

As a member of the Post-Paulina Rangeland Fire Protection Association, I am strongly asking you to support House Bill 3349 and 3350. This year, our association was involved in many major fires – The Durgan Fire, Crazy Creek, Wiley Flat and Rail Ridge. The Durgan Fire was contained on private land and consumed 3,000 acres. Crazy Creek started on federal, swept down on private and ended up burning 86,928 acres. The same held true for Wiley Flat at 30,186 acres and Rail Ridge at 176,619 acres. Our RFPA had a total of 11,121.5 private acres burned with 3,510 federal acres contained within our boundaries. This adds up to 14, 631 acres. We managed to extinguish a total of 11 fires, some before they could even begin, highlighting the crucial need for HB 3349 and HB 3350, which will bring vital resources to protect rural communities like ours. Our volunteers and ranchers fought for 2,660 fire suppression hours with about 45 people involved. Personal ranch vehicles traveled 5,191 miles. PPRFA owns 5 vehicles, but the rest of the equipment is privately owned. That includes dozers, water pumpers, graders, water trucks and anything else that can provide fire fighting help. At one time the wind driven fire jumped a 10-dozer wide fire break and was headed for the town of Paulina. Our ranchers fought fire for over three weeks during a time when we should have been putting up hay and weaning calves. We had people from the Prineville Food Insecurity group coming and going with donations of Gatorade, water and food to help our efforts. It truly took a village to save our ranches and forests. We are your first line of defense. Please support our efforts to stop these fires before they become catastrophic.

Susan M Hermreck