

Summary of Projects Recommended for Access & Habitat Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met January 14, 2017 to review projects recommended by the Regional Councils (Council) for funding. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended for approval by the Board or Council. The following projects are supported unanimously by the applicable Access & Habitat Regional Council and ODFW District Wildlife Biologist. A brief description of the projects, funding requested, access and habitat benefits provided, as well as Board and Council votes follows.

The A&H Board recommends funding the following projects:

#2017-01 Lincoln County Enhanced Patrol

- Annual Project Cost \$145,391
- A&H Funds: \$150,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$576,965
- Total Project Cost: \$726,965
- Applicant: Lincoln County Solid Waste District
- Location: Alesa and Stott Mountain WMU
- Access Acres: 301,400
- Access Duration: Year round July1 2017- June 30, 2022
- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

The applicant is asking A&H for \$150,000 to continue this project through 2022 (\$30k./yr); a 20% match of the total project cost. Started by a group of concerned landowners in 1993, with A&H joining in 2006, to address prevalent illegal dumping, unauthorized motor-vehicle use and provide general enforcement; the project funds a Lincoln County Sheriff's Deputy to patrol over 300,000 acres of private timber lands in Lincoln County.

With 2/3 of Lincoln County in private ownership maintaining access to managed timberlands is critical to provide quality hunting opportunities, access to address damage issues and facilitate continued public access to interspaced public property. The additional law enforcement presence allows landowners to maintain access to their lands, free of charge, during hunting seasons. Beginning in 2017 the deputy will also use funds, provided by the US Forest Service, to patrol Forest Service lands in Lincoln County while traveling between member properties and to investigate specific potential violations as requested by USFS.

#2017-02 Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative

- A&H Funds: \$90,000
- ODFW East Region: \$90,000
- Morrow SWCD: \$122,445
- Farm Service Agency \$390,600
- NRCS: \$24,960
- Private Landowners \$100,000
- Total Project Cost: \$818,005
- Applicant: Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District
- Location: Heppner and Columbia WMUs
- Habitat Acres: Target of 5,000 over 3 years
- Project Duration: April 2017- April 2019
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

This project will reimburse up to \$90,000 of supplies and materials used by a habitat technician for habitat projects in Morrow, Gilliam and Umatilla counties. Project funds may be used to hire limited seasonal help if needed to complete time dependent actions. The technician will focus on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands enrolled in the Upper Columbia Access Program, Heppner Regulated Hunt Area, and Columbia Basin Open Fields access programs, totaling just over 52,000 acres.

Based out of the Heppner Service Center the habitat technician's salary is split between the Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and license dollars from ODFW's East Region. The Farm Services Agency provides technical assistance and cost-share funds on Conservation Reserve Program projects. The habitat technician's activities include improving CRP areas by reseeding with native grasses and forbs, planting shrubs and invigorating decadent stands through burning, disking and mowing. Over the last 9 years the technician has directly improved over 12,500 acres of habitat under the project.

Open Fields (VPA-HIP Grant) Summary

The A&H Program was awarded a \$1.56 million grant from the US Department of Agriculture in the fall of 2016. Administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, grant funding is provided through the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP), a component of the 2014 Farm Bill. The VPA-HIP funding provided block grants to implement or expand programs that provide public hunting access to private lands as well as habitat improvement projects located on private lands open to public hunting.

To date, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Open Fields program has used VPA-HIP grant funds to secure public hunting access to 262,012 acres of working private lands in Oregon through 2021. These public land access areas are known as the "Open Fields" program with projects in the Willamette Valley, Columbia Basin and

Northeast Oregon. With the salary and supplies/services (\$374,728) for the Columbia Basin and Willamette Valley Field Coordinators ODFW has obligated \$1,239,202 of the \$1,560,122 grant award.

