

Projects Recommended for Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in Salem on January 20, 2011 to review projects requesting funding from the A&H Program. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended for funding; five Board members attended the meeting. A summary of each project, funding requested, designation as access and/or habitat project, and Board and Council votes are listed below. Major issues raised are identified below, if applicable.

The Board recommends funding the following projects:

#2011-01 Pine Creek Ranch Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$180,004
- Cooperator Funds: \$2,500 (hunting administration; in-kind)
- Total Project Cost: \$182,504
- Applicant: Donald Dryer
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
Malheur River WMU (69% public lands)
- Access Acres: 14,167
- Access Duration: 5 years: August 1 – March 1, 2011 – 2016
- Cooperators: Donald Dryer
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Pine Creek Ranch Access Area would provide five years of open public hunting access to 14,167 acres of private land from August 1 to March 1 of each year. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowner \$2.40 per acre for each of the five years. In addition, \$10,000 of A&H funds would be used to install two cattle guards on the property.

Located in the Malheur River Unit, this property supports mule deer, elk, pronghorn, predators, and upland game birds including sage grouse. The Pine Creek Ranch has not previously been enrolled in the A&H Program.

#2011-02 Fox Valley Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$7,317
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500 (hunting administration; in-kind)
- Total Project Cost: \$8,817
- Applicant: Earl King
- Location: John Day Watershed District
Northside WMU (41% public lands)
- Access Acres: 1,355
- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – January 31, 2011 – 2014
- Cooperators: Earl King

- Council Vote: Yes: 4 ; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Fox Valley Access Area would provide three years of open public hunting access to 1,355 acres of private land from August 1 to January 31 of each year. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowner \$1.80 per acre for each of the three years.

Located in the Northside WMU, this property would provide opportunities to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn, turkey, upland birds, and predators. The Fox Valley Access Area has not previously been enrolled in A&H and would provide a new hunting opportunity in an area where access is highly limited by private ownership.

#2011-03 M.R. King Ranches Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$23,010
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500
- Total Project Cost: \$24,510
- Applicant: Burt Siddoway (M.R. King Ranches)
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
Sumpter WMU (45% public lands)
Lookout Mountain WMU (66% public lands)
- Access Acres: 3,835
- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – January 31, 2011 – 2014
- Cooperators: M.R. King Ranches
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The M.R. King Ranches Access Area would provide three years of open public hunting access to 3,835 acres of private land from August 1 to January 31 of each year. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowner \$2.00 per acre for each of the three years.

This property would be a new addition to the A&H Program. The access area is located in both the Lookout Mountain and Sumpter units, where hunting access is limited by private landownership and lack of access to existing public land. The M.R. King Ranches Access Area would provide hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, bear, upland birds, and predators.

#2011-04 Troy Ranches Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$34,641
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500
- Total Project Cost: \$36,141
- Applicant: Troy Ranches
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
Sumpter WMU (45% public lands)
Lookout Mountain WMU (66% public lands)
- Access Acres: 5,696 (private); 1,797 (public)

- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – January 31, 2011 – 2014
- Cooperators: Troy Ranches
- Council Vote: Yes: 3 ; No: 1
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Troy Ranches Access Area would provide three years of open public hunting access to 5,696 acres of private land from August 1 to January 31 of each year. The A&H Program would pay the landowner approximately \$1.80 per acre of private land for each of the three years. This property also provides access to 1,797 acres of landlocked public land that is otherwise inaccessible to public hunters. The landowner would be compensated for the additional value of this public land access component at an annual rate of \$0.72 per acre (40% of private-land rate, per A&H payment schedule) for landlocked public land that this project opens.

The Troy Ranches Access Area has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 2010 and is located in both the Lookout Mountain and Sumpter units, where hunting access is limited by private landownership and lack of access to existing public land. The property provides hunting opportunities mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bear, upland birds, and predators.

#2011-05 Rufenacht Access Area Expansion Project

- A&H Funds: \$5,670
- Cooperator Funds: N/A
- Total Project Cost: \$5,670
- Applicant: Rufenacht Land and Cattle Company
- Location: Grand Ronde Watershed District
Sumpter WMU (45% public lands)
- Access Acres: 472.5 new acres
- Access Duration: 5 years: August 1, 2010 – July 31, 2015
- Cooperators: Rufenacht Land and Cattle Company
- Council Vote: Yes: 4 ; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Rufenacht Access Area was approved by the Commission in March 2010 to provide open public hunting access to 4,726.5 acres of private land for five years. The current project proposal is to reimburse the landowner for 472.5 additional acres that were not included in the original proposal. The total size of the expanded access area is 5,199 acres. The landowner would be paid \$2.40 per acre.

The Rufenacht Access Area is located in the Sumpter Unit, which contains only 45% public lands. The property provides opportunities to hunt mule deer, pronghorn, elk, turkey, game birds, and predators.

