

Date: May 14, 2007
To: Oregon Board of Forestry
From: Robert Young, Hearing Officer
Subject: Hearing Officer's Report on Juntura RFPA ORS 477.320(1) Hearing

Hearing Information

Proposed RFPA: Juntura Rangeland Fire Protection Association
Hearing Date & Time: May 10, 2007 7:00 p.m.
Hearing Location: Juntura School, Juntura, Oregon
Written Comments Due: May 10, 2007, 8:00 p.m.
Hearing Authorized: Board of Forestry meeting, March 7, 2007
Hearing Officer: Robert Young, Workforce Capacity & Fire Policy Manager

The hearing on the proposed formation of a Juntura Rangeland Fire Protection Association was convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Juntura School. Registration forms were available for people who wished to provide oral comments on the proposed formation. The hearing was closed at 8:00 p.m.

Approximately 15 members of the public attended the hearing. 11 people signed the Public Hearing Participation Record form and provided oral comments.

Summary of Oral Comments

Community interest in the formation of the proposed Juntura Rangeland Fire Protection Association is high and is strongly supported. A board of directors has been established and a person has been elected chair. Additionally, a set of by-laws has been established, corporate legal status has been applied for, a bank account has been established, some funds have been raised, and commitments of time and equipment have been received.

Landowners and residents of the area are increasingly worried about the incidence of rangeland fire. The past several years have produced numerous, very large, rangeland fires. Many attendees are life long residents that have fought fire for years, but because of federal restrictions are no longer able to assist in fire suppression on federal land. The belief is held that with the formation of a Rangeland Fire Protection Association, additional equipment and formal training, the federal government will recognize them as firefighters. Then they will be able to support not only, private lands fire suppression but assist on federal lands as well. Many fires start on federal lands and spread onto private ground.

No local residents appear to oppose the proposed RFPA formation. There are a few people "sitting on the fence" and waiting to see what the cost to them will be.

Below are a few selected quotes from the oral comments, which described the tenor of the hearing:

"This will help provide interagency credibility."

"We will be able to respond quickly to fires with the right equipment."

"I like the idea of being part of the protection structure for private, state and federal lands."

Summary of Written Comments

No formal written comments were received.

Agency Response to Comments

None.

Robert Young
Workforce Capacity & Fire Policy Manager
Protection from Fire Program