

A&H Board Meeting
January 25, 2010
Salem, Oregon

Attendees:

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

ODFW Staff: A&H Coordinator, Matt Keenan; Administrative Assistant, Heather Thomas; Game Program Manager, Tom Thornton; Wildlife Division Deputy Administrator, Larry Cooper

A&H Regional Coordinators: Jon Paustian, Dave Nuzum, Jim Young, Med Eden, Larry Pecenka, Vince Oredson, Dan Gonzalez

Steve called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Review of the October 20-21, 2009 Meeting Minutes:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the meeting minutes; Ron Borisch seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 6:0.

Board Member Reports:

Alan Christensen: Nothing to report (since it is his first Board Meeting)
Jim Morrell: Wrote an article for the RMEF about the A&H program (in brief) – it also gives dates and locations for the auction tag events
OHA website is conducting a poll – who liked the new rule about being able to purchase your tag after the deadline – last Jim M looked (about a week ago) it was 4 or 5 to 1 against it. Tom Thornton will brief the Board during the April Board Meeting regarding the number of hunters that took advantage of this system.
Tom Alkire: Attended the December commission meeting. Commissioner Edge thought the Board should discuss administrative costs for projects, and had concerns about the differences in the cost of the juniper cutting projects.
Ron Borisch: Played around with the Oregon Hunting Access Map, and was able to refer hunters the map for information regarding hunts that are currently taking place on Longview Fibre lands
Robert Jaeger: Nothing to report.
Barry DelCurto: Nothing to report.
Steve McClelland: Thanked Alan for volunteering his time to serve on the Board, and thanked Tom for taking the time to go to the Commission meeting to wish Duane a happy retirement

Protocol review:

Matt reviewed Board Meeting protocol with the Board and Coordinators. If there are questions for the Coordinators to address they will need to come forward to testimony table when speaking to the Board

Legislative Update:

Additional auction tag for BMEI – Division does not feel that now the current political climate is not conducive to requesting an additional auction tag from Legislature. Wildlife Division discussed the form that such a legislative request may ultimately

take; it would probably be simply a request for an additional tag and not specify in rule where the tag would be allocated.

The Department is in the process of developing the 11-13 biennial budget, the External Budget Advisory Committee (EBAC) will start meeting in late March or early April.

Nothing is coming up in the February special Legislature session that will affect ODFW.

In the January 2011 Legislative session, we have the ability to bring forward a few legislative concepts. Right now ODFW have 4 of them: (1) penalty for mandatory reporting; (2) license reinstatement – will allow ODFW to withhold licenses until the court fines are paid in addition to the time of suspension; (3) issue of free big game tags to encourage people to apply for their controlled hunts early (4) Habitat Conservation stamp – voluntary stamp; all proceeds would go to our conservations strategy program

Budget:

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

Alan thought it would be beneficial to look at the percentage that is supposed to be spent vs. what was actually spent. On average what is our biennial savings from projects coming in under budget, etc.

Coordinator Report:

- Commission approved all A&H Projects during the March Commission Meeting. Commissioner Edge and Commissioner Smith thought the board should be able to approve funds for administrative costs, but that the Board should use discretion in that regard.
- Commissioner Smith wanted the Board to consider what impact proposed projects would have on climate change.
- Law enforcement update – when finalizing the JWTR TMA contract, OSP wanted to substantially increase the hourly rate of retired troopers that patrol all of our TMAs. Division negotiated a \$0.94 increase, but that is only valid through this biennium. OSP said they will need to renegotiate it next biennium and we will see an additional increase.
- Auction Display – Matt has spent time producing some ads and working on a display for the auction events.

2010 Commission Meeting sign-up:

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| March – | Ron B Alan |
| June – | Jim M Tom |
| Sept – | Jim Steve |
| Dec – | Steve Tom |

Auction Event Process:

Matt went over the A&H display for the upcoming auction events.

