

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

Through HB 2538, the 1993 Oregon Legislative Assembly created the seven-member Access and Habitat (A&H) Board. This legislation authorized the A&H Board to review and recommend to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission projects designed to improve wildlife habitat and public hunting access in Oregon. The 2003 Oregon Legislative Assembly reauthorized the program through December 2009. Project proposals are typically submitted by landowners, corporations, organizations, and agencies. Applications are initially reviewed by board-appointed regional advisory councils established in six geographic regions of the state. The councils forward proposals to the A&H Board with recommendations to approve or deny projects. The A&H Board provides the next level of project review and then forwards proposals to the Fish and Wildlife Commission for final consideration and approval to expend A&H Program funds. Because the program is scheduled to sunset next biennium, the Board did not approve any project for more than one year.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Access and Habitat Program provides for public involvement through the regional advisory councils and A&H Board meetings. The meetings are advertised in advance, notices are published on the department’s website and in the program’s newsletter and agendas are mailed to interested citizens. There is an opportunity for interested citizens to provide public comment during these meetings. The A&H Board most recently met on April 22, 2008 in Seaside, Oregon. Board member Ron Borisch was not present, but provided his vote for each proposed project to the board chair prior to the meeting. His votes could not be counted towards projects with amended motions; these are indicated with an asterisk.

ISSUE 1	Project Funding Approval
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Project 1	#2008-02 Widman Access Area
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ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$17,460
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$17,460
- Applicant: Mike Widman
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2008 – December 1, 2008
- Access Acres: 8,430
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$16,860 to allow open

public hunting on 8,430 acres of private land from August 1st to December 1, 2008. In addition, \$600 would be spent to print signs that identify the project area and maps to distribute to hunters. The total A&H cost for one year of hunting access would be \$17,460.

The property is located in the Lookout Mountain Wildlife Management Unit, which is characterized by its trophy mule deer and excellent chukar hunting opportunities. The mid elevation sagebrush steppe and high elevation conifer/aspen habitats also support increasing populations of elk and pronghorn. The proposed project site is located less than 10 miles from the (A&H) Forsea Access Area, and the potential exists to enroll additional landowners to create a large block of quality private land open to public hunting.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council unanimously approved the project as proposed, commenting on the property's extremely high quality hunting opportunities and potential for public use. The Board also voted unanimously to approve the project as proposed (for one year only).

Project 2 #2008-03 Forsea Ranch Access Area

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$22,592
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$22,592
- Applicant: Dan and Ranece Forsea.
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2008 – July 31, 2009
- Access Acres: 9,330
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$20,992 to allow open public hunting on 9,330 acres of private land from August 1, 2008 to July 31, 2009. In addition, \$1,600 would be spent to print signs that identify the project area and maps to distribute to hunters. The total A&H cost for one year of hunting access would be \$22,592.

The Forsea Access Area has been enrolled in the A&H program since 2003, and has proven to be one of our highest quality access properties for Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, mule deer, elk, bear, cougar, and upland game birds. The project site is located in the Lookout Mountain Wildlife Management Unit, which has been identified as the highest priority area for ODFW Baker District staff to maintain or open private land for public hunting access.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council unanimously voted to recommend this project for approval, and noted that the area has received a tremendous amount of use during the first five years in the A&H program. The A&H Board also unanimously voted to approve the project

as proposed (for one year only).

Project 3 #2008-04 Smutz Access Area

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$6,135
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$6,135
- Applicant: Irwin Smutz
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2008 – July 31, 2009
- Access Acres: 1,414
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$3,535 to allow open public hunting on 1,414 acres of private land from August 1, 2008 to July 31, 2009. In addition, \$1,600 would be spent to print signs and maps, and \$1,000 would be used to establish two gravel parking areas. The total A&H cost for one year of hunting access would be \$6,135.

The Smutz property is located in the Starkey Wildlife Management Unit, and would improve access to adjacent A&H project lands, including Glass Hill Conservancy, Forest Capitol LLC, and RMEF Glass Hill properties. Hunting opportunities in the project area include mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, bear, cougar, coyote, turkey, waterfowl, pheasant, Hungarian partridge, California quail, and blue and ruffed grouse.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council unanimously voted to approve the project as proposed, and commented that area would receive high levels of hunter use due to its proximity to the town of La Grande and the popularity of the surrounding hunting area. The A&H Board also unanimously voted to approve the project (for one year only).

