



Oregon's Rangeland Fire Protection Associations

Protecting over 16 million acres of critical sage grouse habitat and working lands in Oregon

The RFPAs operate as independent associations of landowners that provide their own local wildfire protection. ODF supports the associations through administrative guidance, some administrative cost reimbursement, fire suppression training and facilitating access to federal grants and surplus firefighting equipment. RFA fire prevention and suppression helps in conserving grouse habitat as well as safeguarding livestock forage crucial to the local economy.

Continuing Commitment to the RFA Program

The annual Rangeland Summit in Burns was attended by 116 people, a 31% increase from the previous year. Attendees included representation from RFA members, state of Oregon and federal partners, county staff, utility companies and members of the Burns-Paiute Tribe. The RFPAs devoted much of this year's agenda towards continued commitment to enhancement of their program, including a listening session on lessons learned from the previous fire season and an in-depth training presentation on member recruitment and retention.



RFA Members at the 2018 Rangeland Summit

A Successful Fire Season

The Rangeland Associations measure success by suppressing fires that no one hears about in the news. By this account, 2018 would be considered a successful season. Of several fires in the desert this summer in explosive fuel conditions and extreme large fire potential, most were caught at initial attack. Of note, the Ashwood-Antelope RFA was very busy assisting with four large fires north of their protection boundary in Wasco and Sherman counties.

A mid-August lightning storm in Central Oregon engaged all of the wildland agencies in fighting several large fires. The Ashwood-Antelope RFA suppressed eight of these lightning fires, the largest of these reaching only two acres.

Expansion of the RFA Program

This year, the Board of Forestry approved the formation of the new High Desert RFA adding wildfire protection for 1,739,231 acres in Lake County. Additionally, before the BOF in November is a petition for a public hearing on the proposed formation of the Bakeoven-Shaniko RFA in Wasco County which will protect 188,102 acres.

The Lone Pine RFA received approval from the Board of Forestry for an expansion of their protection boundary and the Silver Creek RFA will have an October public hearing on the potential addition of 350,851 acres to their boundary, doubling their protection area.

Once the Bakeoven-Shaniko RFA is approved (early in 2019) there will be 24 RFPAs protecting 16,501,353 acres in Oregon (4,855,598 acres private, 639,982 acres State, and 11,005,773 acres of Federal lands).

Advanced Fire Training

In the last three years more than 700 RFA members have been trained in basic wildland fire suppression. Training highlights for 2018 include ODF, BLM and USFS jointly delivering 'Initial Attack Incident Commander' and 'Basic Fire Investigation' classes in Baker City, with members from three RFPAs making up 65% of the students attending.

Additionally, the Lakeview District BLM prepared curriculum and delivered an 'Operations in the Urban Interface' class for Warner Valley RFA. This class details tactics for the protection of structures from an approaching wildfire.

Land Stewardship

The RFPAs actively apply prescribed fire practices as a tool for fire prevention, fuels management and rangeland enhancement to protect working lands and critical sage grouse habitat. Activities this year include a joint springtime Blue Mountain RFPA and Vale BLM burn out of tumbleweeds stacked up on the fences along Hwy 95 in a fire prevention and fuels management effort.

Additionally, in early September, twenty-eight members of the Ashwood-Antelope RFPA conducted a 400 acre prescribed burn east of Hwy 97 helping the landowner to achieve their rangeland enhancement goals.

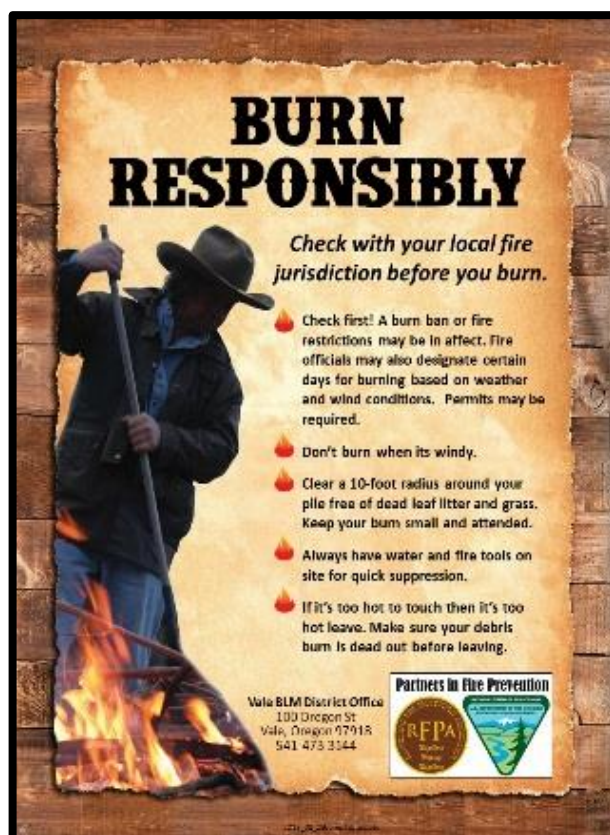


Blue Mountain RFPA & Vale BLM prescribed burn

Fire Prevention

This year, the RFPAs and Vale BLM in Malheur County cooperatively developed several grant-funded fire signs which were installed county-wide to increase public awareness of fire prevention and public restrictions, an especially critical reminder during fall hunting and burning seasons. The signs display both BLM and RFPA logos with the phrase 'Partners in Fire Prevention' to demonstrate their cooperative effort. In early June, the Lone Pine, Crane and Silver Creek RFPAs partnered with Burns and Hines city fire departments, the USFS, BLM, and the State Fire Marshal office to facilitate a pre-season fire prevention and public education event held in Burns. The agencies share a combined objective to engage the local community and provided fire awareness and prevention tips to nearly 300 individuals, continuing their commitment to strengthen partnerships between their fire agencies.

Fire Prevention Signs in Malheur County



Public Fire Prevention Event in Burns



For more information:
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