Quantify Hunter Use on Access Areas:

Potential Options:

- Mandatory check-in
- Mandatory permit system (wouldn't work for ALL areas)
Jon already has 7 kiosks in place on current projects – would just be a matter of hanging a box and checking it periodically.
- Ask people when they are looking at the OHAM properties to go back and report on line if they have used it (low reporting rates expected, based on mandatory reporting results)
- Dan reported that the permit system at DeGuire Access Area is a huge challenge, as the kiosk requires constant maintenance.

ODFW staff will prepare a recommendation and bring back to the Board at the April Board meeting.

Public Comment (10:40):

None

Project Review:

2010-01 Forsea Ranch Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Biologist Brian Ratliff (on the 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 is a project renewal for year-round access in the Lookout Mtn unit, which is the highest priority for the district to open private land to public hunting.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project; Robert seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-02 Widman Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Biologist Brian Ratliff (on the 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 is a project renewal, located in the Lookout Mtn unit, which is the highest priority for the district to open private land to public hunting.

Jim Morrell thanked the biologist (Brian Ratliff and Nick Myatt) for the letters of support. The information is important and he likes that they clearly identify how important and valuable the projects are to the district.

Alan Christensen inquired why this project is close to the same dollar amount \$2/acre for only 5 months of access compared to year round projects receiving \$2.40/acre.

Tom Alkire inquired about whether or not this project has a good entry point such as a paved or well maintained road. Brian indicated it did, so Tom followed up with why the access is closed after December 1st. Brian explained that from the good entry point to the property would be about a 10 mile walk, and the road between is not maintained in the winter.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto motioned to approve the project; Jim Morrell seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-07 Bloomer Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Biologist Brian Ratliff (on the 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 is a project renewal. The landowner has done a lot of work with NRCS funding on his land.

Jim Morrell inquired about why this project was only for 3 years. Brian indicated the landowner has a contract on the land and is not sure what will happen with that, so instead of doing a five year contract and possibly having to back out, he thought it would be best to do a three year contract.

Brian added that the landowner was receiving comparable dollar amount from ONE family to hunt his land exclusively.

Motion:

Ron Borisch motioned to approve the project; Tom Alkire seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-06 Rufenacht Land and Cattle Co Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Biologist Brian Ratliff (on the 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 open 4,726 acres for Welcome to Hunt access in the Sumpter unit. This landowner has done a lot of work on his property with NRCS funding. The property is adjacent to two by permission access areas

Motion:

Steve McClelland motioned to approve the project; Barry DelCurto seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Robert Jaeger expressed concern that there is no other participation in the project. Jon Paustian indicated that the Baker City district staff administers most of this project, so there isn't a lot of landowner participation. Jim Morrell expressed concern that a primary reason that we are bringing the project forward is because it is adjacent to the two other access areas, and wonders if both of the other landowners will be willing to renew their access agreements. Robert Jaeger asked if we could put off approving the project until the other landowners are up for renewal on their contracts. Jon Paustian indicated that those projects won't be up for renewal until next year. Steve McClelland advised the Board that they just need to take the project for what it is on it's own merit, regardless of what the situation is with the adjacent landowners. Tom Alkire thinks it is a very good project.

Vote:

The motion passed 4:2 (Jim Morrell and Alan Christensen opposed)
Jim opposed because he would like to see the other two projects commit to renewing before approving this project because that was a leg for building the case for this project. Alan opposed because it struck him as a luke warm project proposal and one that he would be willing to let go

2010-09 Troy Ranches Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Asst District Biologist Brian Ratliff (on the 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 open 5,696 acres of private land and 1,797 acres of previously inaccessible public land on a Welcome to Hunt basis.

Jim Morrell inquired about why the project is for five months only. Jon Paustian indicated that the landowner requested a one year project because it's a new project and he wants to see how it works out (how much use, damage, etc they are going to experience) before committing to it longer.

