

Projects Recommended for Funding Access and Habitat Board

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in John Day on April 29, 2009, to review eight projects requesting funding from the A&H Program. A project must receive a majority of Board votes to be recommended for funding; six Board members attended the meeting. A summary of each project, funding requested, designation as access and/or habitat funding, and Board and Council votes are listed below. Major issues raised are identified below, if applicable.

The Board recommends funding the following projects:

#2009-09 Rufenacht Land and Cattle Co. Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$15,153
- Landowner Contribution: \$250 - \$500 in-kind (hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$15,403 - \$15,653
- Applicant: Bob Rufenacht
- Location: Grand Ronde Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2009 – July 31, 2010
- Access Acres: 5,647
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$13,553 to allow open public hunting on 5,647 acres of private land from August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010. In addition, \$600 would be spent on maps and signs and \$1,000 would be spent on two kiosks to identify the project area. The total A&H cost for one year of hunting access would be \$15,153.

The Rufenacht Land and Cattle Co. Access Area is located in the Sumpter Wildlife Management Unit, which contains 65 percent private lands. The property provides a wide variety of hunting opportunities, including mule deer, pronghorn, Rocky Mountain elk, turkey, California quail, forest grouse, bear, coyote, and cougar. The Sumpter unit has experienced chronic elk damage which ODFW is addressing with several cow seasons. This project would increase hunter access during these cow hunts, improving ODFW's ability to manage the herd.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve this project as proposed.

#2009-10 Imnaha River Canyon Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$14,774
- Cooperator Funds: \$27,000
- Total Project Cost: \$41,774
- Applicant: The Nature Conservancy (Northeast

- Location: Oregon Office), ODFW (Enterprise) Grande Ronde Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2009 – July 31, 2010
- Access Acres: Private: 6,673; Public: 45,000
- Cooperators: ODFW (Bighorn Sheep program), ODFW (Conservation Strategy), Wallowa Resources, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Blue Mountains Elk Initiative
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would pay for an ODFW seasonal employee (\$12,674) to patrol public hunting and to protect/enhance wildlife habitat on 6,673 acres of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) lands located on the lower Imnaha River, primarily in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area (HCNRA). In addition, \$1,500 has been budgeted for vehicle fuel, and \$600 for signs and maps, for a total A&H cost of \$14,774. The 27 parcels of TNC property provided under this agreement would significantly improve access to approximately 45,000 acres of public land. The property provides excellent opportunities to hunt mule deer, white-tailed deer, Rocky Mountain elk, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, turkey, waterfowl, upland bird, bear, cougar, and coyote.

TNC has agreed to allow public access, provided ODFW patrols the private land during hunting seasons. In addition to reducing wildlife and road closure violations, the ODFW technician would collect biological data related to hunter harvest and assist ODFW – Enterprise District staff to implement wildlife habitat improvement projects, including spring development and repair, fence removal, noxious weed inventory, litter and trash removal, and coordination of volunteer efforts.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve this project as proposed.

#2009-12 Lost Valley Ranch RHA

- A&H Funds: \$15,807
- Cooperator Funds: \$7,319
- Total Project Cost: \$23,126
- Applicant: Robert Wade
- Location: John Day Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 1, 2009 – March 31, 2010
- Access Acres: 6,336
- Cooperators: ODFW (Heppner District), OSP
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$15,207 to allow open public hunting on 6,336 acres of private land from August 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010. In addition, \$600 would be spent on signs to identify the project area and maps to distribute to hunters. The total A&H cost for one year of hunting access would be \$15,807. In addition, ODFW – Heppner District and Oregon State Police would provide \$7,319 of in-kind

support for administration, implementation, and enforcement of the project.

The Lost Valley Ranch is located in the Fossil Wildlife Management Unit, which is 86 percent private land and provides few public hunting opportunities. The property contains 6,336 acres of forested mountains, grassland foothills, open meadows, and agricultural fields, providing opportunities to hunt deer, elk, pronghorn, turkey, upland birds, small game, and predators. The ranch has an extensive history of elk damage, and this project would replace resources that ODFW has historically allocated to hazing elk on the property.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve this project as proposed.

