



2012 OUTREACH NOTICE

Bureau of Land Management Vale, Oregon



GS-0455-8	Supervisory Range Technician (Lead Engine Captain/ Station Manager)
GS-0455-6/7	Supervisory Range Technician (Fire Engine Captain)
GS-0455-5/6	Lead Range Technician (Fire Engine Assistant)

Fire Program Summary

We have a large and complex fire suppression program on the District consisting of 19 type 4 and 6 engines, a nine person Helitack program, a type 2 dozer, an air attack platform, and usually a SEAT contract. In addition, the Vale District is home to the Vale Interagency Hotshot Crew and the Snake River Valley Firefighter Program.

The Vale initial attack engine program operates out of seven stations- Vale, Juntura (Malheur Zone), Jordan Valley, Burns Junction (Jordan Zone), and Baker City, Unity, and Snake River (Baker Zone) to provide protection for the District and some off-set lands for our neighbors.



Memorandums of Understanding and Cooperative Agreements with the State of Oregon, neighboring National Forests, and various Fire Protection Districts and Associations augment BLM fire forces in areas of joint responsibility and initial attack overlap.



An exclusive use contract Bell 407 helicopter with 9 person helitack crew is staffed at the helibase at the Vale City Airport from June through September. The Ontario airport houses our Turbo Commander 690D air attack platform and SEAT base.

Vale is the home of the Snake River Valley (SRV) Fire Program, which for over 40 years has produced the largest trained group of Type II and Type II IA hand crews in the nation. The SRV crews have been dispatched to fires throughout the United States including Alaska. The crews operate on a call-when-needed basis through the local job service offices in Ontario, OR and Caldwell, ID.

Vale is also the home of the Vale Hotshots, a Type I Interagency Hotshot Crew, which provides support for initial attack on the District when not assigned to national incidents. The crew has been in existence since 1997.

Major highways dissect the District both north/south and east/west. However much of the District are accessed by secondary roads and dirt and gravel two tracks. Water sources are numerous but dependant on winter and spring precipitation. Travel to and from incidents often requires long drive times and logistical support to these incidents can sometimes present challenges.



Self-sufficiency of our fire crews is essential. Initial air support is usually provided by our district type 3 helicopter or SEATs or assistance from our neighbors.

The primary fire cause is lightning. Fires are scattered fairly evenly across the District with the predominant carrier being grass and sagebrush that tends to produce fast moving, moderate to high intensity fires. The highest occurrence is primarily July through August. The latter part of July through early September can have fairly dry periods with low to moderate humidity recovery at night and extreme temperatures during the day, during which significant fire activity can occur. Our core historic large fire period is late July to mid-August. Under the right conditions, fires can grow extremely fast and large in size especially when Burning Indices are high. Our 2011 ten year average is 51 fires for 64,738 acres.



Fuels Management on the Vale District is a growing program but dependent on budgets. Prescribed fire is implemented for various resource management, hazard abatement, or urban interface objectives. Ecotypes involved range from, annual grasslands to juniper and sagebrush uplands to pine and mixed conifer forest. Acres treated using prescribed fire, mechanical treatment, or a combination of both average 10,000 acres annually. The engine crews are the primary force for implementation of prescribed fire projects. Annually, engine crews also assist in meeting mechanical treatment targets with thinning or eradication projects.



When our IA crews aren't fighting fire, or training, or performing fuels or fire prevention related tasks, we assist the Resource Areas in a wide range of project work. Project work occurs anytime between March – December. Typical project work for the fire crews includes campground maintenance, cattle guard maintenance, fence construction/repair/removal, misc surveys, re-seeding, restoration work, soil erosion control, hazard tree abatement and others.



LOCAL AREA

The Vale District encompasses nearly 5 million acres of public land from the Nevada border up to and into southeastern Washington. The majority of the acreage is located within Malheur County, with smaller acreages scattered through Baker, Wallowa, Union, Grant, Umatilla and Morrow counties in Oregon and Asotin County in Washington.