Ron Borisch wanted to know if it is pretty much just winter range. Jon Paustian said it is for the most part, but there are resident deer.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project as proposed; Barry DelCurto seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Ron Borisch expressed concern with the work involved to post signs for only a one-year commitment. Jon Paustian didn't think it would be too much of a problem with the three Baker district staff to help him out. Alan Christensen thought a stronger proposal would have been helpful, as well as the landowner's definition of "successful" to determine if he will continue the project for additional years. Robert Jaeger indicated that this project helps with elk damage.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0.

2010-08 Imnaha River Canyon Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Biologist Roblyn Stitt (on the 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 is a project renewal. The access area has received heavy hunter use. It also significantly improves access to the Imnaha River; one day there were 18 vehicles and 17 trailers at one time on the one-lane dirt road, which is why the project request includes money for a parking area.

The Regional Council suggested in the future we request R&E funds in addition to the A&H funds because of the significant access it provides to the Imnaha River.

Steve McClelland inquired about whether or not access will continue when the property is transferred to Forest Service, if they will continue to support the parking area. Roblyn Stitt indicated that the Forest Service is encouraging the parking area and the access will continue for hunting and recreational use.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project; Alan Christensen seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Robert Jaeger wants to know if other funds have been pursued at all (for the habitat work). Jon Paustian indicated that some RMEF funds have been allocated through the BMEI process, as well as some NRCS funds. He also thinks there has been some OWEB funding but is not positive. A&H funding only covers three months of the position; the other nine months are supported by ODFW's bighorn sheep program. Alan Christensen inquired about TNC staff to cost share. Jon Paustian indicated that they are using volunteer time as match from Jeff Shields who works on the Zumwalt. TNC is also funding most of the habitat work that is being done.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0

2010-03 Lost Valley Ranch Regulated Hunt Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Biologist Travis Schutlz 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 is a project renewal. Last year 65 deer hunters harvested appx 25 deer. This project area has become the primary hunting area for that unit, and has helped damage considerably.

Steve McClelland expressed his appreciation for the hunting statistics. Alan Christensen likes the written project proposal, because it addresses hunter use, landowner accomplishments, damage improvement, etc.

Motion:

Alan Christensen motioned to approve the project; Tom Alkire seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-04 Owsley Canyon Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian 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 is a project renewal to allow Welcome to Hunt access on 435 acres of private land in the E. Mt Emily unit. The project is small acreage, but is very crucial in helping the district deal with a chronic damage issue. This area receives heavy archery use. Last year a couple of large bucks were harvested by youth; a couple white-tailed deer also harvested.

Alan Christensen inquired how close the project area is to public land. Jon Paustian indicated it is adjacent to Mt Emily Recreational land.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto motioned to approve the project; Alan Christensen seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-05 Smutz Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian 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 is a project renewal to allow public access to 1,414 acres for 5 years as part of the Glass Hill access area. The project takes in all applicable hunting season (big game, waterfowl, and upland). There have been some very large bulls taken from this property. It is located 7 miles from La Grande so it gets a tremendous amount of use.

Jim Morrell wanted to know if the platform area is going to receive any kind of signs and/or recognition. Jon Paustian indicated that it would, the landowner received a grant to build a viewing area overlooking the wildlife area.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project; Ron Borisch seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-10 Jenkins Access Area

Regional Coordinator Dan Gonzales 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 is a project renewal to provide hunting access to 13,233 private acres in the Diamond and Steens Mountain area.

Motion:

Alan Christensen motioned to approve the project; Robert Jaeger seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jim Morrell would have liked to have a letter from the district biologist. Tom Alkire clarified that the project is part Welcome to Hunt and part by-permission. Dan Gonzales explained the landowner is not comfortable with all Welcome to Hunt since the lower part of the property is close to their house. They allow anyone to hunt there; they just have to ask first so that they know who is there. Alan Christensen likes that it also opens up public land, and Robert Jaeger likes that it has all species available.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0.

2010-11 Palomino Butte Access Area

Regional Coordinator Dan Gonzales 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 will provide 7,343 acres of welcome to hunt access in the Juniper unit.

