

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 (Commission) projects designed to improve wildlife habitat and public hunting access in Oregon. The 2009 Oregon Legislative Assembly reauthorized program funding through December 2019. Project proposals are typically submitted by landowners, corporations, organizations, and agencies. Applications are initially reviewed by A&H Board-appointed Regional Advisory Councils established in six geographic regions of the state. Regional Councils forward proposals to the state 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 Commission for final consideration and approval to expend A&H Program funds.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The A&H 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 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) website and in the A&H program's newsletter and agendas which are mailed to interested citizens. There is an opportunity for interested parties to provide public comment during these meetings. The A&H Board most recently met on January 19, 2012 in Salem, Oregon.

ISSUE 1

PROJECT FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

ANALYSIS

A summary of the project recommended for funding by the A&H Board is presented in the staff summary (Attachment 2).

OPTIONS

Option 1. Approve A&H Board recommendation.

Option 2. Modify project proposal.

Option 3. Reject project proposal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION

I move to approve the recommendation of the Access and Habitat Board for project funding.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

March 9, 2012

Summary of Projects Recommended for Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in Salem on January 19, 2012 to review projects requesting funding from the A&H Program. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended for funding; all seven Board members attended the meeting. A brief description of the project, funding requested, access and habitat benefits provided, and Board and Council votes are listed below. If major issues were raised they are discussed below.

The Board recommends funding the following project:

#2012-01 Kareol Woodlands Habitat Enhancement

- A&H Funds: \$25,200
- Cooperator Funds: \$8,600
- Total Project Cost: \$33,800
- Applicant: John Peel
- Location: Sled Springs WMU (21% public lands)
- Habitat Acres: 284
- Access Acres: 284 (By-Permission; youth only)
- Access Duration: 5 years: April 1 – December 31; 2012 - 2016
- Cooperators: Landowner, ODFW Grande Ronde Watershed District
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 1
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 1

The proposed project would restore two ponds and install off-site watering troughs to provide year-round clean drinking water for wildlife. Large rocks and woody debris would be placed in the ponds to improve amphibian habitat and pond embankments would be planted with native grasses and rushes. Each pond would be fenced to exclude cattle and improve wildlife habitat. The landowner would provide project funding and fencing materials and ODFW Grande Ronde Watershed District would assist with seeding and pond rehabilitation efforts.

Public hunting access would be provided to youth hunters on a By-Permission basis, and would be administered by the ODFW Northeast Region Habitat Biologist in La Grande. The original proposal included two years of hunting access, but the landowner agreed to allow five years at the Board's request. Hunting opportunities include mule deer, white-tailed deer, predators, and upland birds.

This project had one dissenting vote on both the Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board. Some Council members felt that the originally-proposed access duration of two years was insufficient. The dissenting Board member cited concerns with the cost of the project.