#2009-13 Timbers/Spring Butte TMA

- A&H Funds: \$24,498
- Cooperator Funds: \$23,746
- Total Project Cost: \$48,244
- Applicant: Cascade Timberlands (Oregon) LLC, ODFW, and OSP
- Location: Deschutes Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 2009 – January 2010
- Habitat Acres: 3,345 (estimated)
- Access Acres: 33,450
- Cooperators: Cascade Timberlands, ODFW (Deschutes Watershed District), ODFW R&E, OSP, Walker Range Fire Patrol Association.
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would provide funding for OSP law enforcement on 33,450 acres of private timber lands from August 2009 – January 2010. 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. ODFW's R&E Program has purchased one pair of night-vision goggles that will be used on this project.

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

#2009-14 New River Aleutian Goose Project

- A&H Funds: \$24,750
- Cooperator Funds: \$3,150

- Total Project Cost: \$27,900
- Applicants: Mike Knapp, Jim Kamph, Rick McKenzie, Alan Haga
- Location: Rogue Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 1,800
- Access Duration: September 2009 – March 2010
- Access Acres: Private: 4,780; Public: 500
- Cooperators: ODFW Rogue District, landowners
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would provide access to 4,780 acres of private land and 500 acres of land-locked BLM 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 the geese cause annually.

Kamph, Knapp, and Haga properties would each provide access to six 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 (late February - March 10, 2010). The project has been very popular with hunters, landowners, and ODFW district staff since its inception in 2006.

The Southwest Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve the project as proposed.

#2009-15 C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement

- A&H Funds: \$5,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$14,600
- Total Project Cost: \$19,600
- Applicant: Dave Picanso – C2 Ranch manager
- Location: Rogue Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 280
- Access Duration: December 2009 – May 2011
- Access Acres: 2,750
- Cooperators: C2 Ranch, Oregon Hunters Association, ODFW (Central Point)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$5,000 for chemical treatment of Himalayan blackberry on a 200 acre pasture. The C2 Cattle Company will mechanically remove blackberry and apply the chemical treatment. The landowners will also cut 20 acres of decadent wedgeleaf ceanothus and fertilize 60 acres of pasture to improve deer browse.

The C2 Ranch will provide seven youth deer hunts and three youth spring turkey hunts during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 seasons. Hunters will be chosen at random through the Oregon Hunters Association (advertisement in the Oregon Hunter Magazine), at National Wild Turkey Federation banquets, or through ODFW Hunter Education classes. Each hunter will have two days to hunt and will be provided with a guide.

The C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement Project started in 2007, and has been very successful in regards to both youth hunting access and habitat improvements over the past two years.

The Southwest Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve the project as proposed.

#2009-16 Palomino Butte Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$19,738
- Landowner Contribution: \$250 - \$500 in-kind (hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$19,988 - \$20,238
- Applicant: Bill Peila
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: August 2009 – July 2010
- Access Acres: Private: 7,343; Public: 8,296
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would pay the landowner \$18,238 to allow public hunting access on 7,343 acres of private land and 640 acres of land-locked public land. The project would also improve access to 7,656 acres of public land. Access would be provided for one year, from August 2009 – July 2010. In addition, \$1,500 of A&H funds would be used to produce and post signs to delineate the access area and to print maps to distribute to hunters.

Located in the Juniper Wildlife Management Unit, the proposed access area has been known for its high quality mule deer, antelope, elk, sage grouse, and coyote hunting. This area has been subject to chronic big game damage, and a long-duration elk hunt has been established for the 2009-10 hunting season. The improved access provided by this project would help achieve the objectives of this damage hunt.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve the project.

#2009-17 Irwin Habitat Project

- A&H Funds: \$8,400
- Cooperator Funds: \$2,800
- Total Project Cost: \$11,200

- Applicants: Jeff Irwin
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 1.5 acre pond
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would develop a 1.5 acre pond to provide water for mule deer, waterfowl, and upland birds. Waterfowl currently nest near irrigation ditches and are very susceptible to predation. The current lack of a perennial water source on the property forces big game species to travel across a busy highway to access water, resulting in at least six road-killed deer during the past year. The proposed pond and adjacent habitat improvements should increase nesting and rearing success of both waterfowl and upland birds and reduce road kill of deer.

The landowner has improved upland bird habitat on his property, and would plant trees and shrubs along the riparian areas. Although this is habitat-only project, the landowner does allow some youth pheasant hunting on his property.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board both voted unanimously to approve the project.