Project 4 #2008-05 JWTR LLC Law Enforcement Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$30,377
- Cooperator Funds: \$132,333
- Total Project Cost: \$162,710
- Applicant: JWTR LLC and JWTR Holding Company
- Location: Klamath Watershed District
- Access Duration: July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009
- Access Acres: 591,000
- Cooperators: ODFW Klamath District, BLM, Oregon Hunters Association, Mule Deer Foundation, R&E (pending), JWTR
- Council Vote: Yes: 7 ; No: 0
- Board Vote: *Yes: 5 ; No: 0

The proposed project, as approved by the A&H Board, would provide funding for OSP law enforcement on 591,000 acres of private timber lands from July, 2008 – November, 2008. A reduced level of enforcement would be provided from April, 2009 – June, 2009. In addition to OSP patrol, the proposed \$30,377 includes map and sign printing, reader board materials, and a cellular phone for OSP communication.

The JWTR properties span the Keno, Silver Lake, Interstate, Klamath Falls, Fort Rock, and Sprague Wildlife Management Units. The property provides excellent big game and turkey hunting opportunities. In 2006, an estimated 18,716 hunting use days occurred on the project area. In addition, the creeks that run through the properties support an estimated 2,000 recreational fishing days. The landowner has submitted a proposal to the R&E Board to share the cost law enforcement during the summer months.

Unfortunately, this property has been subject to many problems, including illegal dumping, littering, resource damage, OHV abuse, theft, poaching, and criminal activity such as drug manufacturing. The law enforcement presence and informational signs would help discourage illegal and environmentally harmful activities that may otherwise lead the landowners to close their property.

The Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council unanimously voted to approve the project as originally proposed, which included funding to relocate Hidden Valley Rd., purchase 6 new gates and two motion cameras, and rent a backhoe. The A&H Board felt that these items were the landowners' responsibility, and unanimously voted to approve an amended version of the project proposal as described above (for one year only).

Project 5	#2008-06 Timbers/Spring Butte Blocks Travel Management and Enforcement	
ANALYSIS	• <u>A&H Funds:</u>	\$24,498
	• <u>Cooperator Funds:</u>	\$23,046
	• <u>Total Project Cost:</u>	\$47,544
	• <u>Applicant:</u>	Cascade Timberlands (Oregon) LLC, ODFW, and OSP
	• <u>Location:</u>	Deschutes Watershed District
	• <u>Access Duration:</u>	July 1, 2008 – June 30, 2009
	• <u>Habitat Acres:</u>	33,450
	• <u>Access Acres:</u>	33,450
	• <u>Cooperators:</u>	Cascade Timberlands, ODFW (Deschutes Watershed District), OSP, Walker Range Fire Patrol Association.
	• <u>Council Vote:</u>	Yes: 7; No: 0
	• <u>Board Vote:</u>	Yes: 6; No: 0

The proposed project would provide funding for OSP law enforcement on

33,450 acres of private timber lands from August 2008 – January 2009. The project area is located in the southern portion of the Paulina Wildlife Management Unit, and provides largely deer and elk hunting opportunities. Approximately 1,000 hunters utilize this area during the controlled buck rifle season.

This project has been funded by A&H since 2000. Cooperator funds would be used to maintain and fill guzzlers, maintain roads, monitor wildlife and public use, maintain and install signs, and provide OSP supervision over the patrol officer.

Both the Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council and A&H Board unanimously voted to approve the project as proposed (for one year only).

Project 6 #2008-08 Jenkins Access Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$ 35,583
- Cooperator Funds: \$ 0
- Total Project Cost: \$ 35,583
- Applicant: Rich Jenkins
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2008 – March 1, 2009
- Access Acres: 13,233
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 1
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The proposed project would reimburse the landowner \$33,083 for allowing open public hunting on 13,233 acres of private land from August 1, 2008 – March 1, 2009. In addition, \$2,500 would be spent to print signs that identify the project area.

Located in the Steens Mountain Wildlife Management Unit, The Jenkins Ranch property provides excellent mule deer, elk, pronghorn, and sage grouse hunting. In addition to the private land access this project would provide, it would also open a road that would provide access to 60,000 acres of BLM land that is currently blocked.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted to approve this project as proposed (for one year only).

Project 7 #2008-09 Jordan Access Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$2,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$2,000
- Applicant: Dan Jordan
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2008 – March 1, 2009
- Access Acres: 640

- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: * Yes: 4; No: 1

The proposed project, as approved by the A&H Board, would provide the landowner with \$1,600 as compensation for allowing public hunting access to 640 acres of private land. The access period would be from August 1, 2008 – March 1, 2009. In addition, \$400 of A&H funds would be used to print signs and maps of the project area.

