



ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Regional Advisory Council

Council Appointment Review

ODFW Region / A&H Regional Council: East / Deschutes/Klamath

Project Proposal Title: Aspen Valley_____

Applicant(s): James Wood

Date of Council Review: 11/30/16

Motion: Larry Lee motioned to recommend approval of proposal; Rance Kastor seconded.

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Doby Fugate	Chair	Yes
Rance Kastor	Landowner Representative	Yes
Jeff McNerney	Landowner Representative	Absent
Vacant	Landowner Representative	N/A
Ralph Paull (proxy)	Hunter Representative	Yes
Larry Lee	Hunter Representative	Yes
James Reiss	Hunter Representative	Yes

Disposition of Vote:

Council voted 5-0 for Aspen Valley proposal to be approved.

Project's Strengths:

- An Open Fields contract was already awarded to this landowner, who has completed all habitat work as proposed. This new proposal is a renewal for another 3 year contract to expand habitat improvements as part of ODFW's Mule Deer Initiative in the Maury Unit.
- The previous contract allowed 3 years of public access to the property for big game hunters. Hunter permits showed a high hunter satisfaction rate. This renewal will allow public access for the next three years (2017-2019) via the online reservation system.
- This project initiates a long-term burn plan that will maintain juniper treatment benefits well into the future.

Council's Concerns:

- Question was asked regarding if landowner used his LOP tags to hunt the property. The landowner stated that no LOP hunting occurs within the access area, and he does not sell his LOP tags. There may be some LOP hunting outside of the access area boundary, but the best deer hunting is located within the designated access area.



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Prineville Field Office

High Desert Region

2042 SE Paulina Hwy.

Prineville, OR 97754

(541) 447-5111

FAX (541) 447-8065

www.dfw.state.or.us

November 22, 2016

Access and Habitat Board
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr.
Salem, OR 97302

Dear Access and Habitat Board Members,

The purpose of this letter is to express my support for the Aspen Valley 2017 Open Fields grant proposal. The project activities outlined in this proposal will provide a significant benefit to wildlife and hunters in the Maury Wildlife Management Unit (WMU).

The Aspen Valley Ranch is located in the Maury/S. Ochoco/W. Silvies Mule Deer Initiative Area. ODFW has funded juniper removal on this property and surrounding lands to improve habitat for mule deer, elk, and other species as part of this initiative. The proposed project will complement these concurrent and ongoing efforts.

Juniper removal is a priority in this region. Western juniper has encroached onto millions of acres since European settlement, due largely to fire suppression. Junipers compete with understory forage for water, light, and nutrients, reducing quantity and quality of forage for wildlife species. Juniper treatment is an ongoing battle because juniper seedlings will re-emerge and need to be treated again. Most treatment areas are re-established with large juniper trees within about 15 years, requiring follow-up mechanical removal. However, this project implements a burn plan that will maintain existing and future treatment areas juniper-free into perpetuity. Focusing our limited resources on projects with such a long-term maintenance plan ensures the biggest return for dollars spent.

In addition to the habitat benefits, the Aspen Valley Access Area is one of the best public mule deer hunting opportunities in the Maury WMU. The reservation system works very well and provides a controlled, quality hunt that is unavailable on public lands.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Jackle
District Biologist

APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS

**Access & Habitat Program
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
3406 Cherry Avenue NE
Salem, OR 97303**

I/We,

Jim Wood

of Post, Oregon, hereby make application for financial assistance under the terms and conditions of the Access and habitat program in the amount of \$138,500.

The total cost of the project is \$240,800, as shown on page 13.

I/We understand that if this project is approved for funding by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission, before we receive project funds we will be required to:

- Sign a Grant Agreement containing the terms and conditions upon which funds will be released including submission of necessary permits;
- Obtain landowner and maintenance agreements if needed;
- Sign a certification to comply with state, federal and local regulations if needed;
- Submit a completion report to the Board on project performance.

I/We understand that if this application results in an Access/Habitat grant, ODFW will publicize this property through a reservation system administered through the ODFW Prineville District office for access to hunt by permission.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Position: _____

<i>For ODFW Administrative Purposes Only</i>		
A&H Regional Advisory Council	Review Date:	Review Disposition:
A&H State Board	Review Date:	Review Disposition:
Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission	Review Date:	Review Disposition:

ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Application for Grant Funds

1. Project Title: Aspen Valley Ranch 2017
2. Applicant: Jim Wood, D.B.A.
(If private nonprofit, attach IRS letter of 501(c)(3) status)
Address: Aspen Valley Ranch, General Delivery
City/State/Zip: Post, Oregon 97752 Phone: (541) 410-3605
Signature: _____ Date: November 22, 2016
3. Location: ODFW Region (see attached map) East Region
ODFW Region / Watershed District / WM Unit: Deschutes Watershed/ Maury WMU
County Crook Township/Range/Section T16SR19ESec30,31,32
T17SR19ESec5,6,7,18,19; T17SR18ESec1,12,13,22,23,24;
T16SR18ESec23,26,35,36
4. Type of Project (check):
Habitat Improvement Access Damage
Other (specify) Open Fields "By Permission to Hunt"
5. Number of Acres of Habitat to be Improved: 3,850
6. Number of Acres of Access to be Provided: 8,000
7. Proposed Start Date: May 2017
8. Estimated Cost of Project: 240,800
9. Access and Habitat Fund Request: 138,500
10. Briefly explain what the project proposes to do:
 1. Cut 850 acres of juniper (100 acres with Open Fields funds) at a cost of \$100/ac, to improve mule deer and elk winter range and restore hydrologic function to the ecosystem.
 2. Develop 5 springs with steel troughs, at a cost of \$5,000 each, to provide year round water sources for wildlife and to distribute cattle and keep them out of local streams.
 3. Treat 225 acres of weeds (thistle and knapweed) with herbicides, to control spread of invasive plants and reduce impacts to native plant species.
 4. Burn ~1,000 acres a year, for three years, at a cost of \$31.50/ac.
 5. Allow 110 hunters (330 hunter days) to hunt on property "By Permission" annually for three years (2017, 2018 and 2019).

Background: (Describe the wildlife habitat and/or access challenge or opportunity this project will address.)

The Aspen Valley Ranch is approximately 25 miles southeast of Prineville in the vicinity of Post, Oregon and has been in continual operation and ownership since 1963. This 17,000 acre ranch is located on the north foothills of the Maury Mountains in the Maury Wildlife Management Unit (MWU). The southern boundary of this ranch adjoins the Ochoco National Forest. The primary activity on the ranch is a commercial cattle operation with 400 cow/calf pairs and 250-300 yearlings. In addition, 700-900 tons of hay is produced annually on the ranch. Most of this property is in designated critical mule deer winter range with the upper elevation property in elk winter range. Historically, this ranch supported 300-400 mule deer, only a few pronghorn, and no elk. Currently, 150-250 mule deer occupy the ranch seasonally or year round, as well as 150-250 pronghorn and 300- 400 elk. The landowner has been approached by fee hunting operations due to the high quality hunting opportunity the ranch provides.

