

**A&H Board Meeting
Salem, OR
February 1, 2013**

Attendees

Board: Barry DelCurto; Jim Morrell; Ron Borisch; Alan Christensen

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

Regional Coordinators: Jon Paustian, Vince Oredson, Tom Segal, Dave Nuzum, David Stroppel, Meg Eden, Larry Pecenka

Other: Sam Bartling, NRCS; Heather Medina Saucedo, NRCS

Barry called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Review of the October 15th Meeting Minutes

Ron moved to approve the October meeting minutes as written; Jim seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 4:0.

Board Member Reports

Jim Morrell: Nothing to report
Alan Christensen: Nothing to report
Ron Borisch: Nothing to report
Barry DelCurto: Nothing to report

Coordinator Report

- Attended a sports group leaders meeting to discuss two issues at Board's request:
 - Board wanted to know if sports groups would be interesting in providing match funds for long-term access projects. Sports groups explained that because all their members purchase hunting licenses (and therefore pay the \$4 A&H surcharge), they were already funding these projects. For habitat projects, some of the sports groups offer grant funds that A&H could apply for.
 - Board wanted to explore ways to facilitate the use of volunteers to help with projects. Sports groups felt strongly that their members are willing and able to help with a variety of projects, but recognized that logistical coordination can be challenging. Matt broached the idea of a "volunteer database" to track volunteer locations, availability, skills, and interests because it can be difficult for field staff to coordinate volunteer labor. Matt will work with ODFW's Information and Education Division regarding a volunteer database.
- Attended North Coast TMA wrap up meeting.
 - Matt is working on new map and signs for the TMA.
 - OSP is having success with new enforcement "zones", where officers each patrol their own general areas; new process seems to provide better coverage.
- Working on the Portland Sportsmen's Show committee; A&H will have a booth at the show

- Working on the biennium report for 2011-13
- Worked on auction/raffle publications and ads

Discussion:

- Alan suggested including information about the hunters/game shown in auction and raffle publications, and which tag the animal was taken with.
 - Matt replied that more information could be provided, but names are usually not printed because some tag holders are sensitive about using their names
- Auction/raffle ads in Oregon Hunter, Northwest Sportsman, Western Shooting Journal, and via social media (Facebook and Twitter). Planning to incorporate QR codes (bar codes for mobile devices) in 2014 to track which ads are successful.
- Update on Open Fields:
 - spent \$1,524,093, only had to return \$38,406 to FSA
 - 32,365 acres of habitat improvement on 11 properties
 - 23,000 acres of new hunting access
 - Future of next farm bill is up in the air; last year the House and Senate both approved the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program as part of their proposed farm bill - if passed A&H could be eligible to apply for another Open Fields block grant.

Budget/Priorities

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

Discussion:

- Alan feels that after projects have been in place for 3-5 years there should have been some opportunity to measure hunter use, so when the project comes up for renewal they should have some perspective.
- Ron asked if they would have to go through the E-Board to spend more of the savings.
 - Matt said he thinks the limitation is already approved, so they would not need to.
- Barry would like to maintain a buffer of about \$500,000.
- Alan agreed with Barry and suggested that as projects come up for renewal they should have strong justification as to why they should be renewed at the same rate.
- Jim suggested that they look at each project that comes before them as critically as they can and cut part of the project or costs as much as they can.
- Ron commented that Jim's suggestions sounds good but he feels that on law enforcement projects (for example) cuts in patrol funding could result in good projects being lost.
- Barry understands that they may lose some priority projects. He hopes that the hunter data will come back to help them go forward on renewing projects. He thinks it might be next year before they see some good data.
- Matt asked if the board was ok in spending the "savings account" down to about \$500,000.
- Alan said \$500,000 is a good place to start.
- Jim feels like they don't need to spend the extra right away.
- Matt said it would happen naturally over time; they wouldn't be spent right away.

A&H Renewal Guidelines

Refer to handout. If anything gets changed, Matt will send an updated copy to the coordinators.

- 1) No automatic renewal: projects will be approved/denied based on their merits

Discussion

No discussion. The Board agrees to keep this in guidelines.

- 2) Additional data required for access project renewal beginning 2013-2015 biennium:
 - a. Hunter use estimates (via permits, vehicle counters, manual car counts, etc.)
 - b. Hunter satisfaction (estimates via permits, in-person hunter surveys, etc.)
 - I. Short survey for TMA's: use existing permits?
 - II. Oregon Hunting Map: Rate this Access Area?

