

Access and Habitat Board Meeting
January 27, 2009
Salem, Oregon

Steve McClelland called the meeting to order 8:33 am.

Attendees:

A&H Board Members: Steve McClelland (Chair), Jim Morrell, Tom Alkire, Robert Jaeger, Ron Borisch, Duane Bernard, Barry DelCurto

ODFW Staff: A&H Coordinator, Matt Keenan; Administrative Assistant, Heather Thomas; and Wildlife Division Deputy Administrator, Larry Cooper

A&H Regional Coordinators: Jon Paustian, Troy Laws, Crystal Strobl, Dan Gonzalez, and Vince Oredson

On the phone: none

Review of the October 13, 2008 Meeting Minutes:

Ron Borisch motioned to approve the minutes; Duane Bernard seconded the motion. Motioned passed unanimously (7:0).

Board Member Reports:

Steve asked each member to give a brief personal background since we have a couple of new members:

- Jim Morrell: Retired Navy captain; was the state chair of RMEF for a couple of years, then the OHA field administrator for about 3 ½ years; is an avid hunter and a life member of many sport groups.
- Tom Alkire: Business journalist, life long hunter and fisher. Has been, and is still involved in many sport groups.
- Robert Jaeger: Requested an A&H representative come to Condon to talk to 3 landowners that he thinks would be willing to enroll in the program and provide good access projects. (Two of them on the John Day River and one at Lone Rock).
- Ron Borisch: Nothing
- Duane Bernard: One year to go on the Board! Has published a book on hunting and several magazine articles; is a life member of many sport groups.
- Barry: Owns a cattle ranch in Halfway, is an avid hunter.
- Steve: Served on A&H Regional Council for 8 years, board member for 2 years; is now the newly elected chair. With the challenges the program will be facing in 2009-2010 he would like the Board to be involved in things that they may not have been in the past such as attending local events and Regional Council meetings. He has also asked Robert Jaeger to be the vice-chair of the Board in the event he is not able to attend; Robert accepted.

Legislative Update:

Larry Cooper, Wildlife Division Deputy Administrator, gave the Board an update on legislative issues.

The biggest issue this session for the department is the Recreational and Commercial fee increases of 20%. If we get the increase it would take effect January 1, 2010. The fee increase includes an increase in the A&H surcharge from \$2 to \$4.

The Access & Habitat bills (HB 2218 and HB 2628) propose to:

- Extend the Access and Habitat program to 2019.
- Increase surcharge to \$4.
- Remove the requirement for 15 Landowner Representative Board applicants, and replace with a requirement of only 5 Landowner Representatives.
- Use A&H funds to purchase access easements across private property to get to public lands.

Mule Deer Initiative:

Based on the budget meetings the Director had throughout the state, the hunters throughout Oregon want to see an increase in mule deer populations. The Wildlife Division has been tasked by the Director to make that happen.

The Division has taken 5 different wildlife management units (Steens, Maury, Warner, Murderers Creek, and Heppner) and is looking at how to improve mule deer herds. We will be redirecting some funds and concentrating on improving mule deer habitat, population levels, and buck recruitment.

The Board will likely see an increase in ODFW field staff bringing forward project proposals that would implement parts of the mule deer initiative.

Coordinator's Report:

- Completion Reports received for Copley Ranch, Widman, and Abiqua Basin
- New Oregon Hunting Access map has had over 500,000 hits since May. It has been very successful with a lot of positive feedback.
- The BMEI project approved at the last Board meeting was originally proposed as \$100,000 with 30% of the grant funds to be used on public lands for private/public land interface. The Board approved the project for \$80,000 with no funds to be used on public lands. The Board's decision was reversed by the Commission. The Commission felt there were specific circumstances when it would be appropriate to use A&H funds on public land where there is a private/public land interface. The Commission approved the project as originally proposed; \$100,000 with up to 30% of the funds useable on public lands.
- By-permission access areas: There has been some additional publicity recently about our by-permission access areas, which has caused some of our landowners some frustration with an increase in the number of hunter requests. In the past because these projects were approved as access and habitat projects and the landowners were not getting paid for access, we have not actively advertised them.
Action Item: Steve requested we add this as an agenda item for our next meeting: By permission hunt administration, what works and what doesn't, what does by permission mean to us, and what does it mean to potential projects.
- Alvord/Kueny project issues: nothing new to report; will be meeting with landowners in March.

Project Evaluation Form:

The Regional Coordinators and Matt created an appendix for the project evaluation form that contains:

(1) a list of under-represented species to use when answering question number 5 "Does the project provide access to under-represented species in the watershed". The definition used to identify the species on the list was "game species that exist in the watershed district in huntable numbers, but that the general public does not have reasonable hunting access to (via public land, current A&H properties, etc)".