Habitat conditions have been altered and degraded in this area by encroaching early Phase II western juniper woodlands. The juniper stands average 50 to 200 stems per acre with understory vegetation consisting of bunchgrass, sagebrush, bitterbrush, and rabbit brush. As these junipers expand and increase in density, important mule deer, elk, and pronghorn forage will be reduced, eventually leading to shrub and grass communities being replaced with late-seral juniper woodlands. ODFW and other natural resource agencies have identified juniper removal as a priority habitat treatment throughout its range. The Aspen Valley Ranch is located within ODFW's Maury/S. Ochoco/W. Silvies Mule Deer Initiative area. This program is using state, federal, and private funds to remove juniper on parts of Aspen Valley Ranch as well as surrounding lands, and will continue these efforts into the future. This Open Fields project proposes to cut 100 additional acres of juniper and will dovetail with these ongoing habitat enhancement efforts.

Free standing water has always been limited in the upper elevations and reaches of the ranch from summer to fall. There is a need to develop year round water sources to more evenly distribute big game and cattle to encourage optimal use of the forage resources. Instead of being forced to graze in the early spring when the vegetation is in its early critical growing phase, these spring developments would allow the landowner to utilize a deferred grazing rotation, which will also benefit big game use. In addition, maintaining free standing water during the critical dry months will encourage big game to stay in the foothills and reduce agricultural damage on the lower elevation hayfields of the ranch. Four remote spring sites were improved during the previous contract and an additional five more are proposed for this new project.

Invasive plant species have been at moderate levels on the ranch property until this last decade. Since this time, some invasive non-native plant species have expanded and are competing with native vegetation. This ranch is bisected by a major road to US Forest lands and receives heavy traffic year round and thought to be a source of spreading weed seed. This ranch practices weed control management by cleaning vehicles, mapping locations of invasive plants, annual treatments of reoccurring plants, and monitoring the effects of treatments. Invasive plants species include; Russian and spotted knapweed, whitetop, scotch thistle, and Canada thistle. This proposal includes \$9,000 of additional herbicide spraying.

This proposal requests grant funds to cut 100 acres of juniper, spray 225 acres of noxious weeds, develop 5 springs, and burn approximately 3,000 acres (1,000 acres a year, for three years). Approximately 750 acres of juniper will be cut with Mule Deer Initiative funds on the ranch over the next 3 years.

Past History:

Aspen Valley Ranch has received one A&H grant and one Open Fields grant. The focus of the A&H grant was for mule deer enhancement as part of the MDI program. This grant, titled *Aspen Valley Ranch, LLC* was approved in 2010 and included 250 acres of juniper cutting and four spring developments. All project activities were completed.

The 2012 Open Fields grant was a large-scale habitat project that included 3,100 acres of juniper removal, 4 spring developments, 410 acres of weed treatment, 4,500' of wildlife-friendly fencing, and the opportunity for 78 hunters per year via reservation. This large grant was awarded because the Farm Service Administration, which administered Open Fields at the time, changed the timeline for funding distribution and left the A&H Program only three months to expend remaining grant funds. ODFW reached out to conservation-minded landowners in Central Oregon, including the Dixie Meadow Company and Aspen Valley Ranch because of their long history of accomplishing beneficial habitat projects on time.



The 2012 juniper cutting crew set up camp on Aspen Valley Ranch to complete the project on time.



2012 remote water development and weed treatment

The landowner and ODFW are very proud to report this Open Fields project was extremely successful, with all work being completed on time and excellent hunter success and satisfaction ratings. However, the rush to remove so much juniper from the landscape resulted in the current condition: significant risk of catastrophic wildfire and establishment of juniper seedlings that were released from the initial cuts. Ideally, the original Open Fields grant would have included funding for follow-up controlled burns to address both of these issues. The funds needed to be spent prior to September 15, 2012. Therefore, there was no time to burn. The project area contains excellent native forage including bunchgrasses, forbs, and bitterbrush, which could be destroyed in a wildfire resulting in loss of habitat. This current proposal seeks funding to complete the Open Fields project in a responsible manner that maintains excellent habitat for mule deer and other species into the future.

This property provides some of the premier mule deer hunting in Central Oregon. Hunters who have found this opportunity have been very successful and extremely satisfied. However, this access area has been under-utilized because too few hunters are aware it exists. Advances in technology allow more targeted advertising efforts, such as emails sent directly to hunters who draw a Maury Unit tag. If this grant is awarded, we will take advantage of this new marketing strategy as well as increased news releases to maximize awareness of this hunting opportunity. We expect a marked increase in hunter use as a result of this publicity initiative.





Three of the 5 known bucks taken on Aspen Valley Ranch in 2016. There were 9 hunters during 2016 rifle deer season – average hunter satisfaction rating of 4.8 out of 5.

The Open Fields hunting access program on Aspen Valley Ranch made it possible for the landowner to provide public hunting access and fund important habitat improvements. Without this program, the landowner would have likely turned to fee hunting revenue to support habitat work.

Project Objective(s):

- (a) What is the objective of the proposed project?

To continue to improve and protect big game habitat in the Newsome Creek and Crooked River drainages by enhancing and preserving the herbaceous grasses, forbs, and shrub habitat, increasing year round water availability and distribution, reducing invasive plants, and restoring hydrologic function to the ecosystem. This proposal is a continuation of the current Open Fields project which will end in 2016.

- (b) How will the project benefit wildlife habitat and/or public access?

Habitat

The project will continue to improve wildlife habitat, especially mule deer winter range by restoring the sagebrush steppe vegetation. Removal of juniper will enhance native perennial bunch grasses and shrubs as an increased amount of ground moisture will be released through their growing season. As mentioned above, much of the juniper on this property has already been treated. However, there are some pockets of remaining juniper that should be removed. In addition, juniper seedlings have emerged in all the treatment areas. Under this grant, large juniper trees will be cut by hand, and emerging juniper seedlings will be burned through a controlled burn program. This will be the start of a perpetual burn program in which the landowner intends to maintain approximately 15-year burn cycles which would prevent juniper re-establishment.

Water is a critical habitat component for all wildlife. Although mule deer and elk often obtain much of their water from succulent forage, free water is important when big game consume large amounts of dry vegetation and when does and cows are lactating. The enhancement and development of year round water sources from springs will allow mule deer and elk to maximize available habitat for longer periods, provide critical fawning/calving and rearing areas, improve riparian sites, more evenly distribute wildlife and cattle, and provide a more flexible grazing schedule for cattle.

