



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Created in 1993 by the Oregon Legislative Assembly, the seven-member Access & Habitat (A&H) Board (Board) reviews project proposals that improve wildlife habitat and/or enhance public hunting access in Oregon. Project applications, submitted by landowners, corporations, organizations, and agencies, are initially reviewed by Board-appointed Regional Councils established in five geographic regions of the state. Regional Councils forward proposals to the Board with recommendations to approve or deny projects. The Board provides the next level of project review and then forwards proposals to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) for final consideration and approval to expend A&H Program funds.

Funding for the A&H Program, ~ \$2.7 million per biennium, is from three primary sources;

- \$4 from each hunting and combination license sold (approximately \$1.7 million per biennium)
- Proceeds from the annual Big Game Auction and Raffle tags (approximately \$1.0 million per biennium)
- Biennial allocation of approximately \$80,000 from the Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration programs

The A&H Program dedicated account balance was \$1,598,952 at the end of May 2020. A&H Program funds deposited in the dedicated account can be expended only for Program activities. As of July, 2020, A&H project contracts are providing hunters with access to over 3 million acres of private land and improving over 17,000 acres of habitat for wildlife in 2020.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A&H provides for public involvement at Regional Council and Board meetings, which are advertised by Department news release and on the Department webpage. Meeting materials are posted on the Department website. Members of the public may review documents and provide comments. Interested parties may attend or call in to provide public comment during these meetings. The Board most recently met via teleconference on July 14, 2020.

ISSUE 1

A&H PROJECT FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

ANALYSIS

A summary of the six projects recommended for funding by the A&H Board is presented in Attachment 2.

OPTIONS

Option 1. Approve A&H Board recommendations for project funding.

Option 2. Reject project proposals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1. Approve the six projects recommended by the A&H Board.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the six projects recommended for funding by the Access & Habitat Board.

Effective Date: September 11, 2020

ISSUE 2

INCREASING THE MINIMUM ACCEPTABLE BID FOR A&H DEER AND ELK AUCTION TAGS

BACKGROUND

When the Oregon Legislative Assembly created the Access & Habitat (A&H) Program in 1993 it established 10 deer tags and 10 elk tags to be auctioned and raffled to raise funds for the program. The tags to be auctioned, 5 deer and 5 elk tags are divided into 4 statewide deer hunts, 4 statewide elk hunts, and one combination hunt with 1 deer and 1 elk tag. The A&H tags are auctioned at events sponsored by host organizations. The host organization keeps 10% of the auctioned A&H tag proceeds, and 90% goes to the A&H program. The host organizations are selected for each A&H tag at the July A&H Board meeting for the following year. The 10 tags auctioned provide a significant portion of the annual A&H Program funding, roughly 25% on average.

The minimum acceptable bid for A&H Auction Deer and Elk Tags is currently set at \$2,000 for deer and \$5,000 for elk by administrative rule, 635-090-0140 (5)(b). Those values represent the minimum value the tags can be sold for at auction. During the 2019 auctions, one host organization's event had only one bidder for the A&H auction tag. While the tag sold well above the minimum bid value, it raised concerns for the A&H Board. The specific concern is one or more auctions selling the tag at the minimum acceptable bid would create a sudden decrease in program revenue. Currently the minimum acceptable bid is approximately 5% of average deer and 12% of average elk auction sales prices.

ANALYSIS

The A&H Board discussed the issue of minimum bid at the January A&H meeting in Salem. The Board recommended the minimum bid amounts be raised to \$10,000 for deer and \$15,000 for elk. From 2012 to 2020 the average auction value for a deer tag was \$33,506 and \$34,861 for an elk tag. Since 2012, the lowest amount a deer tag has auctioned for is \$11,000 and the second lowest was \$12,500 in 2017. The 2017 value was an anomaly as it was less than half of the next lowest bid that year, and less than a third of the highest bid that year. During the same time frame, the lowest value for an auction elk tag was \$16,000, in 2013 and second lowest value was \$19,000 in 2012 and 2013.

Increasing the minimum bid from \$2,000 to \$10,000 for deer tags and from \$5,000 to \$15,000 for elk tags will ensure more consistent revenue. The A&H Board expects all tags will continue to be sold successfully at auction.

OPTIONS

Option 1. Approve staff proposal.

Option 2. Amend staff proposal.

Option 3. Reject staff proposal.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1. Approve the Staff Proposal.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to amend OAR Chapter 635, Division 090 as proposed by staff.

Effective Date: September 11, 2020