

Access & Habitat Board Meeting
January 20, 2011
Salem, OR

Attendees:

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

ODFW Staff: Matt Keenan, A&H Coordinator; Christina Schmidt, Administrative Assistant; Tom Thornton, Game Program Manager

A&H Regional Coordinators: Jon Paustian, Dave Nuzum, Scott Torland, Meg Eden, Vince Oredson, Larry Pecenka

Ron called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Review of the October 19, 2010 Meeting Minutes:

Jim Morrell would like the "2011 Auction Event Schedule" changed to show that he will be attending the February 19th MDF event in place of Robert Jaeger. Jim would also like the February 19th work session day (page 4) to be corrected to show that it was cancelled. Corrections noted.

Motion:

Alan Christensen moved to approve the corrected meeting minutes; Barry Delcurto seconded; Vote 5:0.

Board Member Reports:

Ron Borisch: Nothing to report

Barry DelCurto: Nothing to report

Alan Christensen: Attended a workshop in Lebanon (Middle East) aimed at changing the hunting situation by allowing hunting, identifying the birds which are game birds, setting bag limits, and identifying legal hunting methods and seasons.

Tom Alkire: Nothing to report

Jim Morrell: Tried to get out to the proposed Pringle Creek project but was unable to visit the site due to too much water from the snow melt off

Coordinator's Report:

- Defended Master's Thesis at Penn State University
 - "Hunter distribution and harvest of female white-tailed deer in Pennsylvania"
 - High deer densities destroying forests
- December Commission Meeting
 - All projects were approved

- Commission voiced their support on juniper removal and encouraged staff involvement and inter-agency cooperation
- Auction/Raffle Program
 - Completed contracts with sponsoring organizations
 - Advertisements
 - News releases: Christmas Gifts
 - Auction and Raffle brochures
 - Raffle poster
 - Oregon Hunter Magazine Advertisement (2 page colored ad)
 - "Steve's Outdoor Adventures" – television ad on his tv program
 - Website re-structuring to make webpage more user friendly
- A&H Publicity
 - Guide to hunting the Columbia Basin
 - Modeled after Sauvie Island guide
 - Access area signage
 - Universal across all ODFW access programs
 - Signs will be color coded to differentiate Welcome to Hunt from By-permission properties, and will show species permitted, open dates, and contact info
 - Fall Newsletter
 - Front page features the "Oregon Open Fields" program
- Oregon Open Fields (Federal funding received from Farm Service Agency)
 - Provided Presentations:
 - Sports Group Leaders Meeting
 - Morrow County Grain Grower/SWCD
 - Positive feedback received from all
 - Meetings
 - Teleconference with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Farm Service Agency, and the Council on Environmental Quality: Many states having trouble completing Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA), as required to receive federal funds. The federal agency awarding the grant typically completes the PEA for all states - this meeting was held to discuss the possibility of the FSA completing this requirement. Verdict: States must complete it themselves.
 - South Willamette District ODFW staff: Discussed goose damage issues in the district and the role that Open Fields will play.
 - A&H Board Review Process
 - Matt will present proposals during the April Board Meeting:
 - Block grants for the Columbia Basin Upland & Willamette Valley Goose access components.
- Other Program Business
 - Assisted New Mexico Fish and Game with project evaluation and VPA-HIP ("Open Fields") application
 - Visited A&H and UCAP properties
 - Owsley Canyon
 - Glass Hill
 - Heppner RHA
 - Murtha Ranch

Auction Event Schedule & Process

Jim Morrell presented "Proposed A&H Event Sign Up Methodology", a process for signing up for auction events.

Discussion:

Barry DelCurto suggests that #6 be revised to say that if two Board members want to go to the same event that the Board member with seniority goes if that Board member has never been to that event.

Motion:

Jim Morrell moved to accept the "Proposed A&H Event Sign Up Methodology" with suggested revisions; Alan Christensen seconded; Vote 5:0.

Revised guidelines are attached to this document as Exhibit A.

Regional Council Appointments:

Southwest Regional Council

Discussion:

Southwest Regional Advisory Council has a Hunter Representative vacancy. The council voted to appoint Fred Craig.

Motion:

Jim Morrell moved to approve Fred Craig to the Southwest Regional Advisory Council as a Hunter Representative; Tom Alkire seconded the motion; Vote 5:0.

North Willamette Regional Council

Discussion:

North Willamette Regional Advisory Council has three Hunter Representative vacancies and two Landowner Representative vacancies. The council voted to appoint the following applicants:

- Truman Stone – Landowner Representative
- Eric Shultz – Landowner Representative
- Carl Swartz – Landowner Representative
- Jim Buchanan – Hunter Representative
- Brian King – Hunter Representative

Motion:

Barry DelCurto moved to approve the council appointments; Alan Christensen seconded; Vote 5:0.

Malheur Regional Council

Discussion:

Malheur Regional Advisory Council has two Hunter Representative vacancies and a Landowner Representative vacancy. The council voted to appoint the following applicants:

- Brett Amdor – Hunter Representative
- Ramey Mosman – Hunter Representative
- Ryan Peila – Landowner Representative

Motion:

Jim Morrell moved to approve the council appointments; Tom Alkire seconded the motion; Vote 5:0.