Jim Morrell expressed concern regarding vandalism. Dan Gonzales indicated that they are still getting some vandalism but they are now getting this little bit of compensation for tolerating it. Alan Christensen clarified that the landowner's hope would be to help control the vandalism by opening it up. Dan said that for the most part hunters that use it police themselves by turning in other hunters for unlawful activities.

Motion:

Ron Borisch motioned to approve the project; Barry DelCurto seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Ron Borisch thinks it is an important project since it is located between two alpha-alpha fields. Barry DelCurto clarified that last year was the first year for this project and last year the Board told landowner we would only do one year even though he wanted longer. We also cut the cost from what it was originally proposed; this proposal is for the amount that was actually approved for last year. Alan Christensen thinks it will be important to document use, vandalism, etc. in order to apply toward future applications.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0

2010-12 Bentz Access Area

Regional Coordinator Dan Gonzales 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 is a project renewal to open 400 acres of private land and maintain access to over 10,000 acres of BLM land. The Regional Council liked the project, and most of them have used the property.

Motion #1:

Alan Christensen motioned to approve the project; Tom Alkire seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Barry DelCurto would like to comment that out of all of the projects being reviewed today, he thinks this one is overpaid. Alan Christensen verified that BLM does not have a public access easement on the road through the private property. Steve McClelland is also concerned about the amount of money for this project with the small acreage. Tom Alkire also has concerns, but can see where it will increase substantial access to BLM land which is important to the hunters.

Alan withdrew his motion

Motion #2:

Jim Morrell motioned to pay for two years of access as this is written with the understanding that during that time we will pursue purchasing an easement on the

two major roads – if that does not work out we would do a three year contract extension (if landowner does not go along with that then Dan should bring the project back to the Board as a five year project); Ron Borisch seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Ron asked if maybe the BLM would want to cost share with us on the easement.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0

2010-13 McBride Access Area

Regional Coordinator Dan Gonzales 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 is a project renewal to provide year-round hunting access to 10,100 acres of private land. This property provides an excellent squirrel hunting opportunity. The Regional Council strongly supported this project, and most have stated that they use the property. The access to the property is directly off of I-84. The landowner has stated that a few deer have been taken, a small herd of elk do show up on the property, and a few antelope have been taken - but the primary use is for squirrel hunting. The Council liked it because of its accessibility for youth and family hunting opportunities.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto motioned to approve the project; Alan Christensen seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Jim Morrell wanted to know what the safety zone blocked out on the map was. Dan Gonzales indicated it was where the landowner's house is. Robert Jaeger supports the project because it is such a good spot for the kids.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0

2010-14 High Desert Project Assistant

Regional Coordinator Dan Gonzales 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 is to fund a temporary staff assistant for Dan to help post signs and monitor access areas during August and September.

Motion:

Robert Jaeger motioned to approve the project; Ron Borisch seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Robert Jaeger inquired about who helped last year, since there was no assistant. Dan Gonzales indicated that he used an OSU intern.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0

2010-15 Sutherlin Access Project

Regional Coordinator Vince Oredson and District Biologist Tod Lum 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 will provide public hunting access for antlerless elk on Weyerhaeuser's Calapooya Tree Farm and RFP's Hinkle Creek watershed through the controlled hunt process. The project helps reimburse costs for the maps that Weyerhaeuser makes for each of the hunters, padlocks, and keys. It is a youth controlled hunt, with access provided on weekends only. The youth that draw the tag have to sign a key check-out agreement and must have an issued permit in their vehicle at all times while in the hunt area – this eliminates multiple vehicles driving around, creating a higher-quality hunt. The Regional Council thought the project was a very good bargain.

Alan Christensen inquired about whether enough animals are being harvested to address the damage. Tod Lum indicated it hasn't lowered the herd numbers considerably, but the landowner is very satisfied with the changes in the elk behavior since the hunt has been in place.

