

APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS

Access & Habitat Program
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE
Salem, OR 97302

I/We, Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District of Heppner, Oregon, hereby make application for financial assistance under the terms and conditions of the Access and Habitat program in the amount

\$ 110,000.

The total cost of the project is \$772,405

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 grant, ODFW will publicize my/our property via printed documents and internet for the purpose of helping hunters locate private lands that may be open to hunting. I/We will cooperate with ODFW to post signs indicating public hunting access at the project location.

I certify that either:

I am the sole landowner of the Property where the Access and Habitat Project will occur.

I am an authorized representative of the landowner of the property where the Access and Habitat project will occur.

I am leasing the property from the landowner and the lease allows me to enter into this agreement.

I have the legal authority to enter into a grant agreement for this Access and habitat project because: landowners signed contract giving Morrow SWCD authority to implement projects.

(Fill in details – for example: "The project is on three parcels; one is owned by me, one is owned by my wife, and one is owned by our family farm business").

Grantee Signature: 

Date: 11/14/22

Position: Wildlife Habitat Technician

ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Application for Grant Funds

1. **Project Title:** Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative
2. **Applicant:** Trent Gianella Phone: 541-676-5452 ext. 115
Grantee: Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District (As will appear on contract/payments)
If private nonprofit, attach IRS letter of 501(c) (3) status
Address: 430 W Linden Way, PO box 127
City/State/Zip: Heppner, Oregon 97836 **Phone:** 541-676-5452 ext. 115
Email: trenton.gianella@or.nacdnet.net
3. **Location:** ODFW Region: Northeast Region
Watershed District / Wildlife Management Unit: John Day Watershed/Heppner and Columbia Basin Units
County: Morrow, Umatilla, Gilliam Township/Range/Section: See Map Attached
4. **Type of Project:**
Habitat Improvement Access Damage
5. **Number of acres of habitat to be improved:** Approximately 5,000
6. **Number of acres of access to be provided:** Approximately 110,000 acres of UCAP/RHA/Open Fields are currently available and open to the public for hunting.
Welcome to Hunt By Permission Other _____
7. **Proposed Start Date:**5/1/2023 (Project is a continuation of past grant ending 4/30/2022)
8. **Proposed End Date:** 4/30/2026
9. **Estimated Cost of Project:** \$772,405
10. **Access and Habitat Fund Request:** \$ 110,000
11. **Briefly explain what the project proposes to do:**

The Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative is intended to help address the habitat related decline of mule deer and upland game bird populations in the Columbia Plateau. Funding will help supply the Habitat Technician with materials to implement habitat improvement projects throughout land enrolled in ODFW Public Access Programs. Habitat improvement projects will consist of planting seasonal food plots, shrub plantings, improving CRP stands through interseedings, mowing, light disking, chemical treatments, and prescribed burning. Materials needed include fuel, seed, chemicals, equipment service, and repair parts. Overall, this grant will increase the effectiveness of the ODFW/SWCD cooperatively funded Habitat Technician position.

This project is projected to help address habitat related decline of mule deer and upland game bird populations in the Heppner and Columbia Basin Game Management Unit's (GMU's).

The project focuses on improving grassland structure and forb diversity, protecting riparian vegetation, and enhancing CRP habitat quality. The project also incentivizes landowners to enroll their land in a public hunting access program such as UCAP. Habitat improvements done through this program will complete the mid-management practice requirement for land enrolled in CRP. The project therefore benefits the landowner by completing the management practice for them while also improving habitat quality and providing greater public hunting access. The ODFW/SWCD cooperative position will continue to increase the wildlife focused benefits of these programs and provide an efficient means of working with the multitude of private landowners in the project area.

12. Habitat and Landscape: Describe the habitat and landscape of the project area.

The Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative area consists of grasslands, shrub-steppe, and agriculture land. The project area begins at the mountainous northern boundary of the Umatilla National Forest in the Heppner GMU. This portion is higher in elevation, receives greater precipitation, and has more vegetative structure. From there it extends north through the foothills of Morrow County into grasslands and croplands of the Columbia Basin GMU. Historically this area consisted of bunchgrass prairies with hundreds of miles of riparian corridors but has since been altered over the past decades. Encroachment of annual grasses, severe drought, and shortened green up periods have threatened mule deer populations due to the reduction in forage quality and quantity. Majority of the deer located within this habitat are year-round residents and do not display a seasonal migration. Given the scarcity of shrubs throughout this landscape, these deer require a diverse mix of bunchgrasses and forbs to support their energetic demands throughout the year. A great proportion of rangeland and CRP fields within the project area are lacking the diversity to support a healthy mule deer population.

