

Summary of Projects Recommended for Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in Grants Pass on April 12, 2016 to review projects requesting funding from the A&H Program. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended for consideration by the Commission. The Board currently has a Hunter representative position vacant and all Board votes were unanimous with the exception of Mackenzie Access. A brief description of the projects, funding, 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:

#2016-05 Iron Mountain Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$60,336
- Cooperator Funds: \$2,500
- Total Project Cost: \$62,835
- 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, 2016-2021
- Cooperators: Gary and Kathy Bloomer
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

Located in the Lookout Mountain WMU, this property would provide opportunities to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bear, upland birds, and predators. The project was first funded by A&H in 2011 and renewed in 2013 and 2014. This proposal will continue annual payments to Gary and Kathy Bloomer of \$8,021 (\$2.40/acre) for “Welcome to Hunt” access on 3,342 acres of private land as well as an annual bonus payment of \$4,050 (\$0.96/acre) for providing the only public access to 4,215 acres of previously inaccessible public property. The access period will run from August 1 through January 31, 2016 through 2021.

The Bloomer’s property currently provides the only public access to 4,215 acres of public land highly sought after by hunters and maintaining public hunting access to the area is a high priority for the Department. The A&H payment schedule provides for additional compensation to the Bloomer’s for providing access to the inaccessible public lands. The schedule allows for 40% of the annual private-land rate for each acre of inaccessible public land opened yielding a \$0.96 per acre per year of access provided.

#2016-06 Virtue Flat Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$66,285
- Cooperator Funds: \$2,500 (in-kind hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$66,285
- Applicant: Rex Nelson
- Location: Lookout Mountain WMU (42% public lands)
- Access Acres: 7,087
- Access Period: 5 years; August 1, 2016 – January 31, 2021
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

This new project proposes annual payments of \$12,757, \$1.80 per acre, to Rex Nelson for providing Welcome to Hunt access on 7,087 acres of private land from August 1 to January 31 for a period of 5 years. The project will also improve/enhance access to adjacent Access and Habitat program lands (Troy Ranches) and 10,848 acres of BLM lands. Less than half of the Lookout Mountain Wildlife Management Unit is public and this project will bring new property into the A&H program providing additional hunting opportunities for upland game birds, big game and predators in this popular unit.

#2016-07 Divide Ridge Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$13,920
- Cooperator Funds: \$3,500 (in-kind hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$17,420
- Applicants: Dan and Joyce Gover Jerry and Karen Carlson,
- Location: Imnaha WMU (76% public lands)
- Access Acres: 1,160
- Access Period: Year round for 5 years, 2016-2021
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The new Divide Ridge Access Area proposes annual payments of \$2,184, \$2.40 per acre, to Dan & Joyce Gover for Welcome to Hunt access on 910 acres of private land and an annual payment of \$600, \$2.40 per acre, to Jerry and Karen Carlson for year-round Welcome to Hunt access on 250 acres of private land. The access agreement would provide year round access starting in 2016 and running through 2021.

The properties provide upland game bird, big game and predators hunting as well as additional access to adjacent US Forest Service lands. The addition of these properties to the A&H program will increase public hunting opportunities as well as provide additional support for the Enterprise Wildlife District in dealing with elk damage to this and surrounding properties.

#2016-08 Heppner Regulated Hunt Area

- A&H Funds: \$475,488
- Cooperator Funds: \$59,000
- Total Project Cost: \$534,488
- 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: Year round for 5 years, 2016-2021
- Cooperators: Landowners (project applicants), ODFW – Heppner District, Oregon State Police
- Council Vote: Yes: 7 ; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

First established in 1967, the Heppner Regulated Hunt Area (RHA) is one of the longest running and popular ODFW access projects in the state. This proposal will provide five more years of Welcome to Hunt public hunting access to 39,624 acres of private land on a year-round basis in the Heppner WMU. The A&H Program would reimburse the landowners approximately \$2.40 per acre for each of the five years to allow public access to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn, upland birds, turkey, and predators.