Obligated Open Fields (VPA-HIP) Grant Funds March 2017						
Project Title	Contract End Date	Open Fields Funds	Annual Cost	Private Access Acres	Habitat Acres	Cost per acre
Calvin Farms	3/10/2021	\$1,800	\$360	150	-	\$2.40
Kropf Farms	3/10/2021	\$10,956	\$2,191	913	-	\$2.40
Tenbusch Farms	3/10/2021	\$3,576	\$715	298	-	\$2.40
Manning Farms	3/10/2021	\$9,132	\$1,826	761	-	\$2.40
Bunker Hill Access	1/31/2021	\$12,105	\$2,421	1,345	-	\$1.80
Four Mile Access	1/31/2021	\$13,554	\$2,711	1,506	-	\$1.80
Social Ridge	1/31/2021	\$63,351	\$12,670	7,039	-	\$1.80
Hancock Forest Management	12/31/2021	\$750,000	\$250,000*	250,000	-	\$1.00
Projects Total		\$864,474	\$172,895	262,012		
Open Fields Funds for Coordinators		\$374,728				
Total Open Fields Funds Committed		\$1,239,202				
Remaining Open Fields Funds		\$320,919				

*\$150,000 per year funded by Open Fields and \$100,000 per year funded by A&H

The projects discussed below are recommended for funding by the Deschutes/Klamath Region Council, A&H Board, and ODFW District Biologist. The request for a combined \$222,479 of Open Fields grant funds, if approved by the Commission, would bring the total obligated funds to \$1,461,681 leaving \$98,440 in funds for additional projects. The Open Fields funds must be obligated prior to September 30, 2018 and projects completed no later than summer 2021.

#2017-03 Aspen Valley Open Fields Habitat

- Open Fields Funds: \$138,500
- Cooperator Funds: \$102,300
- Total Project Cost: \$240,800
- Applicant: Aspen Valley Ranch
- Location: Maury WMU
- Habitat Acres: 3,850
- Project Duration: May 2017-December 2019
- Council Vote: Yes: 5: No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6: No: 0

This project on the Aspen Valley Ranch near Post, Oregon is a follow up on two prior habitat projects funded by A&H and Open Fields. This proposal requests \$138,500 in Open Fields funds to cut 100 acres of juniper, spray 225 acres of noxious weeds, develop 5 springs, and burn approximately 3,000 acres (1,000 acres a year, for three years). Addressing juniper encroachment, treating noxious weed and developing water sources

are all identified in the Mule Deer Initiative as important components to resorting mule deer populations in the Maury Unit. In order to hold on to the gains made with the juniper and weed treatments the landowner is committed to implementation of regular controlled burns to retard juniper seedlings from reestablishing.

The project will provide by permission hunting on 8,000 acres for deer, elk, and predators with ODFW administrating the hunting reservation system. The landowner also provides access for youth, disabled and veteran hunts on additional parcels not included within the 8,000 acres.

#2017-04 Dixie Meadows Open Fields Habitat

- Open Fields Funds: \$83,979
- Cooperator Funds: \$101,200
- Total Project Cost: \$185,179
- Applicant: John Breese
- Location: Ochoco WMU
- Habitat Acres: 800
- Project Duration: May 2017-December 2019
- Council Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0

This project is located on Dixie Meadows Company ranch near Prineville, Oregon. The project will follow up on a previous Open Fields project by improving habitat in the Eagle Creek drainage with treatment of 800 acres of juniper, installing 5,280 feet of water line and installing a water trough. The landowner is contributing in-kind labor for treatment of slash and removal of tree boles generated by the juniper cutting.

Used year round by mule deer, elk and pronghorn, the ranch lies entirely within identified mule deer range and provides important fawning/calving summer areas. The extensive juniper treatments and water projects will build upon prior habitat projects including a 2012 Open Fields grant that developed a well and 4 springs, repaired of over 50 riparian head cuts, 50 acres of juniper cutting, 12 miles of wildlife friendly fence construction, and improvement of 3 roadbeds.

The project will provide by permission hunting for big game hunters on 5,835 acres. Hunters will gain access using the same online reservation system as Aspen Valley; ODFW will administer the hunting reservation system.