Discussion

No Discussion. The Board agrees to keep this in guidelines.

- 3) Use current Project Evaluation Form to help rank projects.
 - a. Low: 0-14 (14 projects)
 - b. Med: 15-16 (14 projects)
 - c. High: 17+ (18 projects)

Discussion

Alan commented that this is fine as long as it's not an absolute.

The Board agrees to keep this in guidelines.

- 4) Balance access and habitat projects between regions.
 - a. Matt will provide map with symbols indication project type
 - b. For now: Generally prioritize short-term commitments (typically habitat projects)

Discussion

- Alan suggested that for habitat projects, we quantify the duration of the benefits provided.
 - Matt said it could be added to "other considerations" for the coordinators keep in mind as something the board would like to know.
 - Jim suggested adding it to the application or evaluation form so that the biologist has to be proactive and it is not up to the board to ask.
 - Matt replied that it could be added to the application or evaluation.
 - Jon let the board know that RMEF has this criterion on their applications and having the numeric score can be helpful in their decision process.
 - Matt said if they wanted to add it to the habitat portion of the evaluation form, other adjustments would need to be made to other portions of the form to maintain the balance between access and habitat projects.
- Alan asked if they consider landowners operation practices on access projects. It would be helpful to know if a landowner runs their livestock /farming/timber operation in a way that benefits wildlife and District goals.
 - Jon indicated that a lot of his landowners are also active with a NRCS program and have some type of grazing plan or timber management plan in place, which

could be identified early on in the application process in the background section. It won't take a lot of additional effort.

- Jim suggested addressing this in the letter from the district biologist in which the biologist can give his opinion of the landowner.
- Matt asked if the board was comfortable in listing this under "other considerations" on the evaluation form.
- Matt suggested that if "duration of benefit" was added as a line item to the evaluation form, part 2 of question 19 could be deleted to maintain balance. Otherwise, the criterion could be added to "other considerations" on the evaluation form (no points associated), or added as a question on the project proposal.
- Ron thinks this question could apply differently in each region. From a timber perspective, deer and elk are not necessarily a good thing for growing trees so it may not be practical for the landowners to intentionally create deer and elk habitat. But the landowner, hunters, and ODFW can mutually benefit in allowing hunting access to help control the deer and elk population to reduce damage on trees. He feels it would be hard to quantify the "duration" of this benefit provided by allowing access.
- Matt let Ron know that those projects are considered "access" projects so this wouldn't apply to those types of projects.
- Alan suggested a "letter of guidance" to the regional coordinators: these things are hard to quantify but will help us make good decisions:
 - Can you express something about the duration of habitat projects and their benefits?
 - Can you express something about the actions of the landowner that support your goals for wildlife or not?
- Jim likes the idea of making the question a line-item on the evaluation form and putting out a letter of guidance to the biologists or coordinator.
- Tom Thornton cautioned the board that there would likely be significant variation between letters from different districts, depending on the writing style of the individuals. Tom also reminded the Board these letters are public information that anyone can access. When asked subjective questions, responses will vary greatly. It may be hard to compare merits of projects based on support letters.
- Alan clarified he would focus the question on what is happening on the property and if it's benefiting the habitat and/or hunter, not about personal perspectives.
- Tom added that our staff is very accessible and if you have questions you can certainly call them and ask.
- Matt said for the time being he will discuss the two questions about duration of habitat impact and landowner management actions with the coordinators over the next quarter and come back to the board at the next meeting to propose how they would like to include the criteria in the project evaluation/application.

5) Reduce A&H funding component of projects:

- a. Encourage minimum 30% landowner match
- b. Encourage minimum 30% partner match
 - i. Sports groups have grant programs and volunteers
 - ii. ODFW working on volunteer database
 - iii. Seek help from FFA, youth groups, boy scouts, etc.

- c. Reduce high-cost commitments as much as possible without jeopardizing project continuation (ex: 10%-30% reduction in TMAs, BMEI, MDI, etc.)
 - i. TMA's: reduce hours to most critical periods of enforcement
- d. Think outside the box: different project funding opportunities
- e. Find ways to reduce costs within project proposals

Discussion

No discussion. The Board agrees to keep in guidelines.

- 6) Determine project cost
 - a. Sometimes landowners just want the problem controlled (hunting administration), no payment required.
 - b. Project Evaluation Form - Payment Tables: Use as starting point; tables don't set price in stone.