Infestations of invasive, non-native plants can have significant impacts to native plant communities and wildlife habitat by displacement of native plants, reduction in biodiversity, increased soil erosion, and alteration of fire regimes. If not managed, knapweeds, white top, scotch thistle, and Canada thistle, which are found on this property, will expand and alter the quality and quantity of wildlife forage, alter thermal and escape cover, reduce water availability, alter distribution of wildlife on the landscape and create over-utilization of critical habitats, and increase uncontrolled wildfire frequency.

The landowner has been very aggressive in fighting noxious weeds and preventing any further expansion of existing populations. Because many weeds are spread by vehicles, the landowner has a strict vehicle policy: any contractors or fire wood cutters are required to thoroughly clean their vehicles before traveling off-road on the property, and usually leave a work vehicle on site and use another vehicle to commute. Furthermore, access was limited to only when appropriate ground conditions existed (i.e. not when it was muddy or extreme fire conditions). The landowner has worked cooperatively with the Crooked River Weed Management Area to treat over 100 acres of weeds per year. This diligence has prevented the spread of medusahead onto the project area.

A catastrophic wildfire could undermine this history of exemplary noxious weed management. The previous Open Fields project left a 3,000 acre tinderbox of juniper skeletons on the landscape which, if burned uncontrolled, could wipe out stands of bitterbrush and native vegetation and leave the soil ripe for medusahead and cheatgrass invasion. This project proposes to prevent wildfire by initiating a controlled burn program and to continue the direct chemical attack on weeds, particularly scotch thistle, Canada thistle, Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, and whitetop, and aggressive monitoring.

This project site is in the Maury WMU and one of ODFW's Mule Deer Initiative (MDI) units. ODFW placed a high priority and commitment to the MDI program in its efforts to restore mule deer abundance. The Maury WMU Working Group prioritized habitat management as the top objective for this unit. This ranch is in critical mule deer winter range and is a high priority for mule deer habitat restoration.

Hunting Access

The Aspen Valley Ranch provides one of the best mule deer hunting opportunities in central Oregon. Every year, hunters experience high success rates with several mature bucks taken (see "Past History" above). Hunting is regulated to ensure a quality hunting experience. ODFW will initiate targeted marketing efforts to Maury WMU hunters to maximize awareness and participation of this program. In total, this property will offer hunting opportunity for 110 hunters, for a total of 330 hunter days per year. See "procedure section for details on the hunting access program.

Many of the private properties in the Post/Paulina Valley are large ranches that have been purchased in the last decade by absentee owners for personal recreation and big game hunting. This change in ownership has greatly reduced public hunting opportunities on lower elevation private lands. The Aspen Valley Open Fields project will continue to offer quality hunting opportunities to the general public. Not only will 8,000 acres of this ranch be available for public hunting but there will be access to an additional 480 acres of land-locked BLM property.

Historically, the landowner has provided special hunting opportunities for youth and disabled hunters, as well as for veterans. In recent years, such opportunities have been provided in addition to the established Open Fields structure, such as access for disabled hunters to a parcel of gentle terrain that is not included within the access boundary. Just this season, ODFW approached the landowner about allowing the Maury WMU premium deer tag hunter to hunt on the access area after the regular deer season, and he graciously approved. The hunting program on this ranch has been well received by hunters, ODFW, and the landowner. The 2012 Open Fields grant made this all possible.

(c) If damage related, how will the project alleviate/eliminate the problem?

Juniper cutting, prescribed burning and weed spraying will improve the availability of native forage for big game. The previous contract's spring developments now provide free standing water during the critical dry months and providing high quality forage to encourage big game to stay in the foothills and reduce agricultural damage in the lower elevation farmlands. Depending on the year, the ranch loses between 75 to 100 tons of hay a year to big game. In addition, the landowner spends approximately \$5,000 for fence repair caused by big game.

Project Location:

From Prineville Oregon travel 26 miles east on Highway 380 to Newsome Creek Road. Turn south on Newsome Creek Road.

Procedure:

Habitat:

Approximately 100 acres of juniper will be cut on ranch property with Open Fields funds. An additional 750 acres will be cut with MDI funds. Juniper will be hand-felled with a chainsaw, leaving stump height to less than 18" above ground level. Down juniper will be left to lay. Required treatment in all areas includes removal of all live limbs on the stump. Individual junipers as well as clusters of junipers may be retained in some of the canyons and ridges in mosaic patterns to benefit big game. Much of the pre-settlement junipers located on rocky outcrops and ridges will be retained. The down juniper will remain on the ground for 3-5 years (or until the needles drop) providing protection to the vegetation, wildlife habitat, and soil. In the future, these junipers will be burned as part of a long-term controlled burn program.

Five springs will be developed using steel troughs. A wildlife escape ramp of expanded steel mesh will be included in each trough. These will be located at naturally occurring seasonal springs and will provide a year-round water source for wildlife and cattle.



Example of spring development area.

Non-native invasive plants, including Russian knapweed, spotted knapweed, Scotch and Canada thistle, and whitetop will be treated with herbicides at appropriate time, rate, and distribution in relation to local site condition. The herbicide will be applied with a boomless nozzle by way of ATV or backpack sprayer. Weed treatments will be coordinated with the Crooked River Weed Management Area. Approximately 100 acres will be treated in year 1, 75 acres in year 2, and 50 acres in year 3.

Approximately 1,000 acres of downed juniper will be burned each year for three years via a controlled burn. These juniper stands were cut with Open Fields funds in 2012. The type and timing of each burn will be determined by current weather and site-specific conditions, and in accordance with the landowner's long-term burn plan. This burning regime will kill emerging juniper seedlings and minimize the chance of catastrophic wildfire which could destroy thousands of acres of prime mule deer habitat and leave the landscape vulnerable to noxious weed infestation. Fall burning is the preferred option.

Hunting Access:

This property will be made available to big game hunters by an online reservation system for "By Permission" hunting on 8,000 acres (plus access to an additional 480 acres of land locked BLM property, see map) for three hunting seasons, beginning with the 2017 season. In total, this property will offer hunting opportunity for 110 hunters (330 hunter days) per year. The table below for details on hunting parties.

	Number of Parties	Party Size	Days Per Party
Archery Hunters	1	2	3
Rifle Deer Hunters	2	2	3
Rifle Elk Hunters	2	2	3
Youth Hunters	2	1	3
Cougar Hunters	2	1	3

The reservation system will be implemented in the following manner: Hunters will reserve a 3-day hunt period via online registration. Two hunting parties will be permitted during each hunt period during rifle mule deer and elk seasons and cougar season. Only 1 hunting party will be permitted access at any one time for archery deer/elk hunts. Hunting party size will be up to 2 hunters for mule deer and elk hunts, and 1 hunter for youth and cougar hunts. This property is available for youth antlerless elk hunters through December 31st. Youth hunters must be accompanied by a parent or guardian that is 21 years or older.