Barry DeCurto wanted to know what the success rate is for the kids. Tod indicated it is generally about 30-40%, but the parents have all been happy even if they weren't successful because most of the kids at least got to see elk.

Jim Morrell feels it is a good project because it creates a good relationship with Weyerhaeuser; Tom Alkire agreed since Weyerhaeuser in other parts of the state have gone to fee hunting.

Motion:

Jim Morrell motioned to approve the project; Tom Alkire seconded the motion. The motion passed 6:0.

2010-16 Territorial Youth Deer Hunt

Regional Coordinator Vince Oredson and District Biologist Tod Lum 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 will allow access to 10 youth deer hunters through the controlled hunt process. This allows the youth an extremely high-quality deer hunt; kids last year had a 100% success hunting black-tailed deer. Parents were extremely happy that the kids got such a great opportunity; many of them wrote letters to the timber company thanking them.

Alan Christensen inquired about how many days it took for the kids to harvest. Tod thought on average it was two days.

Jim Morrell thinks this would be a good opportunity to require the youth to wear orange.

Motion:

Ron Borisch motioned to approve the project; Robert Jaeger seconded the motion.

Discussion:

Alan Christensen would like to initiate some sort of recognition to these timber companies that are working with the A&H program to thank them for the opportunities they provide. Barry DelCurto would like to see this hunt be a one-time opportunity for each hunter, in order to give more kids that type of hunting experience.

Vote:

The motion passed 6:0

Matt will follow up regarding a recognition letter or certificate

Coordinator Reports:

Vince: Jackson TMA will be up for renewal next spring. Forest Capitol partners have said they are in financial troubles and that they will participate but they can't put any money into it. The TMA is the cornerstone of deer management in the Rogue district.

They use public hunt area permits on the Denman WA with six self-service check stations throughout the Wildlife Area

New River project has provided some great waterfowl hunting opportunities

Jim Young: Will be retiring soon; was hoping to bring his replacement with him to this meeting, but that decision has not yet been made.

Two big TMA's are up for renewal this spring, the Willamette Private Lands and Linn County. Most of the issues they have are related to trash.

The District uses hunt area permits on the wildlife areas, but compliance is not 100% even though they are mandatory. Would be best to coordinate the tracking and administering of permits and have that be the responsibility of the landowner.

Ron Borisch thinks that the Abiqua Basin project might be a good pilot project for the hunter use permits/survey.

Thinks there might be some possibilities in the future as the goose populations increase and become more of a problem for the agriculture industry for a different type of project for the A&H program to get involved to help alleviate damage.

Jon Paustian: BMEI has taken quite a bit of his time (most of October); those projects go through two screening processes, and should know by the end of February what will be approved.

Has been posting signs on access areas in the Grand Ronde Valley because of the new closure dates - to alleviate the shed hunters disturbing the animals.

Larry Pecenka: Made contact with 5 landowners that are interested in enrolling in the program, but are concerned that after today we have no money left in the budget.

Meg Eden: Update on the Star 1 Trust project: it is a habitat project, the landowner had asked for a two year extension because he had surgery and didn't think he would be able to get it done on time. Then he had a crop failure due to weather conditions, creating a stand of cheat grass. The landowner received 90% of grant funding up-front (per contract) in October; in January he received a 1099 and ended up having to pay 15K in taxes on the grant payment.

Dan Gonzales: Has been helping landowners complete project proposals and completion reports.

Other Business:

Ron Borisch expressed concern about some information he got from an OSP retiree that has been patrolling for the past five years. He indicated that OSP is getting strict that they can ONLY work on the A&H project – if they see an accident along the way they aren't allowed to stop; they can't do any investigative work; and they are not allowed to run decoys. Matt indicated that OSP's message has been that since retirees are not members of the union and are making much less they have to make a clear distinction between the duties of regular troopers and these retirees. *Matt will follow up with Steve Lane on the decoy issue.*

Handed out updated OARs to all of the Board members.

Adjourn:

Steve adjourned the meeting at 3:50