

Summary of Projects Recommended for Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in Klamath Falls on April 29, 2014 to review projects requesting funding or additional LOP tags from the A&H Program. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended to the Commission. A brief description of the projects, funding or tags 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 projects:

#2014-02 Fur Mountain Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$16,344 (\$5,448 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500 (\$500 per year: in-kind hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$17,844 (\$5,948 per year)
- Applicant: Gary Bloomer
- Location: Sumpter WMU (45% public)
- Access Acres: 2,724 private; 120 public
- Access Duration: 3 seasons: August 1 – January 31, 2014 - 2017
- Cooperators: Gary Bloomer (landowner)
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 1

The Fur Mountain Access Area has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 2009. The current proposal would provide three additional years of open public hunting access to 2,724 acres of private land from August 1 - January 31 beginning August 2014. The A&H Program would pay the landowner \$2.00 per acre per year.

The Fur Mountain Access Area is located in the southern portion of the Sumpter Wildlife Management Unit, which contains 75 percent private land and has historically been prone to elk damage. A long cow season is in place to address the damage, and increased public access would help to achieve the goals of this management effort. The property supports elk, mule deer, and upland game birds and provides access to 120 acres of previously land-locked public land.

The dissenting Board Member did not provide a specific reason for his vote but did not support spending A&H funds on the project.

#2014-04 M.R. King Ranches Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$23,010 (\$7,670 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500 (\$500 per year: in-kind hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$24,510 (\$8,170 per year)
- Applicant: Burt Siddoway (M.R. King Ranches)
- Location: Sumpter WMU (45% public lands)
Lookout Mountain WMU (66% public lands)
- Access Acres: 3,835
- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – January 31, 2014-2017
- Cooperators: M.R. King Ranches
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 1

The M.R. King Ranches Access Area would provide three additional 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 has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 2011. 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.

One dissenting Board Member felt the project should have been funded at 50% the proposed rate to help reduce program expenditure.

#2014-05 Troy Ranches Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$30,759 (\$10,253 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500 (\$500 per year: in-kind hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$32,259 (\$10,753 per year)
- Applicant: Troy Ranches
- Location: 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, 2014-2017
- Cooperators: Troy Ranches
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 1

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 (fence repair, road maintenance, litter removal, etc.). This property also provides access to 1,797 acres of landlocked public land that is otherwise inaccessible to public hunters.

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.

One dissenting Board Member felt the project should have been funded at 50% the proposed rate to help reduce program expenditure.

#2014-06 Murderers Creek Winter Range Enhancement

- A&H Funds: \$150,000 (\$50,000 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$647,000 (215,667 per year)
- Total Project Cost: \$797,000 (\$265,667 year)
- Applicant: ODFW – John Day District
- Location: Murderer’s Creek WMU (65% public)
- Habitat Acres: ~15,000
- Cooperators: ODFW – Mule Deer Initiative, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Grant Soil and Water Conservation District, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, private landowners.
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Murderers Creek Winter Range Enhancement project would enhance critical mule deer habitat by removing encroaching western juniper on private lands surrounding ODFW’s Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area (PWSWA) in the Murderers Creek WMU. The A&H grant would fund three years of treatment and would leverage other state and federal funds at a 4:1 (cooperator : A&H) funding ratio. Individual projects must first be approved through the Natural Resource Conservation Service’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program before being considered for A&H funding.

The Murderers Creek WMU has been identified as a Mule Deer Initiative Unit and the proposed project is focused on improving mule deer habitat. Requested funds would help achieve landscape-scale habitat improvements across multiple ownerships including PWSWA and federal lands. Although this is not an access project, the participating public lands provide thousands of acres of public hunting access.

This project is an ongoing initiative that A&H has participated in since 2009.