Hunters are required to park at designated parking areas along Newsome Road. Vehicles will not be permitted beyond the parking area, to preserve soils on the primitive roads and reduce the spread of invasive plants. No overnight camping will be permitted on the property; however, there is available camping on adjacent USFS lands. Due to concerns of wildland fire, hunting is generally not permitted in August. The hunter reservation system will be administered by ODFW Prineville Field Station.

Permits:

The landowner will submit burn plan to ODF and Crook County Fire Chief and acquire necessary permits.

Scheduling:

- (a) Habitat Work Start Date: May 1, 2017
Habitat Work Completion Date: December, 2019
- (b) Access Agreement Start Date: All hunter types will be permitted access starting September 1 for three years (2017, 2018, 2019)

Access Agreement End Date: December 31, 2019.
- (c) List major project activities and time schedule for each.

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Time (month/year)</u>
Juniper Cutting	May 2017 – September 2017
Weed Control	May 2017 – September 2019
Prescribed burns	Fall 2017 – Fall 2019

Participation:

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Access & Habitat Open Fields	Cut 100 acres of juniper Develop 5 springs Spray 225 acres of noxious weeds Burn 3,000 acres via prescribed burn
ODFW Mule Deer Initiative	Cut 750 acres of juniper
Crooked River Weed Management/ Crook County Weed Master	Integrate weed control activities Purchase herbicide Monitoring and mapping
Landowner	Oversee all projects to completion Help develop and implement management plans Provide spring materials
ODFW Ochoco District	Administer hunting reservation system

Note: in addition to the participation listed above, the landowner is constantly working with outside entities to improve wildlife habitat on the ranch. Active partnerships include Oregon Department of Forestry, OWEB, Crooked River Weed Management Area, the Natural Conservation Resource Service, and the Crook County SWCD.

Funding:

- (a) List other sources and amount of project funds (include in budget on page 7).

Landowner: \$12,000 administration (200 hours per year @ \$20/hr).
\$8,000 materials for spring development

Mule Deer Initiative: \$75,000 juniper cutting. Estimated funding based on recent availability.

Crooked River Weed Management Area: \$4,800 herbicide for 225 acres.
\$2,500 monitoring and mapping.

- (b) Have any conditions been placed on the funds listed in (a) which may affect the completion of the project? If so, identify and explain

N/A

Project Maintenance and Monitoring:

- (a) Who will maintain the project and fund long-term maintenance and/or operation if needed?

Landowner will assume long-term responsibility for habitat project maintenance. ODFW will provide assistance and monitoring as needed.

ODFW Ochoco District will maintain/administer hunting access program.

Landowner with the help of the Crook County Weed Management Area and Crook County Weed Master will maintain weed management operation.

- (b) What element(s) of the project will be monitored, how often, for how long?

All aspects of the project will be monitored through the life of the project contract by ODFW Ochoco District Staff and A&H Regional Coordinator.

Crook County Weed Management Area and Crook County Weed Master will monitor the weed management program.

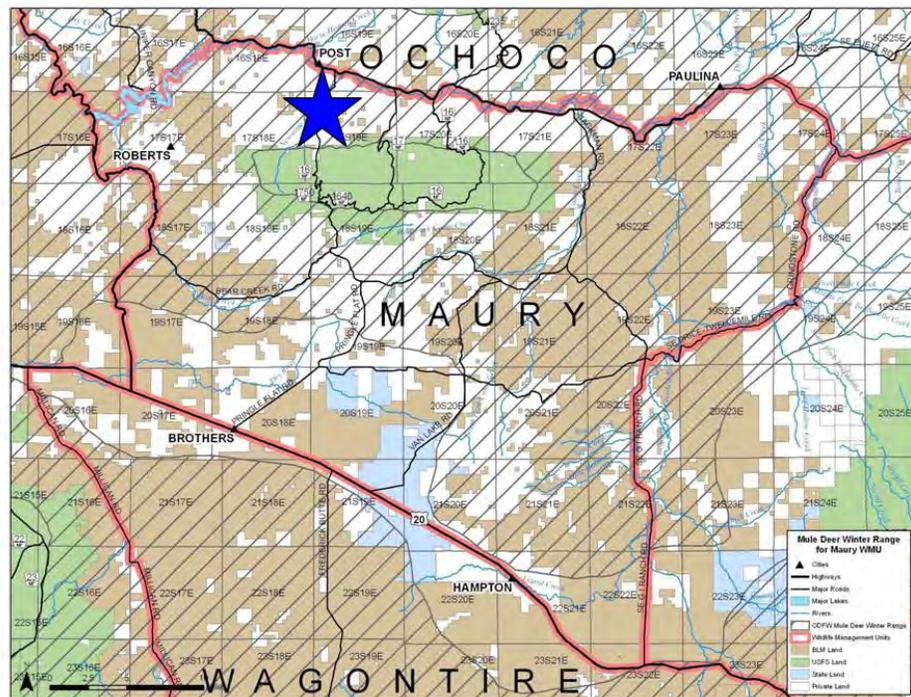
Project Cost Estimate

<u>Category</u>	<u>A&H Funds</u>	<u>Other Funds</u> ¹	<u>Total Cost</u>
<u>Administration</u> (landowner)		12,000	12,000
<u>Juniper Treatment</u> Juniper Cutting 100 acres @\$100/acre	10,000		25,000
750 acres @ \$100/acre		75,000 (MDI)	75,000
<u>Weed Control</u> Labor (225 acres)	9,000		9,000
Herbicide (CRWMA)		4,800	4,800
Mapping/monitoring		2,500 (CRWMA)	
<u>Spring Development</u> 5 Springs	25,000 Labor	8,000 Materials (Landowner)	25,000
<u>Prescribed burns</u> (3 years) 3,000 acres @ 31.50/ac	\$94,500		\$94,500
TOTAL COSTS	\$138,500	\$102,300	\$240,800