13. Background: Describe the project area and explain the wildlife habitat and/or access challenge or opportunity this project will address. Address how current management actions benefit public access and/or wildlife and their habitat needs.

Over the last century, land within the project area has gone through a variety of land uses. Historically the area consisted of bunchgrass prairies and healthy riparian corridors. In the 1900's the land was heavily depended on for dry land farming and irrigated cropland. This led to significant erosion and loss of wildlife habitat. Beginning in the 80's efforts were being made to restore the rangeland by returning cropland back into perennial grass stands. This effort was backed by Farm Bill Programs such as the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that incentivized farmers to convert cropland back to grass stands. These stands usually consist of one or two introduced sod-forming grasses. While these types of grasses are excellent at reducing soil erosion, they present little wildlife benefit. Additionally, invasive species encroachment, droughts, annual grasses, increased fire frequencies, and the loss of disturbance have resulted in further degradation to the ecosystems natural functions. These changes have resulted in reduced availability of quality forage for deer throughout the year limiting the ability for this population to reproduce and recruit young.

The result of these changes in successional stages are a decline in critical wildlife habitat, leading to subsequent declines in dependent populations. Mule deer for example,

have seen a decline in populations since the early 90's. To improve the mule deer populations, ODFW selected the Heppner GMU as a Mule Deer Initiative focus area. ODFW began focusing on improving various resources that affect mule deer populations in this selected area. One of the main resources being, the improvement of habitat. Along with mule deer, upland game birds have seen a decline in populations. The Heppner and Columbia Basin GMUs historically supported large populations of upland game birds. This led to the area establishing itself as an important sportsman destination. Unfortunately, this degradation of habitat along with poor weather conditions associated with changes in climate have resulted in lower nesting success and chick recruitment across the project area. The proposed habitat improvement projects address the habitat related decline of these species by providing improved forage conditions as well as increasing bedding and nesting areas.

To maintain sportsmen opportunity ODFW has contracted over 109,866 acres of public access on private lands within the Mule Deer Initiative/ Upland Game Bird focus area. However, as the majority of the focus area is a patchwork of private ownership it is difficult to address the habitat on the biologically appropriate scale. This is where the Wildlife Technician and this project can incorporate various programs in order to accomplish larger goals. The various USDA Farm Bill Programs offer means of improving habitat on the landscape scale across the various ownerships. These programs historically focused on improving production agriculture. Over time, the Farm Bill Programs have progressed away from small-scale projects towards larger multi-agency projects that support landscape level environmental functions. The Morrow County NRCS presently uses their Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) to support projects within the ODFW's Mule Deer Initiative Area. Additionally, Farm Services Agency (FSA) selected areas of the Mule Deer Initiative Area to implement State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE.) With programs like these supporting the work of the Wildlife Technician, larger scale projects will result in successful outcomes.

14. Past A&H History: Describe any past Access & Habitat project, especially if the proposed project deals with continuation or amendment to a past project.

Over the past fourteen years, the Access and Habitat Program assisted in funding the Habitat Technician position. The Soil and Water Conservation District administers the position and houses it at the AG Service center. This allows the Habitat Technician to access and manage USDA contracts. The A&H program funded the positions administrative costs for the first three years and part of the operating costs the last eleven years. A cooperative agreement with ODFW along with other funding sources now pays for the Technician's salary and administrative costs. In the past, a contribution agreement between the NRCS and Morrow SWCD provided additional funding to provide technical assistance on programs like CRP. Unfortunately, NRCS has since moved away from contribution agreements, which left a gap in funding. To supplement this, Morrow SWCD and the Habitat Technician decided to provide technical assistant for FSA's Conservation Reserve Easement Program (CREP). The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) provides funding for the technician to implement these CREP contracts. These additional projects help protect riparian areas that are critical to the environmental and biological health of the ecosystem. Furthermore, the Wildlife Habitat Technician is providing the technical assistant for FSA's SAFE program. This program allows eligible acres in the Mule Deer Initiative Area to be enrolled in contracts to improve mule deer habitat. These contracts have specific requirements all of which create new or enhance existing mule deer habitat in the Heppner Mule Deer Initiative Area.