Public comment:

No comment (10:23 a.m.)

A&H Budget Report:

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

Project Review

#2011-01 Pine Creek Ranch Access Area

Regional Coordinator Scott Torland presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide Welcome to Hunt public access to otherwise non-accessible private lands. Hunting opportunities include mule deer, elk, pronghorn, predators, and upland game birds including sage grouse. Due to the agricultural damage and high numbers of elk, special hunts have been developed to assist with controlling elk.

Alan would like to see an effort made to gather data on the number of hunters that access the property in order to see what good is being done and how many people are taking advantage of it.

Motion:

Alan Christensen moved to approve the project as proposed; Jim Morrell seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-02 Fox Valley Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide "Welcome to Hunt" access to 1,355 acres of private land in the Northside Unit for a period of three years to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bear, cougar, coyote, and upland game birds (i.e. blue and ruffed grouse, Hungarian Partridge, turkey, and California quail).

Motion:

Barry DelCurto moved to approve the project as proposed; Jim Morrell seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-03 M.R. King Ranches Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide "Welcome to Hunt" access to 3,835 acres of private land in the Lookout Mountain and Sumpter Units for a period of three years to hunt mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, California bighorn sheep, bear, cougar, coyote, and upland game birds (i.e. blue and ruffed grouse, Hungarian partridge, chukar and California quail). This project will also improve access to surrounding public lands and other Access and Habitat properties (i.e. Troy Ranches Access Area).

Motion:

Jim Morrell moved to approve this project as proposed; Alan Christensen seconded; Vote 5:0.

Additional Discussion

Barry would like to see hunter use tracked even if it's the landowner reporting back to Jon.

#2011-04 Troy Ranches Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project)

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide "Welcome to Hunt" access on 5,696 acres of private land and 1,797 acres of previously inaccessible public land from August 1, 2011 through January 31, 2014.

Jim expressed his concern with paying for public land access. Matt explained that A&H built this option into the project evaluation form because there were project proposals with the main purpose of providing right-of-way access through private land to landlocked public land. A&H was previously structured to pay landowners only for access to private land, forcing the program to fund such projects based on the size of the private ranch as opposed to the value of the right-of-way access to the public land. The project evaluation form provided an objective assessment of the value of such a right-a-way, based on the size of the public land it opened and the quality of the grounds. Alan shares Jim's concern and supports the concept of an easement, but feels that in this case the main purpose of the project is access to the Troy Ranches. Alan questioned whether the landowner would agree to accept payment for the private land only. Jon was not sure and pointed out that purchasing an easement to access the public land would be substantially more expensive than paying for right-of-way access on a per-acre basis. Tom Thornton explained that we could re-structure the payment so that we were not paying for the public land explicitly.

Motion:

Alan Christensen moved to approve this project as proposed; Barry DelCurto seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-05 Rufenacht Access Area Expansion Project

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide "Welcome to Hunt" public hunting access to an additional 472.5 acres of private land on the Rufenacht property from August 1, 2010 to July 31, 2015. Original A&H Grant Application (2010-06) opened up 4,725.5 acres of Rufenacht Land & Cattle Co. lands. With this expansion, a total of 5,199 acres of private land will be open to the general public.

Motion:

Jim Morrell moved to approve this project as proposed; Barry DelCurto seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-06 Heppner RHA

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project with Shannon Jewett, Heppner Assistant District Wildlife Biologist, and Steve Cherry, Heppner District Biologist (via phone). Refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project.

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide year-round public hunting access to 39,624 acres of private land (5 landowners) by operating a cooperative hunting program. The Heppner Regulated Hunt Area has been in effect for 44 years. This project proposal is to continue "Welcome to Hunt" access for five years (2011-2016).

Motion:

Alan Christensen moved to approve this project as proposed; Jim Morrell seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-07 Iron Mountain Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide "Welcome to Hunt" access on 3,342 acres of private land and 4,215 acres of previously inaccessible public land from August 1, 2011 through January 31, 2016.

Jim reiterated that he is not comfortable paying for access to public land. Alan elaborated on his earlier comments regarding this issue, clarifying that he is OK with paying for access to public land, but was more concerned with how such a payment was presented in the proposal. He thinks it should be more clear that these payments serve as compensation for the value of the access provided to public land, as opposed to a payment for the public land itself. Tom Thornton suggests that this issue be revisited and discussed at April's Board meeting.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto moved to approve the project as proposed; Alan Christensen seconded; Vote 5:0.

Additional Discussion:

Jim will vote in favor this time but feels in the future that the payment structure be modified so that we are not specifically paying for public land access. Matt will add this to the April Board meeting agenda to be discussed. Ron suggested that if anyone has comments regarding this issue, to email them to Matt prior to the April meeting.