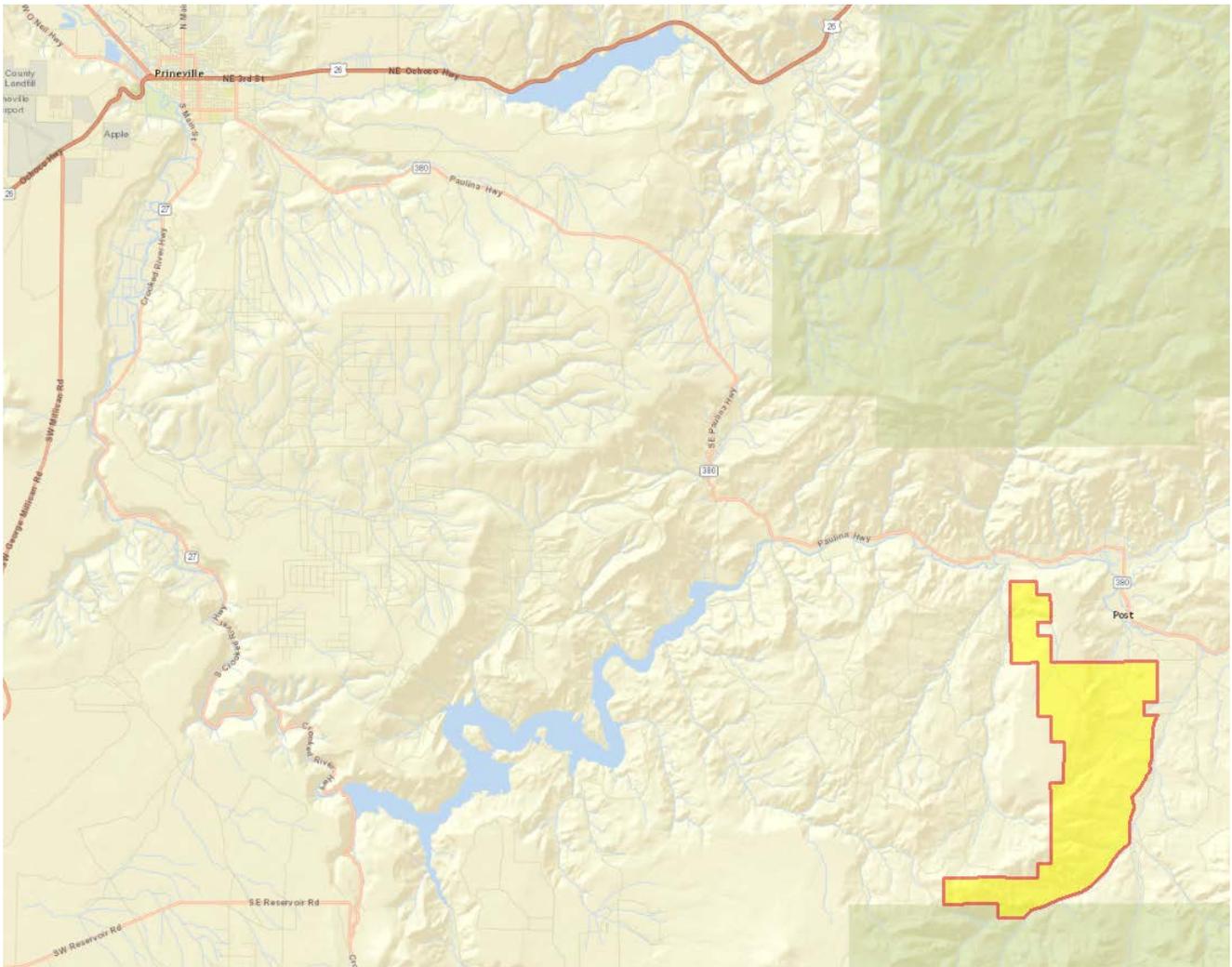
¹ List detail in funding (page 6).