#2014-07 Heffernan Additional LOP Tags

- Tags Request: 252C – S Starkey Private antlerless elk (2 tags)
253A – S Catherine Cr Private antlerless elk (2 tags)
- Applicant: Chris Heffernan
- Location: Starkey WMU (67% public lands)
Catherine Creek WMU (24% public lands)
- Access Acres: 3,387
- Access Duration: N/A
- Habitat Acres: ~1,000
- Cooperators: Chris Heffernan
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The landowner has requested four additional antlerless elk LOP tags (two tags for 252C and two tags for 253A). By statute, the landowner may request from the A&H Board 2 additional LOP tags for providing significant public access and 2 additional LOP tags for conducting habitat programs that benefit wildlife.

The landowners provide quality hunting opportunities annually for Hunt of a Lifetime, youth, women, seniors, and veterans, including archery and rifle deer, elk, and pronghorn, as well as muzzleloader cow elk hunts. Additional opportunities include turkey, upland game bird, predator, and waterfowl hunts. Several hunts have been donated to local sports groups.

The Heffernans have completed many habitat improvement projects on their property including wildlife food plots, water developments, and riparian fencing.

The local ODFW District Biologist has reviewed the request and confirmed elk numbers in the area are at or above management objective and these tags will not reduce public hunting opportunities.

#2014-08 Alvord Ranch Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$17,481 (\$5,827 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$11,596 (~\$3,865 per year)
- Total Project Cost: \$29,077 (~\$9,692 per year)
- Applicant: Paul Davis - Tom Davis Livestock
- Location: Steens Mountain WMU (64% public lands)
- Access Acres: 3,532 private; 16,509 public
- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – March 1, 2014-2017
- Cooperators: ODFW – Upland Bird Stamp, Paul Davis
- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Alvord Ranch Access Area would provide three additional years of public hunting access to 3,532 acres of private land. Access through the private lands would significantly improve access to 16,509 acres of public land on the east face of Steens Mountain. This property provides excellent chukar hunting and good opportunities for quail, sage grouse, mule deer, sheep, pronghorn, and predators. All hunters must check in at the Alvord Hot Springs (staffed year-round) or call the Hot Springs to get the combination to open the access gates. Access will be provided free of charge to all hunters with a valid hunting license.

This property has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 2007. The A&H Board approved funding for 50% of the previous annual payment in an effort to reduce program expenditure. The ODFW Upland Bird Stamp Program will contribute an additional \$3,532 (\$1 per acre) per year to the access payment. In total, the landowner would receive \$9,359 per year instead of the \$11,653 requested.

#2014-09 Kueny Ranch Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$18,012 (\$6,004 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$19,510 (~\$6,503 per year)
- Total Project Cost: \$37,522 (~\$12,507 per year)
- Applicant: Mike Davis – Davis Ranches and Farms
- Location: Steens Mountain WMU (64% public lands)
- Access Acres: 6,170 private; 4,282 public
- Access Duration: 3 years: August 1 – January 31, 2014-2017
- Cooperators: ODFW – Upland Bird Stamp, Mike Davis
- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Kueny Ranch Access Area would provide three additional years of public hunting access to 6,170 acres of private land and improve access to 4,282 acres of public land on the east face of Steens Mountain. This property provides excellent chukar hunting and good opportunities for quail, sage grouse, mule deer, sheep, pronghorn, and predators. Access will be provided on a Welcome to Hunt basis.

This property has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 2007. The A&H Board approved funding for 50% of the previous annual payment in an effort to reduce program expenditure. The ODFW Upland Bird Stamp Program will contribute an additional \$6,170 (\$1 per acre) per year to the access payment. In total, the landowner would receive \$12,174 per year; the proposal requested \$12,007 annually.

#2014-10 JWTR Travel Management Area

- A&H Funds: \$211,473 (~\$42,295 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$616,500 (\$123,300 per year)
- Total Project Cost: \$827,973 (~\$165,595 per year)
- Applicant: JWTR LLC and JWTR Holding Company
- Location: Klamath Watershed District
- Access Acres: 608,129 private, ~10,000 public
- Access Duration: 5 Years: March 2015 – April 2020
- Cooperators: JWTR LLC, JWTR Holding Company, Mule Deer Foundation, ODFW Klamath District
- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would spend \$211,473 of A&H funds to hire a retired Oregon State Police (OSP) trooper to provide dedicated law enforcement on 608,129 acres of private timberland for 5 years. The patrol period would be March – November, 2015-2019. Public access will be provided year-round through April 2020. The Mule Deer Foundation would also contribute \$2,500 for enforcement. Additional cooperator funds would be used to administer and maintain road closures and conduct habitat improvements including guzzler maintenance.