#2011-06 Heppner Regulated Hunt Area

- A&H Funds: \$475,490
- Cooperator Funds: \$72,340

- Total Project Cost: \$547,830
- Applicant: Wilkinson Ranches, LLC
Mary Madison
Triangle Ranches
Robert Jones
David Moody
- Location: John Day Watershed District
Heppner WMU (34% public lands)
- Access Acres: 39,624
- Access Duration: 5 years: September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2016
- Cooperators: Landowners (project applicants), ODFW – Heppner District, Oregon State Police
- Council Vote: Yes: 4 ; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Heppner Regulated Hunt Area (RHA) would provide five years of open public hunting access to 39,624 acres of private land on a year-round basis. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowners approximately \$2.40 per acre for each of the five years.

The Heppner RHA was first established in 1967 and continues to be very popular among big game and upland bird hunters, providing an estimated 6,010 use days in 2010. The property supports mule deer, elk, pronghorn, upland birds, turkey, and predators.

#2011-07 Iron Mountain Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$60,335
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500
- Total Project Cost: \$61,835
- Applicant: Gary and Kathy Bloomer
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
Lookout Mountain WMU (66% public lands)
- Access Acres: 3,342 (private); 4,215 (public)
- Access Duration: 5 years: August 1 – January 31, 2011 - 2016
- Cooperators: Gary and Kathy Bloomer
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Iron Mountain Access Area would provide five years of open public hunting access to 3,342 acres of private land from August 1 to January 31 of each year. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowner approximately \$2.40 per acre for each of the five years.

This property also provides access to 4,215 acres of landlocked public land that is otherwise inaccessible to public hunters. This public land has been highly sought after by hunters, and securing access to the area has been a high priority for the Department for many years. The public land access component significantly increases the value of this project; the landowner would be compensated \$0.96 (40% of private-land rate, per

A&H payment schedule) annually for each acre of landlocked public land that this project opens.

Located in the Lookout Mountain WMU, this property would provide opportunities to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bear, upland birds, and predators. This property has not previously been enrolled in the A&H Program.

#2011-08 Morgrass Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$71,142
- Cooperator Funds: \$9,000
- Total Project Cost: \$80,142
- Applicant: Morgrass Grazing Association
- Location: John Day Watershed District
Northside WMU (41% public lands)
Heppner WMU (34% public lands)
- Access Acres: 9,256
- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – January 31, 2011 - 2014
- Cooperators: Morgrass Grazing Association
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Morgrass Access Area would provide three years of open public hunting access to 9,256 acres of private land from August 1 to January 31 of each year. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowners \$2.40 per acre for each of the three years. An additional \$4,500 of A&H funds would be used to construct three parking areas on the property.

Located in the Heppner and Northside units, this property would provide opportunities to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn, turkey, upland birds, and predators. Increased hunting access provided through this project would help alleviate chronic elk damage that has been occurring in the area. The landowners have provided “by-permission” public hunting access at various times since 1997 in return for habitat improvement grants awarded through A&H. This is the first time the landowners have proposed to enroll on a “welcome to hunt” basis.

#2011-09 Thomas Sage Steppe Habitat Management

- A&H Funds: \$11,575
- Cooperator Funds: \$7,111
- Total Project Cost: \$18,686
- Applicant: Robert Thomas
- Location: Grande Ronde Watershed District
Keating WMU (58% public lands)
- Habitat Acres: 1,200
- Cooperators: Thomas Angus Ranch, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Baker County Weed District, Browne Consulting
- Council Vote: Yes: 3; No: 0

- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Thomas Sage Steppe Habitat Management project would improve habitat for both upland game bird and big game species, including sage grouse and mule deer. Proposed activities include removal of invasive annual grasses (e.g. Medusahead) and other Class A noxious weeds including yellow start thistle, as well as installation of watering troughs.

This project would improve critical big game winter range and upland habitat by enhancing wildlife forage and cover and by providing access to water in an area where wildlife have very limited water resources.

#2011-11 Logan Butte Habitat Improvement

- A&H Funds: \$37,360
- Cooperator Funds: \$48,880
- Total Project Cost: \$86,240
- Applicant: Al and Dan Luttrell
- Location: Deschutes Watershed District
Maury WMU (56% public lands)
- Habitat Acres: 315
- Cooperators: Al and Dan Luttrell, ODFW – Ochoco District, Oregon
Watershed Enhancement Board
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Logan Butte Habitat Improvement project would improve wildlife habitat on important mule deer winter range, providing direct benefits for both deer and elk, as well as other wildlife species. Project activities include removal of 300 acres of juniper, development of three spring sites, and fencing of a one-acre aspen stand.

The project area is located in the Maury WMU, a Mule Deer Initiative unit. The property adjoins public land and many of the deer and elk that winter in the area move to BLM or Forest Service lands where they are available to public hunters.