Discussion

The Board agrees to keep this.

- 7) Other considerations
 - Consider the long-term cost across biennia for all multi-year projects
 - Advise landowners of potential tax benefits for in-kind contributions (i.e. bargain sales)
 - Consider regional context (other projects, public land, etc.)

Discussion

Alan asked if the market shows that a property is worth 2.50/acre to allow access to it and the landowner gives it to them at no cost is there a grounds there to claim that as a donation.

Matt will look into this.

Matt will take these revisions/additions and incorporate them into a new version and get it out to the coordinators so they have it as they work on project proposals.

Public Comment

No public comment at 10:39 a.m.

Auction Event Information

Matt went over the auction event checklist, new auction rules, and auction protocol.

Discussion

- Barry asked if anyone could take his place at the FNAWS banquet on April 20th.
 - Alan said to put him down as tentative.
- Jim asked Matt to email updates of the auction sign-up sheet when changes are made.

WRP, Geese, and Hunting in the Willamette Valley

Samantha Bartling, NRCS WRP Coordinator, gave a presentation on the WRP (Wetland Reserve Program).

Hunter Recruitment and Retention

Chris Willard, ODFW gave a presentation on Recruitment, Retention, and Re-activation Action Plan.

Regional Coordinator Reports

- Meg Eden: Gave an overview of two projects recently completed, Dixie Meadows and Aspen Valley.
- Larry Pecenka: Currently in the process of looking at council replacements for vacancies, losing the chair after 8 years of service, will be getting the news releases out for those, hopefully those will be ready for April's meeting.
- Dave Nuzum: Had NCTMA end of season meeting; the new "zone" changes for patrol seemed to work out well, officer resources were well used; deployed traffic counters in the Wilson Unit this season.
- Vince Oredson: C2 ranch youth hunts went through December. 27 youth hunters on the ranch shot 12 deer, 11 bucks, and 1 doe. Many young kids were hunting for the first time. A timber company approached him a couple weeks ago and wants to be added to the Jackson TMA project. The company would pay \$5,000 toward patrol and it wouldn't cost A&H anything; public meetings will be held soon.
- David Stroppel: Continuing monitoring of the Open Fields goose sites. His council will be meeting soon to fill a vacancy. Working with a landowner that wants to offer goose hunting opportunities on his property and another that wants to offer elk hunting opportunities, working with both on getting a 50/50 cost share; hopes to have some hunter use data at April's meeting from the Lincoln County Forest Protection Project.
- Tom Segal: Wrapped up some Open Field projects; latest fire seeding project should be seeded today, the other two fire seeding projects were able to drill their acreage before the snow fell. Tom will have some photos and a better report of how the projects have done at the April meeting. Traffic counters and permit boxes are deployed, will have data on upland bird hunters from this winter and hopes to have that information for April's meeting.
- Jon Paustian: McGinnis Range and Habitat Improvement project had a youth antelope hunt in Catherine Creek Area. The Glass Hill complex had three youth elk tags - this hunt historically runs 100% success, but this year one youth decided not to shoot a bull because they didn't see one big enough. One of his Open Fields projects, Carman Access Area, supported many hunters this year.

Projects Review

2012-16 Hancock Forest Management Access

Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian, ODFW Grande Ronde Watershed District Manager Nick Myatt, ODFW Fish and Wildlife Technician Mike Hansen, and Hancock Forest Management representative Steve McClelland presented this project (refer to A&H Board packet for the Regional Council Review and application for detailed information on the project).

This is a renewal project. It was previously called Sled Springs MDA. This project will ensure compliance with the landowner's resource protection rules while continuing public access to 292,000 acres of private timberlands in NE Oregon for two years.

Discussion

Jon explained that prior applications for this project dedicated 10 months of technician time to patrol 127,000 acres in Sled Springs. The other properties did not have dedicated patrols, but they still offered

Welcome to Hunt access. The new project application is for 12 months of funding, primarily because they are proposing to increase the patrol area from 127,000 acres to 158,000.

The primary reason for expanding the area is the amount of resource damage that the company experiences. There are four formal TMA's associated with this project: Noregaard, Shamrock/Whiskey, Little Catherine Creek, and the Tip Top parcel. Those grounds are all closed to all motorized vehicles beginning 3 days prior to the archery season and ending May 31. From June 1 until 3 days before archery season, roads in these areas are open to motorized vehicles and are used very heavily. The Hancock grounds are used all year round.