#2011-08 Morggrass Access Area

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to provide "Welcome to Hunt" access on 9,256 acres of private land in the Heppner and Northside Units for a period of three years to hunt mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, pronghorn antelope, bear, cougar, coyote, and upland game birds (i.e. blue and ruffed grouse, Hungarian partridge, turkey, and California quail).

Motion

Jim Morrell moved to approve this project as proposed; Tom Alkire seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-09 Thomas Sage Steppe Habitat Improvement Project

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian and Peggy Brown of Brown Consulting presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to improve habitat for both upland game bird and big game species, including sage grouse and mule deer. Proposed activities include removal of invasive annual grasses (e.g. Medusahead) and other class A noxious weeds including yellow star thistle, as well as installation of wildlife watering troughs. The project will improve critical big game winter range and upland habitat by enhancing wildlife forage and cover and providing access to water in an area where there is very limited water available.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto moved to approve the project as proposed; Alan Christensen seconded; Vote 5:0.

#2011-10 Pringle Creek

Regional Coordinator Meg Eden presented this project with (all by phone): Brian Ferry, Prineville District Biologist; Stuart Otto, Oregon Department of Forestry; Neil Dow, Landowner; Bill Friedlander, Deschutes/Klamath Regional Council Member (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to treat a total area of 220 acres. Within this area the project will remove 200 acres of juniper, pre-commercial thin 100 acres of ponderosa pine,

slash pile 160 acres of juniper/pine, and seed 220 acres. These treatments will improve the quality and quantity of mule deer and elk habitat as well as improve hydrologic function in Pringle Creek and Horse Heaven Creek. The landowner will allow up to 4 youth hunters to hunt antlerless elk for 2 seasons (2011 and 2012) and will evaluate the hunting access component afterwards for potential continuation.

Jim feels that the project requires too much money for the treatment size and amount of hunting access.

Motion:

Alan Christensen moved to approve the project as proposed; Barry DelCurto seconded; Jim Morrell and Tom Alkire opposed; Vote 3:2.

Tom feels hunters should not be the ones to primarily fund juniper eradication. Jim feels that the cost for the amount of treatment is too great.

#2011-11 Logan Butte Habitat Enhancement

Regional Coordinator Meg Eden and landowner Amy Luttrell presented this project (refer to the A&H Board packet for Regional Council review and application for detailed information on the project).

Discussion:

This project proposes to cut 300 acres of juniper to release herbaceous and shrub-steppe dominated plant communities, subsequently improving the quality of mule deer and elk habitat and restoring hydrologic function in Camp Creek, to develop and enhance three spring sites to increase water availability for wildlife/livestock and evenly distribute animal use, and to protect a one-acre aspen stand by fencing the perimeter.

Motion:

Barry DelCurto moved to approve the project as proposed; Alan Christensen seconded; Vote 5:0.

Regional Coordinator Report:

Jon Paustian: Has spent a lot of time preparing grant paperwork (13 projects total, including the 8 presented at this meeting). Was unable to get kiosks installed due to late arrival from the manufacturer: he plans to get them up for spring turkey and bear seasons (April).

Vince Oredson: Has been talking with the C2 Ranch Manager about enrolling the entire ranch in the A&H program. The south side of the ranch is currently an A&H project, but the north side is being used for fee hunts. The ranch manager wants to provide access for youth-only hunts. The youth that are drawn (at random) for the hunts are sent a letter on ODFW letterhead. Vince would like to incorporate an A&H logo on the letter. Matt will work on creating A&H letterhead.

Dave Nuzum: Wrapped up with North Coast Travel Management Area duties in December. The non-hunter related big cases were notable this year. There was a large vandalism case on Longview's property on some logging equipment which shut down a

significant portion of ground for most of deer season but opened back up for elk season.
Working on measures of hunter use and analyzing collected data.

Meg Eden: Working on more projects, a couple in the Maury Unit similar to Logan Butte. Working with the District Biologist to find access areas in Central Oregon, which is very difficult compared to other areas of the state.

Larry Pecenka: Doesn't have anything concrete going on as far as projects, but is starting to piece something together in Lake County.
Interviewed for Habitat Biologist position in Hines.

Adjourn:

Ron Borisch adjourned the meeting at 3:03 p.m.

Exhibit A

A&H Board Event Sign Up Methodology

Approved January 20, 2011

1. The ODF&W Coordinator sends an email to each A&H Board member at least a week prior to the meeting at which attendance at next year's banquet events will be decided.
2. Board members send back an email with their desires indicated. If no response is received, it will be assumed that the Board member doesn't have a preference on what events they want to attend or they want to take their chances at the meeting.
3. The Board Chair or ODF&W Coordinator should put together a list of who wants to attend what banquet event.
4. The list should be distributed to the Board members at the meeting.
5. If anyone has attended the contested banquet event previously, they should go to the bottom of the list.
6. If more than one person wants to attend a given event, and one of the members has more time on the Board than the other, the person who has been on the Board longer will get to go to the event. If each of the concerned Board Members has been on the Board the same length of time, a random selection process will be used to determine who goes.