



Oregon

Department of Forestry

South Cascade District

Eastern Lane Unit

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September 23, 2022

To whom it may concern,

The Oregon Department of Forestry, South Cascade District, supports and encourages the formation of a Rural Fire Protection District in the Dorena area, East of Cottage Grove. A few properties in the area, such as the school, contract with South Lane Fire for structure protection but they are a long way from a South Lane station. In general, Dorena and the areas further Southwest currently have no structural fire protection. Depending on the boundaries of the district this could include around 300 homes, plus all the associated outbuildings, barns, etc.

Improved properties without structural protection are a risk to the area residents as well as the adjoining wildlands and ODF employees. When there is no fire department to respond, anyone or any animals in a burning building are on their own. Neighbors and even ODF employees trying to help have been tempted to take ill-advised chances to save someone's home. The Oregon Department of Forestry does not have the required equipment or training to provide interior structural protection i.e., no protective turnout gear or SCBA breathing systems. Our pumps produce in the range of 50 gallons per-minute where a structural engine is likely to produce 1,500 gallons per-minute.

Burning buildings are a common cause of wildland fires. The fuel loading is high, and they produce huge numbers of embers and can send them long distances. They also pose many health risks to wildland firefighters. Without the capacity to knock down a structure fire, ODF firefighters can be exposed to toxic smoke and prolonged heat while protecting the wildland from the structure fire.

If a Rural Fire Protection district is formed, the South Cascade District can support the department, with access to the Federal Excess Personal Property program (FEPP) and the Firefighter Property Program (FFP). These programs give fire departments access to excess federal firefighting equipment. They would also be able to apply for Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants (VFA). These grants are to help rural departments meet their firefighting and emergency response needs. The district can also provide wildland fire training.

John Flannigan
Eastern Lane Unit Forester