(2) a list of under represented Watershed Districts to use when answering question number 4 "Is the project in a under-represented watershed in the A&H program". The definition used to identify the watersheds listed was "ODFW watershed districts that support 3 or fewer active A&H projects".

Motions:

Under represented species: Robert Jaeger motioned to approve the appendix as proposed, Barry DelCurto seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously (7:0).

Under represented watersheds: Robert Jaeger motioned to approve the appendix as proposed, Ron Borisch seconded the motion; the motion passed unanimously (7:0).

Access and Habitat Project Evaluation - Appendix

Under-represented Species

Approved 1/27/09

Definition: game species that exist in the watershed district in huntable numbers, but that the general public does not have reasonable hunting access to (via public land, current A&H properties, etc.)

Watershed	Species
Malheur	sage grouse, bighorn, pheasant, waterfowl, turkey
South Willamette	waterfowl, turkey, valley quail
North Coast	predators, waterfowl
Grande Ronde	sage grouse, mountain goat, bighorn
Rogue	dove, waterfowl
Deschutes	waterfowl, quail
John Day	mountain goat, bighorn
Umpqua	waterfowl, dove
Klamath	waterfowl, quail
North Willamette	waterfowl

Under-represented Watershed Districts

Approved 1/27/09

Definition: ODFW watershed districts that support 3 or fewer active A&H projects.

Watershed District	Active Projects
North Willamette	1
Klamath	1
South Willamette	2
Umpqua	2
Deschutes	4
John Day	4
North Coast	5
Rogue	5
Grande Ronde	9
Malheur	20

**Under-
represented
Districts**

2009 Auction Events:

Changes to the 2009 Auction Event attendances:

March 14, 2009 – Oregon Hunter's Association, Portland Chapter: Duane Bernard and Tom Alkire

March 7, 2009 – National Wild Turkey Federation, Rogue Gobblers: It is possible Robert won't be able to attend, so Ron Borisch agreed to be back-up if needed.

2009 Commission Meeting Attendance:

Board member attendance to the commission meetings will be:

March 20th (Salem): Robert Jaeger and Duane Bernard

June 5th (Salem): Tom Alkire and Robert Jaeger

Sept 4th (Grants Pass): Jim Morrell

December 11th (Salem): Duane Bernard and Ron Borisch

Regional Project Overviews:

The Regional Coordinators each gave a brief overview of the current A&H projects in their area.

Public Comment:

Dave Wiley, Lead Volunteer for RMEF (agency plan team leader) came today to give a quick idea of what the hunter conservation organizations do with respect to habitat improvement throughout the state. Specifically what the RMEF does on an annual basis. In January the Oregon RMEF received and reviewed 44 grant proposals. They had \$200,000 to award and were able to approved 27 projects (6 of those projects were through the BMEI that also included A&H funds). Those 27 projects will equate to habitat improvement on 22,206 acres. Cooperator funds (BLM, USFS, OHA, NWTf, ODFW, PGE, and private land owners) contributed over \$3 million.

Regional Council Appointments:

SW Regional Advisory Council

Discussion:

The SW Regional Advisory Council has a hunter representative position vacant; the council voted to appoint Elizabeth (Betsy) Smith to the position.

Motion:

Duane Bernard motioned to appoint Betsy Smith to the SW Regional Advisory Council Hunter Representative position; Robert Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

High Desert/Malheur Council

Discussion:

The High Desert/Malheur Regional Advisory Council has two vacant positions: one Hunter Representative and one Landowner Representative. The council voted to appoint Todd Dinsmore to the Hunter Representative position; and Kirk Davies to the Landowner Representative position.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to appoint Todd Dinsmore to the High Desert/Malheur Regional Advisory Council Hunter Representative position; Ron Borisch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

Barry DelCurto motioned to appoint Kirk Davies to the High Desert/Malheur Regional Advisory Council Landowner Representative position; Duane Bernard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

High Desert – Deschutes/Klamath Council

Discussion:

The High Desert – Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council has two vacant positions: the Chair position and one Hunter Representative. The council voted to appoint James Reiss to the Hunter Representative position; and Teal Purrington to the Chair position.

Motion:

Robert Jaeger motioned to appoint James Reiss to the High Desert – Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council Hunter Representative position; Jim Morrell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

Barry DelCurto motioned to appoint Teal Purrington to the High Desert – Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council Chair position; Duane Bernard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

Action Item: Steve would like to discuss at the next board meeting what avenues we use to advertise and recruit for council vacancies, and any suggestions for increasing that scope.

