



Even more ranchers ready to fight fire this season

June 18, 2013

Nearly 170 ranchers are trained and already fighting fires on more than 3.6 million acres of southern Idaho rangeland following the successful formation of four rangeland fire protection associations (RFPAs) since 2012.

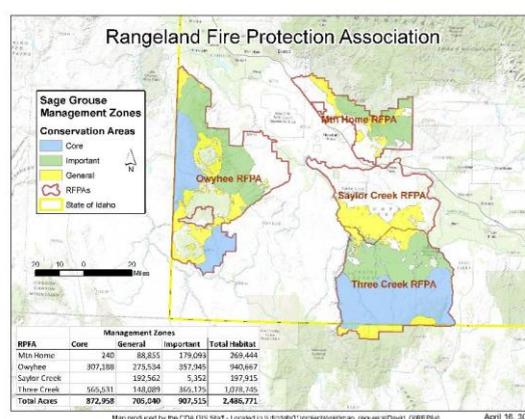
Land Board members heard the update this morning at their regular meeting. State Forester David Groeschl presented the update, mentioning that **three or four additional RFPAs could be up and running by the 2014 fire season.**

The ranchers assist fire managers with the Bureau of Land Management in responding more quickly to fire starts, keeping the wildfires small and **saving property, fire suppression resources and tax dollars.**

Successful initial attack also protects habitat for sage grouse, a bird species that may receive federal protections through limitations of land use such as developments of transmission lines and wind energy, grazing, and other uses.

Earlier this year Governor Otter and the Idaho Legislature approved a change to Idaho Code to clarify the requirements and process for establishment of the nonprofit organizations. In addition to the clarifying legislation, Governor Otter and the Idaho Legislature approved \$300,000 to assist new RFPAs with one-time start up costs associated with training, purchase of personal protective equipment and radios, refurbishment of firefighting equipment, and other costs. Ongoing funds were also included in the Idaho Department of Lands budget to create a fire position in southern Idaho to work with the RFPAs.

Wildland firefighting truly is a team effort. Federal, State, and local agencies - **including the growing number of ranchers now associated with RFPAs in southern Idaho** - share resources and work together to provide the safest and quickest response to wildfires in order to protect people, property, and important resources on the land.



Above: Map of existing RFPAs with overlay showing sage grouse habitat.

Rangeland Fire Protection Associations April 2013



Above: Coverage areas of the four new rancher associations - the Owyhee RFPAs, Mountain Home RFPAs, Saylor Creek RFPAs, and the Three Creek RFPAs.



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