale, Oregon.

**NEXT STEPS**

The Department will hold public hearings and determine the support for providing fire protection in the vicinity of Jordan Valley and Vale, Oregon. If there is sufficient support, a request would 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) Map of area under consideration