Budget Update:

Matt provided an update of the current A&H Program budget (refer to A&H Board Packet).

Project Review:

#2009-01 Jenkins Access

Regional Coordinator Dan Gonzalez presented the project (refer to the A&H Board Packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project would continue to allow annual open hunting access to 13,233 private acres in the Diamond and Steens Mountain area for a period of 10 years. Access would be provided from August 1 – March 1 (unless designated otherwise – see map) each year the landowner enrolls.

- * Project is located in Mule Deer wintering ground and within the mule deer initiative area.
- * The only issue has been ATV use.
- * A lot of hunter use and good hunter success.

Motion:

Duane Bernard motioned to approve the project as proposed; Jim Morrell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0.

#2009-02 Jordan Access

Regional Coordinator, Dan Gonzalez presented the project (refer to the A&H Board Packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project would continue to provide open hunting access to 640 acres of private land adjacent to Fish Lake on the Steens Mountain.

Project is located in the Mule Deer initiative area.

Concerns with spending A&H funds for fencing, the board felt it should be landowner's responsibility. There were also concerns with how well the fence would be maintained if we pay to build it.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to fund 1,600 (access portion only); and NOT fund the fence; Ron Borisch seconded the motion. The motion did NOT pass (2:3). [Approving votes: Jim Morrell, Ron Borisch; descending votes: Robert Jaeger, Duane Bernard, Barry DelCurto]

Discussion:

Barry's thoughts for this year (since we funded the access component last year but not the fence) were to agree to pay for ½ of the fence cost and require the landowner fund the other ½ of the fence and fund access for 3 years .

Motion:

Barry DelCurto motioned to fund ½ fencing cost (\$2,750) and have the landowner pay for the other ½ of the fence (\$2,750) with a 3 year contract for access (\$4,800); total A&H funds approved \$7,550 over 3 years. Robert Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed (4:3). [Approving votes: Barry DelCurto, Robert Jaeger, Duane Bernard, Steve McClelland; descending votes: Ron Borisch, Tom Alkire, Jim Morrell]

#2009-03 Smutz Access

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff (by phone) presented the project (refer to the A&H Board packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project would continue to provide open public hunting access to 1,414 acres of private land.

Motion:

Duane motioned to approve as is (for 3 years). The motion died; there was no second on the motion.

Ron Borisch motioned to fund for \$3985 for only 1 year; Robert Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed (6:1). [Descending vote was Jim Morrell - was not aware that the Board has recently been approving access projects for only 1 year because of budget uncertainty]

#2009-04 Forsea Access

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff (by phone) presented the project (refer to the A&H Board packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project would continue to provide year round open public hunting access to 9,330 acres of private land. This has been an extremely popular hunting area with very valuable hunting opportunities.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project as proposed; Barry DelCurto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7:0).

#2009-05 Widman Access

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff (by phone) presented the project (refer to the A&H Board packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

- * Open public hunting would be provided on 8,430 acres of private land from August 1 to December 1.
- * The property has had a lot of use by deer and antelope hunters.
- * The landowner is doing a lot of habitat work with NRCS on his property.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto motioned to approve the project as proposed; Duane Bernard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7:0).

#2009-06 Bloomer Access

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff (by phone) presented the project (refer to the A&H Board packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

- * Barry thinks this is a good project from a landowner perspective.
- * Because this is a new project the Board felt strongly about approving it, as it would eliminate the current fee hunting operation on the property.

Motion:

Duane Bernard motioned to approve the project as proposed; Jim Morrell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7:0).

#2009-07 Owsley Canyon Access

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Wildlife Biologist Brian Ratliff (by phone) presented the project (refer to the A&H Board packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

- * Project is located really close to town and provides an excellent opportunity for getting youth involved.
- * There were some concerns about the small size of the property and that the house is located on site.

Motion:

Robert Jaeger motioned to approve the project as proposed; Duane Bernard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (7:0).

#2009-08 Abiqua Basin

Regional Coordinator Troy Laws and Joe Ricker from Oregon Hunters Association presented the project (refer to the A&H Board packet for the Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project was first enrolled in the A&H program in 1993 or 1994. Allows public hunting access to 36,500 acres and reimburses mileage for volunteers to open and close gates during hunting season .

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project at \$1,650 (55 cents/mile); Robert Jaeger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously (6:0). [Ron Borisch abstained from voting due to conflict of interest]

Adjourn:

Duane Bernard motioned to adjourn the meeting; Barry DelCurto seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7:0. Meeting adjourned at 3:25 PM.