#2016-09 Glass Hill Access Area - Rice

- A&H Funds: \$6,648
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500
- Total Project Cost: \$8,148
- Applicant: DR. Joel Rice
- Location: Starkey WMU (67% public lands)
- Access Acres: 1,231
- Access Period: 3 years; August 1, 2016 – January 31, 2019
- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The Rice Access Project would provide continued public hunting access to 1,231 acres of private land within the Glass Hill Access Area. Access would be provided on a Welcome to Hunt basis during the access period of April 1 – January 31, for three years. The landowner would be paid \$2.40 per acre (\$2,216) for each year of enrollment. August 2008, the Smutz property was added to adjacent A&H lands to create the Glass Hill Access Area. Adjoining the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area this project provides opportunities to hunt mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, bear, cougar, coyote, turkey, waterfowl, pheasant, Hungarian partridge, California quail, and blue and ruffed grouse in the Starkey Wildlife Management Unit.

#2016-10 Mackenzie Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$132,617
- Cooperator Funds: \$4,500 (in-kind hunting administration)
- Total Project Cost: \$137,117
- Applicants: Mark Mackenzie, Sam Mackenzie, Duncan Mackenzie
- Location: Owyhee WMU (82% public lands)
- Access Acres: 9,029
- Access Period: August 1- March1, 2016-2021
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0; 1 absent, 1 abstention
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 1

First funded in 2006 by A&H for a ten year access agreement, the Mackenzie Access Area north of Jordan Valley has proven very popular with hunters; including a large contingent of non-resident upland bird hunters from the nearby Boise/Napa/Caldwell area.

Recently the property was split among three Mackenzie brothers, Mark, Duncan (Wannie), and Sam. Total acres opened to public hunting and payment per acre remain unchanged from the previous agreement at 9,029 and \$2.40 respectively. The annual payments will be spread among the three brothers based on acres controlled; Mark \$8,852 (3,576), Duncan \$11,551 (4,813) and Dan \$1,536 (640). The proposal includes an additional \$24,000 for purchase and installation of 3 cattle guards to address issues related to gates left open poorly secured causing the landowners to avoid using some of their pastures during hunting season.

One of the landowners, Duncan “Wannie” Mackenzie is a second term landowner representative on the A&H Malheur regional council and participated in the council meeting when this project was presented. Wannie participated in the discussion of the project but abstained from voting on the motion to recommend the project for Board consideration.

Wannie’s participation in discussions of the project during the council meeting was raised during the April 12 A&H Board meeting in Grants Pass. One Board member expressed concern regarding the potential conflict of interest created by Wannie Mackenzie’s participation in council discussions about a project he has direct pecuniary interest in. The Board member felt Wannie Mackenzie should have had completely recused himself from the process, that abstaining from voting was insufficient, and Wannie’s participation in discussions of the project left the Board member unable to support the project due to the appearance of improper conduct.

No other issues were raised about the project during the meeting.

#2016-11 C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement

- A&H Funds: \$18,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$278,400
- Total Project Cost: \$296,400
- Applicant: C2 Cattle Company
- Location: Rogue WMU (57% public)
- Access Acres: 9,500
- Access Duration: 2 years: August 2016 – May 2018, by permission
- Habitat Acres: 1,860
- Cooperators: C2 Ranch, ODFW Central Point, Oregon Hunters Association Rogue Valley Chapter
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The C2 Ranch proposes to improve important black tail deer winter range as well as turkey habitat on 1,860 acres of private land by treating invasive Himalayan blackberry, cutting decadent buck brush to promote new growth and pasture fertilization. A&H funds will be used for blackberry treatments and brush cutting, cooperator funds would pay for the remaining costs of those activities as well as pasture fertilizing.

As part of the project the landowners will allow limited hunting access to the entire ranch for two seasons, 2016/17 and 2017/18. 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. 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 are selected by random drawing.