²

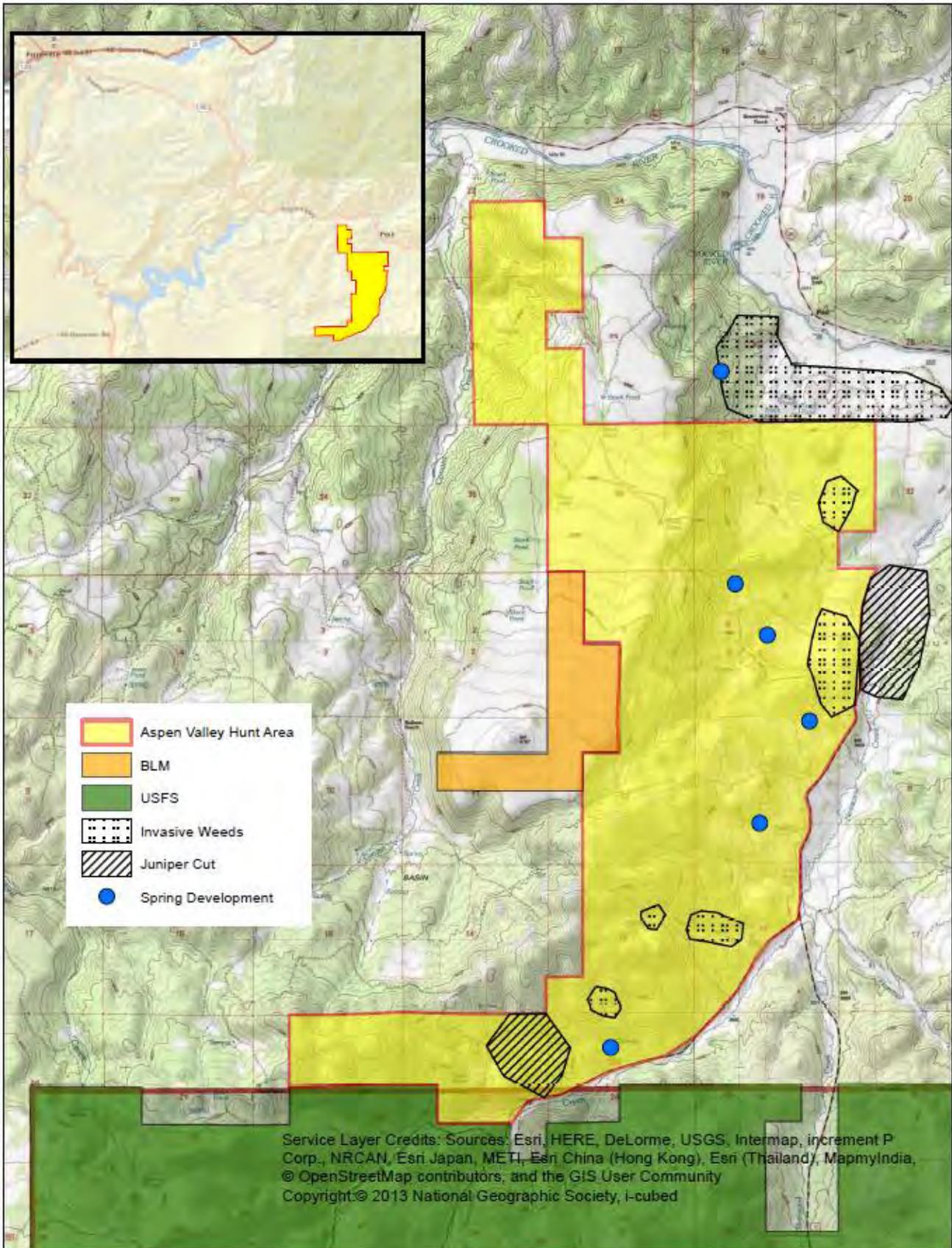
Aspen Valley Ranch



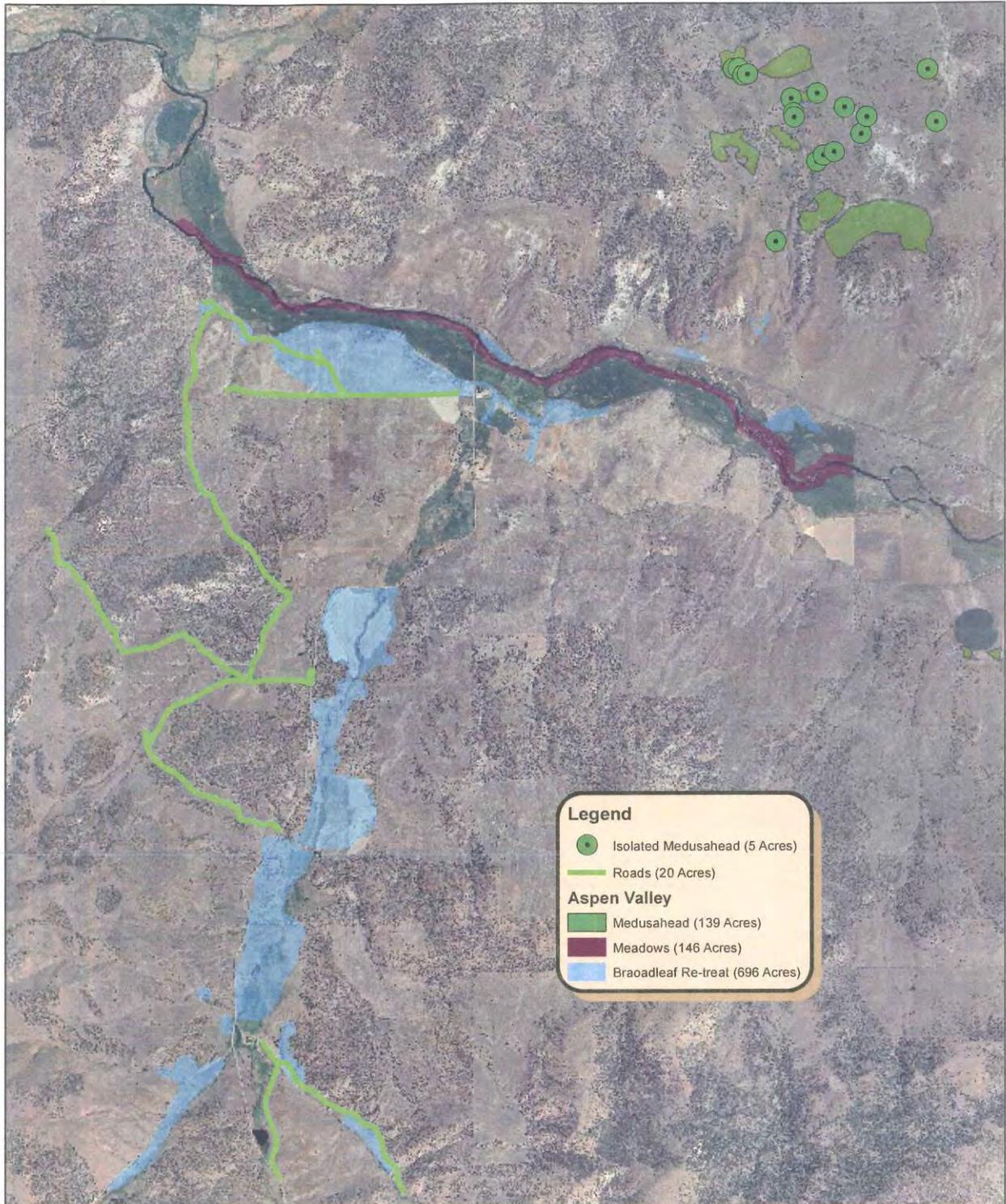
Aspen Valley Location Map



Aspen Valley Project Map



Aspen Valley Noxious Weed Survey March 2012



0 1,050 2,100 4,200 6,300 8,400 Feet



MODERN
WEED CONTROL LLC
(541) 633-6118

Access and Habitat Program Project Evaluation Form



Program Objective: The Access and Habitat Program's motto, "Landowners & Hunters Together for Wildlife," conveys the program's basic mission to foster partnerships between landowners and hunters for the benefit of the wildlife they value. The program also seeks to recognize and encourage the important contributions made by landowners to the state's wildlife resource.

Project Name: Aspen Valley Ranch 2017

Project #: _____

	Access Acres	Habitat Acres	Habitat Category:	2	Total Score:	25
"Welcome" Private	0	3,850	(range: 1-6; see flow chart on page 4. Not applicable to access-only projects)		Total Possible:	36
By-Permission Private	8,000					
Inaccessible Public*	0					
Accessible Public*	0					

Instructions:

Complete these sections

Project Type	General Criteria	Access Criteria	Habitat	Criteria
Access Only	X	X		
Habitat Only	X			X
Access & Habitat	X	X		X

Mark 1 point in the corresponding "Project Score" box for EACH criterion that is met. Example: for question 2, if partnerships include 4 sports groups, award points for the first 2 criteria. Do not mark more than 1 point per box. Point schedule is designed to weigh access-only and habitat-only projects equally.

Definitions:

Inaccessible Public*: Access will be provided through private land to public land that is completely landlocked (surrounded) by private land, legally precluding public hunting access. Total area includes only public land within the boundary of private ownership.

Accessible Public*: Access through private land will improve accessibility to public land. Public land may be extremely difficult to access otherwise, but is not legally surrounded by private land. Total area includes only public land that is closer (in linear distance) to the landowner's access point(s) than any other public access point.

* Access to public land MUST be provided on a "Welcome to Hunt" basis

General Criteria

(mark a "1" in the "Project Score" box for EACH criterion that is met)

1. *Habitat Condition*

Score 1 point only if the property contains the resource in sufficient abundance/quality to support target species referenced in questions 11, 15, 16 and 19 (during at least one season of the year). For habitat projects, use the predicted future condition. Justify your score.