JWTR LLC and JWTR Holding Company collectively (JWTR) provides 608,129 acres of public hunting access to industrial timberlands in the Keno, Klamath Falls, Interstate, Sprague, Silver Lake, and Fort Rock WMUs. JWTR's wildlife-friendly management practices have created superior deer and elk habitat through much of this range. For example, JWTR property provides more than 80% of big game winter range in the Keno Unit. Timber management increases forage and supports higher densities of big game, therefore attracting a disproportional share of hunting pressure than adjacent public lands. In 2013, JWTR lands supported an estimated 12,050 big game and turkey hunter use days. These lands improve access to approximately 10,000 acres of public land.

The JWTR Travel Management Area first enrolled in A&H in 2009. During the first five years the project has proven successful in reducing destructive behavior such as poaching, OHV abuse, garbage dumping, and theft that if left unchecked would threaten continued public access.

#2014-11 Jackson Travel Management Area

- A&H Funds: \$96,963 (~\$24,241 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$115,000 (\$28,750 per year)
- Total Project Cost: \$211,963 (~\$52,991 per year)
- Applicant: Hancock Forest Management and ODFW Central Point
- Location: Rogue WMU (57% public)
Dixon WMU (77% public)
Evans Creek WMU (43% public)
- Access Acres: 20,269 private; 39,068 public
- Access Duration: 4 years: October 2014 – April 2018
- Cooperators: Hancock Forest Management, Plum Creek LLC, Indian Hill LLC, Lone Rock Timber, ODFW Central Point, Bureau of Land Management, US Army Corps of Engineers, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon State Police, Oregon Hunters Association
- Council Vote: Yes: 3; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Jackson Access Cooperative TMA would provide funding for one retired OSP officer to patrol over 59,000 acres of private and public timberlands from October through April, 2014-2018. In return for this dedicated enforcement, private timberland owners would allow continued public access to their property, and through their property to land-locked public land. Program cooperators would also conduct habitat improvement projects such as forest thinning, weed removal, and seeding.

This project has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 1995. The travel management regulations restrict motor vehicle use on specific roads from mid-October through April 30. These closures protect the landowners' roads from excessive vehicle use and reduce disturbance to deer and elk on critical winter range. Prior to the establishment of this program, the participating landowners had considered closing their lands to public hunters because of the damage to roads. Walk-in access is provided to the entire project area from mainline roads that remain open through the closure period.

#2014-12 C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement Project

- A&H Funds: \$18,000 (\$9,000 per year)
- Cooperator Funds: \$278,400 (\$139,200 per year)
- Total Project Cost: \$296,400 (\$148,200 per year)
- Applicant: C2 Cattle Company
- Location: Rogue WMU (57% public)
- Access Acres: 9,500
- Access Duration: 2 years: August 2014 – May 2016, by permission
- Habitat Acres: 1,860
- Cooperators: C2 Ranch, ODFW Central Point, Oregon Hunters Association Rogue Valley Chapter
- Council Vote: Yes: 3; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would improve big game and turkey habitat on 1,860 acres of private land by removing blackberry, cutting back decadent buck brush, and fertilizing pasture. The 9,500 acre cattle ranch located in the Cascade foothills northeast of Medford provides prime winter range for black-tailed deer and supports good populations of elk and turkeys.

In return for the habitat work, the landowners would allow limited hunting access to the entire 9,500 acre ranch for two seasons, 2014/15 and 2015/16. Hunts include 6 adult archery deer hunts (3 days each), 16 guided youth deer hunts, and 10 guided youth spring turkey hunts. Youth hunts are for one day. Hunters will be selected by random draw. A&H would partially fund blackberry cutting, herbicide treatment, and brush cutting; cooperator funds would pay for the remaining costs of those activities, and for fertilizing.