- Alan asked if it was possible to put some of the traffic counters in the area.
 - Jon replied yes, especially on Catherine Cr and Tip Top.
- Barry asked if Jon had taken the council's suggestion and asked for partner funds to help with ATV and snowmobile activities.
 - Jon replied that he has not looked into partner funding yet, mainly due to project review timelines.
- Jim asked how much usage there is from December to April.
 - Mike replied that there about 2-8 people that hunt bobcats each weekend, and from February/March through April many fisherman access the property.
- Jim asked how much of an impact it would have if the project was funded for 8 months instead of 12.
 - Nick replied that the main issue with funding the project for 8 months as opposed to 12 months is a seasonal/temporary position vs. a full-time position. With 12 months funding they can maintain continuity of staff familiar with land, landowner, and project processes. With 8 months funding it would be a seasonal position possibly resulting in frequent turnover and staff not familiar with the project, which would not serve the landowner as well.
 - Tom Thornton added that during the winter months there are other values to enforcement presence, such as minimizing disturbance to elk and deer on winter range. There are shed hunters and fishermen using the area during those months.

Motion:

Jim moved to approve the project for 8 months, from mid April to mid December for two years at \$120,081.

Discussion

- Alan asked Jon if they would be able to keep the same person if they were to approve it for 8 months.
 - Jon replied that they may not be able to.
 - Nick added that in the past this position was funded for 10 months and they came up with the other months of funding from other sources which was a struggle. With a 4 month gap they would have to lay the person off at the end of the period.

Ron seconded the motion and would like Jon to ask the R&E Board for two months of funding.

Further Discussion

- Barry asked if the additional properties added to this project will still be included if they only fund the project for 8 months.
 - Jon replied yes, the scope of work will not change.
 - Nick added that the issue is that they'll lose the same person they've had for 4 years, who has a good relationship with the landowners, and knows the properties. They would have to retrain a technician.
 - Barry added that it could be costly to the program if they do have to retrain a new technician every year.

The motion did not pass 1:3 (Jim, yes; Alan, no; Ron, no; Barry, no).

Motion:

Alan moved to fund this project for 2 years at 10 months per year for a total of \$147,275 including cameras, but would still like Jon to request funding from the R&E board to replace A&H funding for 2 months per year [in which case A&H would only pay for 8 months per year]. Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

2012-17 Fur Mountain Access Area

Jon Paustian, Regional Coordinator, and Nick Myatt, ODFW Grande Ronde Watershed District Manager, presented this project (refer to A&H Board packet for the Regional Council Review and application for detailed information on the project).

This project will provide "Welcome to Hunt" public hunting access on 2,274 acres of private land in the Sumpter Wildlife Management Unit from August 1 to January 31 for three consecutive years.

Discussion

- Jon let the Board know that he doesn't have hunter use data yet, but it's one of the projects that he has designated for a traffic counter.
- Nick added that it's a popular area for the late cow season and for chukar hunting.
- Alan said he's lukewarm about this project because you can hunt right up to the property on public land.
- Jon indicated if they approve this project for one year, he will collect hunter use data for one year and present that information during project renewal in one year.

Motion:

Alan moved to fund this project for one year with the understanding that the Board review a longer-term proposal with hunter use information in one year. Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

2012-18 Prairie Springs Wildlife Watering Project

Jon Paustian, Regional Coordinator, and Kyle Sullivan with Grant SWCD presented this project (refer to A&H Board packet for the Regional Council Review and application for detailed information on the project).

This project will provide habitat for wintering wildlife, including Rocky Mountain elk and mule deer, through the installation of a watering system and the reseeding of 48 acres with dryland alfalfa. A total of 500 acres will be enhanced for the sole benefit of wildlife.

Motion:

Jim moved to approve the project as written; Ron seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

Regional Council Appointment

Southwest Regional Advisory Council

The Southwest Advisory Council has one Hunter Representative position and one Landowner Representative position vacant. The council voted to appoint Joanne Bigman to the Hunter Representative position and David Peterson to the Landowner Representative position.

Discussion:

Barry asked if Vince felt the decision made by the council was adequate given the lack of a quorum. Vince replied yes, he felt it served as an adequate recommendation.

Motion:

Jim moved to appoint Joanne Bigman as Hunter Representative as recommended by the advisory council; Ron seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 4:0.

Alan moved to appoint David Peterson as the Landowner Representative as recommended by the advisory council; Jim seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4:0.

Barry adjourned the meeting at 3:18 p.m.