Project Score

Food:	Native grass, forb, and brush (including bitterbrush) species.	1
Water:	Newsome Creek, numerous tributaries and springs	1
Cover:	Brush species and downed juniper; pine forest at higher elevation	1

2. *Partnerships*

Partners contributing financial or in-kind support:

1 or more Sports groups.....	
3 or more Sports groups.....	
Educational programs / non-governmental organizations.....	1
Other government agencies or ODFW programs (i.e. OWEB, R&E).....	1

3. <i>Matching Funds</i>	Total matching funds (monetary and in-kind)	Project Score
	> 1% matching funds.....	1
	> 25% matching funds.....	1
	> 50% matching funds.....	
4. <i>Damage</i>	Project would mitigate current damage to private property:	
	Wildlife damage occurring on private property.....	1
	Landowner participates in ODFW damage control programs.....	1
	General Total	9
	<i>General Possible</i>	12

Access Criteria - Applies to **private land** access that would be provided under the proposed project.
(mark a "1" in the "Project Score" box for EACH criterion that is met)

5. <i>Public Land</i>	Project located in Wildlife Management Unit with <50% public land.....	
6. <i>Private access</i>	Private land access type:	
	Project would provide access to private land.....	1
	Private land access would be on a "Welcome to Hunt" basis.....	
7. <i>Public access</i>	Access through private lands would:	
	improve access to public land.....	1
	provide access to otherwise inaccessible public land.....	1
8. <i>Special Access</i>	Project would provide special youth or disabled hunter access opportunities.....	1
9. <i>Species Permitted</i>	Species groups include big game, waterfowl, upland birds, turkey, and predators/varmints.	
	2+ species groups available and permitted.....	1
	4+ species groups available and permitted.....	
10. <i>Under-rep. Species*</i>	Project provides access to under-represented species in the watershed.....	
11. <i>Harvest Restriction</i>	Landowner would not restrict sex or species permitted for lawful harvest.....	
12. <i>Season Restriction</i>	Landowner would not restrict access to any hunting season(s).....	
13. <i>Dispersion</i>	Property would provide access to animals pushed off of publicly accessible land during hunting season.....	1
	Access Total	6
	<i>Access Possible</i>	12
	Payment Fee Total	

* lists of under-represented species will be created by A&H state coordinator and approved by A&H Board

Habitat Criteria

(mark a "1" in the "Project Score" box for EACH criterion that is met)

Project Score

14. Department Priorities Project is located within target area and will benefit target species identified in any of these Department programs: Mule Deer Initiative, Sage Grouse Initiative, Black-tailed Deer Plan Implementation..... 1

15. Location importance: Applies to species that the habitat work will benefit. Question structured to equally weigh big game and game bird projects - score "1" if either item in each bracket is true:

{ Area populations < 90% of management objective (deer and elk).....
or:
Project will increase wintering populations of upland birds/waterfowl..... 1

{ Area populations < 75% of management objective (deer and elk).....
or:
Project will increase breeding populations of upland birds/waterfowl..... 1

16. Conservation Strategy Project addresses Oregon Conservation Strategy (OCS) concerns:
Project action benefits Strategy Habitat or Strategy Species..... 1
[above] **AND** action occurs in Conservation Opportunity Area (COA)..... 1

17. Critical Habitat Applies to the specific GAME habitat that the project will maintain or enhance. Use accompanying flow chart and definitions to determine habitat category. Definitions are slightly amended from OAR Division 415 to be game-specific.

Project meets requirements of Habitat Categories 1-4..... 1
Project meets requirements of Habitat Categories 1-2..... 1

18. Habitat Connectivity Project will help facilitate local animal movement (fence removal, etc.).....
Project will help establish or maintain a wildlife habitat corridor or otherwise reduce fragmentation on landscape level.....

Description of habitat connectivity benefit (required):

19. Habitat Impact Describes the predicted impact that the project will have on the habitat. Habitat work must benefit game species.

Project will increase the habitat quantity/quality >25% per unit treated..... 1
Project will increase the habitat quantity/quality >50% per unit treated..... 1

Description of habitat impact:
_____ Bunch grasses, forbs, and brush species will provide double the wildlife forage in juniper cuts.
_____ Succession will be set back in burns, providing much more forage in a few years.

20. Population Impact Describes the predicted impact that habitat improvements (excluding external variables such as weather, etc.) will have on game species on the project site. Provide estimates for all targeted species.

Local abundance of at least one targeted game species should increase >25%..... 1

Estimated Abundance				
Species	Pre-treatment	Post-treatment		
mule deer	200	250	Habitat Total <i>Habitat Possible</i>	10
elk	300	400		12
			Grand Total <i>Total Possible</i>	25
				36

21. Miscellaneous Describe other project details that may help with prioritization or fee assessment (i.e. current market value of similar hunting leases in the vicinity)..... *NO POINTS*

_____ This project will work hand-in-hand with an ongoing Mule Deer Initiative project on the property.
_____ This is one of the best mule deer hunting opportunities in central Oregon.
_____ This grant will help generate a perpetual burn plan, ensuring maintenance of gains made in past.

Access and Habitat Project Evaluation - Appendix

Under-represented Species

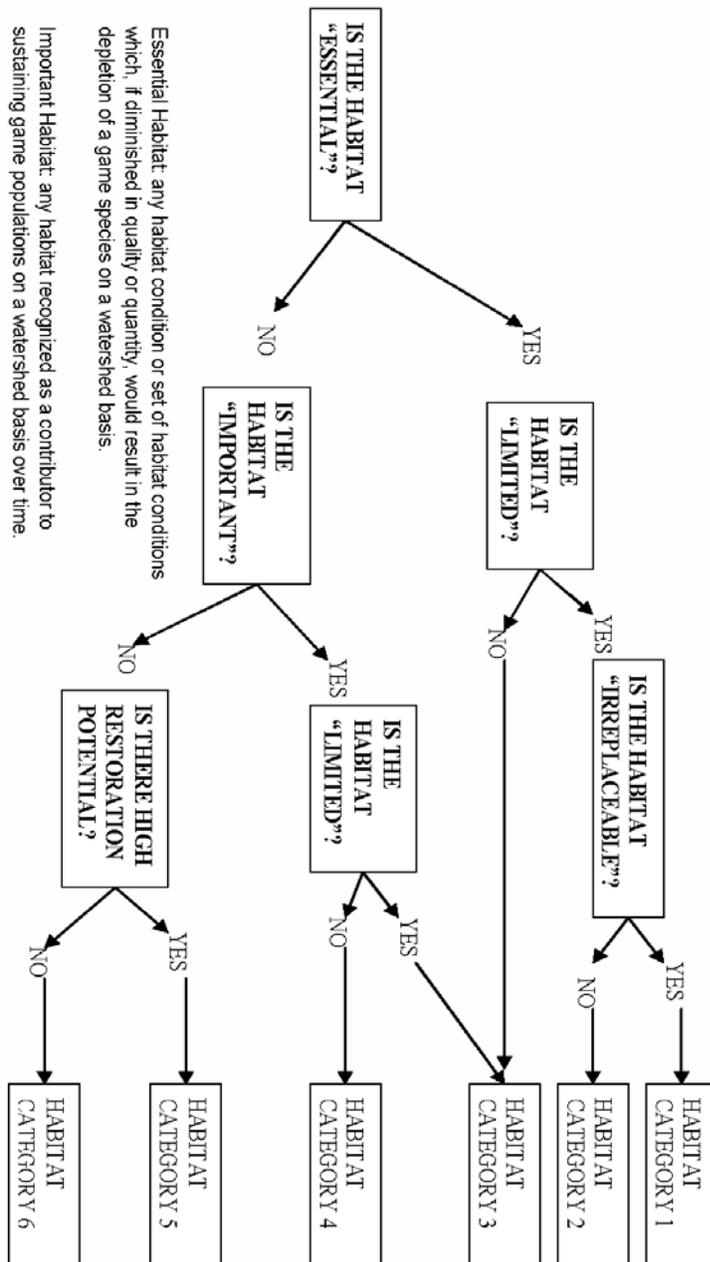
Definition: game species that exist in the watershed district in huntable numbers, but that the general public does not have reasonable hunting access to (via public land, current A&H properties, etc.)

