

Agenda Item No.:	D
Title and # of Issue:	Rangeland Protective Association Formation
Date of Presentation:	March 7, 2007
Contact:	Robert Young
Title:	Workforce Capacity & Policy Mgr.
Contact Information:	<u>ryoung@odf.state.or.us</u>

SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to obtain Board approval to proceed with a public hearing to provide protection from fire for private rangelands in the area of Juntura, 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 December 14, 2006, Ms. Linda Bentz a representative of rangeland owners in northern Malheur County, requested the Oregon Board of Forestry to hold a public hearing in regards to providing protection from fire for private rangelands in the vicinity of Juntura, Oregon (Attachment 1).

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 don't 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 Protection Associations have been formed in Post-Paulina, Burnt River and Brothers-Hampton.

The area the private landowners are considering for fire protection (Attachment 2) is interspersed with many land management agencies. The total area included is approximately;

Private	= 182,565 acres
Bureau of Land Management	= 685,297 acres
Federal Energy	= 1,362 acres
Bureau of Reclamation	= 5,320 acres
Division of State Lands	= 79,721 acres
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife	= <u>2,397</u> acres
Total Acres	= 956,663 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.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ACTIONS REQUESTED

The Department recommends that the Board approve the landowners request to hold a public hearing on the subject of providing protection from fire for private rangelands in the vicinity of Juntura, Oregon.

NEXT STEPS

Upon Board approval, the department would hold a public hearing and determine the support for providing fire protection in the vicinity of Juntura, 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, shall 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) Landowner Request
- (2) Map of area of consideration