Malheur and Baker Counties are historic Oregon Trail focal points and are rich in old west history. Vale is located on the Malheur River at the point where the wagons using the Oregon Trail crossed the river. Jonathan Keeney built the first building in Vale on the banks of the Malheur River in 1864. This crude log cabin served travelers until the Stone House was built in 1872. The community was named Vale, meaning "valley" when the post office was established. The first school in Vale opened in 1887. The first church built was the Methodist. The city was incorporated in 1889.

What is now Malheur County was formerly a part of Baker County to the North. In 1887, Oregon's governor approved the measure that divided Baker County and created Malheur County. When the new county was established, there were six aspirants for county seat, including Vale. After many bitterly fought elections, Vale was selected as the county seat. The final election was held in 1955, ending a 65 year battle!



Baker City is home to the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center (NHOTIC) operated by the Vale District BLM. Multiple cultural and



historical points dot the district and add to the old west flair that is already prevalent in this area. Much of the Vale district is cowboy country. The majority of Malheur County is BLM land and the Vale District focuses on multiple user groups such as ranchers, miners, hunters, fishermen, rafters and kayakers, rock-hounds, etc.

Malheur County has abundant recreational opportunities including big game and bird hunting. Various lakes and rivers offer great fishing, water skiing, kayaking and rafting. There are a large variety of hiking, camping and horseback riding prospects from deep canyons to timbered mountains with

phenomenal vistas. Local events are numerous and typically include rodeos and town festivals and the National Old Time Fiddlers Festival in Weiser, Idaho just across the Snake River. Winter activities abound with snowmobiling and excellent skiing opportunities only a few hour's drive away.

Wild horses are plentiful on the district and can be seen often as well as sage grouse, as Malheur County still remains a stronghold for large populations of these birds. Big Horn sheep can also often be spotted and the district works in cooperation with multiple partners in the interest of these majestic animals.



Vale, population of 1900, has much to offer including a fine public school program, Doctors, Dentists, banks, a grocery store, restaurants and convenience stores. Vale is a farming and ranching community. The predominant crops in the local area include onions, potatoes, sugar beets, hay, and corn. The people are friendly and the air is clean. There are several denominations of churches in the area. Our local area population dynamics grow more diverse each year. Historically this area was settled by Basque sheep herders.



City of Vale looking west from Rhinehart butte

The city of Ontario, 15 miles to the east, provides movie theatres, shopping facilities, Treasure Valley Community College, Four Rivers Cultural Center, and St. Alphonsis Regional Medical Center. Other commuting communities from Vale include Nyssa, Adrian, and Harper. Idaho is also a short 20 minute drive from Vale. Many employees choose to live on the other side of the Snake River in Payette County, Idaho. Additional communities include Weiser, Payette, Fruitland and New Plymouth which are all within a 35 minute commuting time. Many locations within the greater Treasure Valley which includes Nampa, Caldwell, Meridian, Boise, etc. are 45-60 minute drives from Vale. The dynamics of this area allow you to live and/or work and play in the rural areas with close proximities to the amenities that larger urban areas provide.

In the local Oregon area, rental rates for a two bedroom unfurnished house average about \$600.00 per month. The price for purchasing a 2-3 bedroom home ranges from \$75,000.00 to \$200,000.00 depending on location (Idaho or Oregon), size and acreage. Many homes are available with acreage. Unemployment rates typically run below the national average. The cost of living is lower than most of the US and the quality of life is high. Winters in the lower elevations are typically moderate and the summers are long.

If you are interested in a challenging position with a proactive, progressive wildland fire program consider the Vale District Bureau of Land Management. A list of websites covering some of the opportunities available in Eastern Oregon and Southwest Idaho (The Treasure Valley) and other detailed information about our program is available upon request. For more information please contact the names below or visit us at:

www.blm.gov/or/districts/vale/fire

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Vale District BLM Fire - Mission Statement

“Dedicated to safety and quality public service through professionalism and teamwork”