Located in the Steens Mountain Wildlife Management Unit, the Jordan property offers good mule deer, pronghorn, sage grouse, and elk hunting opportunities. In addition, the landowner maintains a forty-acre public campground around Pate Lake.

The original proposal included funding for gates and fencing. Both the Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board felt these items were the landowner's responsibility, and motioned to only approve funding for the access reimbursement, signs, and maps as described above. The Regional Council unanimously voted to approve the amended project proposal. Four of the five A&H Board members voted to approve the amended project proposal. One dissenting vote was cast due to concerns regarding the public camping easement between BLM and the landowner.

Project 8

#2008-10 New River Aleutian Goose Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$24,750
- Cooperator Funds: \$4,107
- Total Project Cost: \$28,857
- Applicants: Mike Knapp, Jim Kamph, Rick McKenzie, Alan Haga
- Location: Rogue Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 1,800
- Access Duration: October, 2008 – March 2009
- Access Acres: 4,780
- Cooperators: ODFW Rogue District
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 2

The proposed project would provide access to 4,780 acres of private land for waterfowl hunting. The landowners would be compensated with fertilizer for 1,800 acres of pasture fields that provide forage for a large population of Aleutian Canada geese. The combination of increased hunting pressure and fertilizer would help the landowners mitigate the damage that these animals cause annually.

Kamph, Knapp, and Haga properties would provide access to 6 hunters per day on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays throughout the waterfowl season. McKenzie lands would provide access to 10 hunters per day on

Saturdays and Sundays throughout the waterfowl season. All properties would be open daily for the South Coast goose zone season, February 24-March 10, 2009. The project has been very popular with hunters as landowners were fully booked on most days during the 2006/2007 season.

The Southwest Regional Advisory Council unanimously voted to approve the project as proposed. The A&H Board also voted to approve the project as proposed (for one year only), although two Board members cast dissenting votes. These members expressed concerns that the proposed project is not a long-term solution, and the increasing cost of fertilizer will pose a financial strain on the A&H Program.

Project 9 #2008-11 Territorial Youth Hunt

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$2,648
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,332
- Total Project Cost: \$3,980
- Applicant: Giustina Resources
- Location: Umpqua Watershed District
- Access Acres: 4,477
- Access Duration: November 7, 2009 – November 30, 2009
- Cooperators: Giustina Resources, Seneca Jones Timber Company, ODFW Umpqua Watershed.
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The proposed project would reimburse the landowner \$2,648 for allowing 10 youth deer hunters to access 4,477 acres of quality private timber land through the controlled hunt process. The hunt would be specific to black-tailed deer during weekends in November; this property has not previously been open to hunting.

Spotlight surveys on the property indicate good numbers of black-tailed bucks and good fawn recruitment, as the animals take advantage of the abundant forage found within the logged units. Successfully drawn hunters will be provided with a key and permit to access the project area. Giustina Resources will contribute administration and security resources, ODFW will also assist with security, and Seneca Jones Timber Company will contribute 500 acres of the total access area.

The Southwest Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both unanimously voted to approve the project as proposed, and both commented on the quality hunting opportunity provided to youths.

Project 10 #2008-12 Sutherlin Access Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$905
- Cooperator Funds: \$5,000
- Total Project Cost: \$5,905

- Applicant: Tash Shaleed – Weyerhaeuser Company
 - Location: Umpqua Watershed District
 - Access Duration: January – February, 2009
 - Access Acres: 89,600
 - Cooperators: Weyerhaeuser, ODFW Umpqua District, Roseburg Forest Products (RFP).
 - Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
 - Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- *Tally abstained from voting due to working relations with the applicant.

The proposed project will provide 80 hunters (40 youth and 40 adults) access to otherwise-closed private timber lands during two controlled antlerless elk hunts on Weyerhaeuser’s Calapooya Tree Farm and RFP’s Hinkle Creek watershed. Successfully drawn applicants will receive a map, entry permit, and a key to access these two areas, which total 89,600 acres.

Both properties hold good numbers of elk, and have consistently experienced elk damage to tree seedlings. Since 2003, controlled hunts have replaced emergency hunts as the primary mitigation tool used to address damage issues. The proposed project would provide hunter access without requiring that gates be opened and closed daily. The Southwest Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both unanimously voted to approve the project as proposed (for one year only).

DRAFT MOTION I move to approve the recommendations of the Access and Habitat Board for project funding.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 6, 2008