Watershed	Species
Malheur	pheasant, waterfowl, turkey
South Willamette	waterfowl, turkey, valley quail
North Coast	predators, waterfowl
Grande Ronde	upland game birds
Rogue	dove, waterfowl

Watershed	Species
Deschutes	waterfowl, valley quail, chukar, dove
John Day	upland game birds
Umpqua	waterfowl, dove, turkey
Klamath	waterfowl, quail
North Willamette	waterfowl

A&H Habitat Category Flow Chart

Note: These definitions have been amended from OAR Division 415 to be game-specific and applied on a watershed basis. Habitat Category designations made on this Evaluation Form are for Access & Habitat Program use only, and do not have any legal implications associated with OAR 415.



Essential Habitat: any habitat condition or set of habitat conditions which, if diminished in quality or quantity, would result in the depletion of a game species on a watershed basis.

Important Habitat: any habitat recognized as a contributor to sustaining game populations on a watershed basis over time.

Limited Habitat: an amount of habitat insufficient or barely sufficient to sustain game populations on a watershed basis over time.

Irreplaceable Habitat: successful in-kind habitat mitigation to replace lost habitat quantity and/or quality is not feasible within an acceptable period of time or locations, or involves an unacceptable level of risk or uncertainty, depending on the habitat under consideration and the game populations that are affected. "Acceptable", for the purpose of this definition, means in a reasonable time frame to benefit the affected game species.

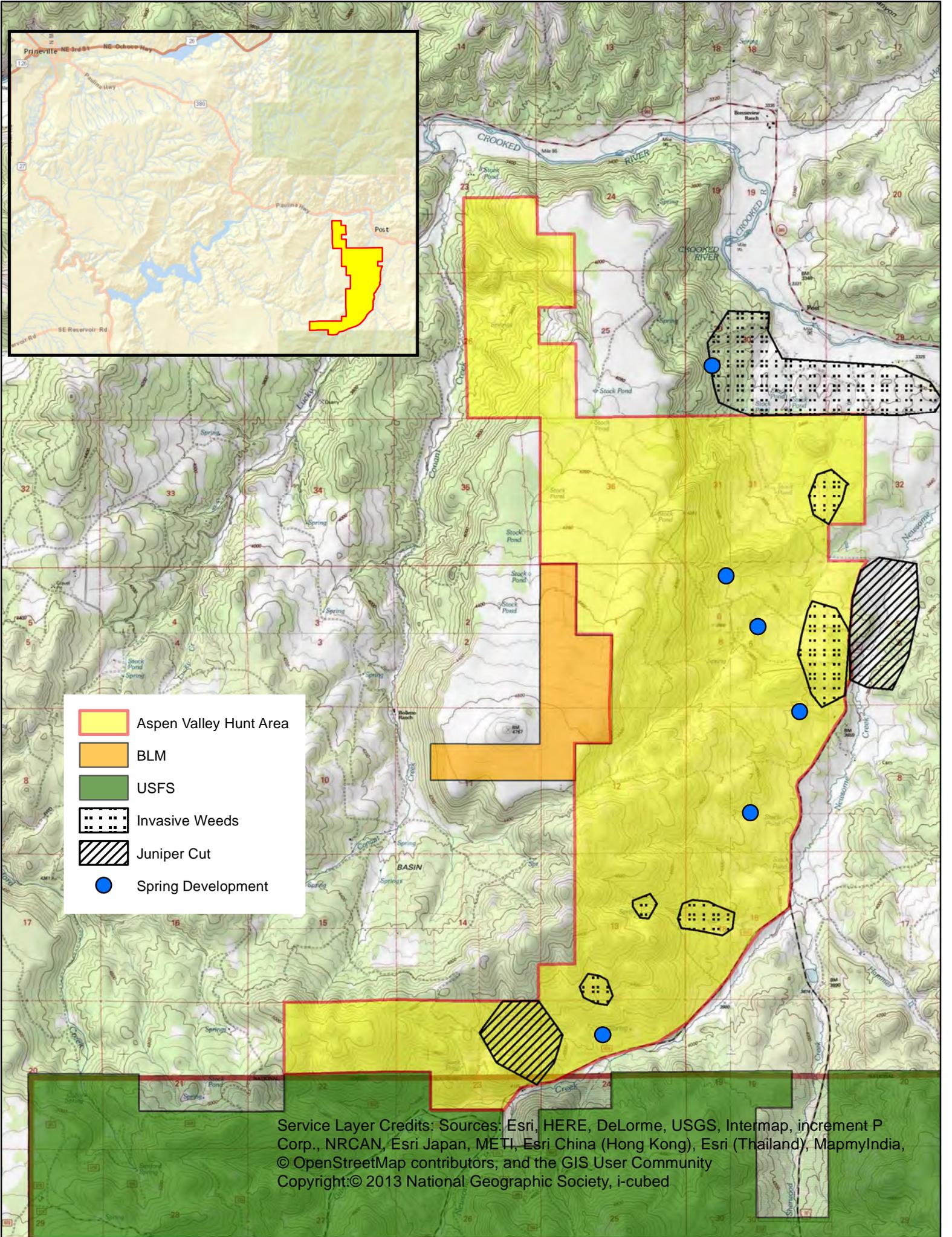
Payment Tables

Table 1: Proposed Per-acre Access Payment

Total Score:	Private Welcome to Hunt (\$/acre)	Private By- Permission (\$/acre)	Inaccessible public land (\$/acre)	Accessible public land (\$/acre)
	100%	60%	40%	20%
1-3:	\$0.60	\$0.36	\$0.24	\$0.12
4-6:	\$1.20	\$0.72	\$0.48	\$0.24
7-9:	\$1.80	\$1.08	\$0.72	\$0.36
10-11:	\$2.40	\$1.44	\$0.96	\$0.48
12-13:	\$3.00	\$1.80	\$1.20	\$0.60

Table 2: Proposed Total Access Payment Calculator

Access Type	Score	\$/Acre	Acres	Payment
Private Welcome	#REF!	#REF!	0	#REF!
Private Permission	#REF!	#REF!	8,000	#REF!
Inaccessible Public	#REF!	#REF!	0	#REF!
Accessible Public	#REF!	#REF!	0	#REF!
Total Payment:				#REF!



- Aspen Valley Hunt Area
- BLM
- USFS
- Invasive Weeds
- Juniper Cut
- Spring Development

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community
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