This position originally focused on improving upland game bird habitat on Upland Cooperative Access Program (UCAP) and A&H contracted lands in Morrow, Gilliam, and Umatilla Counties. The position has directly improved a total of 14,000 acres in the three counties by spraying, disking, burning and seeding. The technician currently has approximately 250 acres of habitat improvements in progress that will be completed in the coming years.

Overall, this project has experienced great acceptance by private landowners and cooperating agencies. The funding provided by the ODFW's Access and Habitat Grant has allowed us to build off these government programs and obtain outcomes beyond what was expected. To date, the project has affected thousands of acres of habitat as well as increased sportsmen access to private lands.

- 15. Hunter Use Data:** New Projects: Must give estimates of expected usage and how usage will be assessed. Old Projects: Use Access Area Permit data, vehicle or pedestrian counts, hunter interviews, etc.

We are able to evaluate the impact of our projects on hunters in multiple ways. The first method we use is keeping track of the total acreage provided to public hunters. We currently have 109,866 acres of private land available for public hunting access throughout Morrow County. To get an estimate of hunter use, we utilize kiosks and vehicle counts to collect data. This gives us an idea of hunter use in a certain geographic area that can then be extrapolated to estimate total use of all enrolled land. Out of the total 109,866 acres of private land available for public hunting access, 39,624 acres are Regulated Hunt Areas, 62,834 acres are in the Upland Cooperative Access Program, and 7,390 acres are enrolled in Open Fields. In 2021 we estimated that hunters utilized these A&H lands for a total of 5,198 days. We hope to increase recreational use on these lands in the coming years by continuing to create harvest opportunities through habitat improvement projects. We can use harvest statistics and herd composition data to evaluate hunter success and population trends. This data has many variables, but we feel that our projects are done at a large enough scale to have an impact on populations leading to increased harvest opportunity.

16. Project Objective(s):

- (a)** What is the objective of the proposed project?
1. Improve mule deer and upland bird populations by enhancing habitat to provide quality forage, vegetative structure, and nesting habitat.
 2. Improve harvest success on UCAP, A&H, and Open Fields properties by providing quality wildlife habitat that will support increased wildlife populations.
 3. Improve hunter access to private lands for consumptive and non-consumptive use.
 4. Improve interagency communication and cooperation between ODFW, NRCS, FSA, and SWCD to accomplish all desired program goals.
 5. Serve as a resource for producers interested in improving habitat on private lands by providing technical advice and/or project implementation assistance.
- (b)** How will the project benefit wildlife habitat?

The project will focus on improving mule deer and upland game bird habitat primarily through CRP enhancements. Non-productive monoculture CRP plantings will be converted to diverse, species rich stands that benefit wildlife. Seed mixes will be comprised of a variety of native grasses and forbs including alfalfa, small burnet, yellow blossom sweet clover, and sainfoin. The abundant forb presence will serve as the primary food source for mule deer as well as attract insects that are a necessity for upland bird chick diets. This food source will help supplement mule deer diets during winter months when resources are scarce as well as during summer when females experience higher energetic demand due to lactation. CRP enhancement projects will also incorporate tall structure grasses and shrubs to provide additional cover. Tall structure grasses will include wheat grasses and Great Basin Wild Rye. Shrubs will consist of basin sage brush, bitterbrush, salt brush, elderberry, and golden current. Additional structure will provide mule deer with alternative food sources as well as shelter from elements. Tall structure plantings will deliver upland birds with necessary nesting habitat leading to increased nesting success. This is expected

to increase bird recruitment and harvest opportunity. The project focus and activities listed above are also outlined as a primary objective by ODFW in the Mule Deer Initiative Plan for the Heppner Unit. A large portion of the focus area is a part of an ODFW access program providing increased public hunting access on private land.

Approximately 54,467 acres of the 216,000 acres of private lands in the Mule Deer Initiative focus area are currently open to public access through ODFW access programs. Without this additional access provided through the program, there would be very little public access in the project area. Only 5% of land in the Columbia Basin Unit is public land while the Heppner unit provides an additional 34%. Even though the Heppner unit provides a considerable amount of public land, all of the project area consists of private land. The enrolled access lands significantly increase the amount of acreage available for public hunting access. The technician will continue to encourage landowners interested in habitat projects to consider allowing public access or enrolling in an ODFW hunt program. Not only does enrolling in the program increase hunting access and improve habitat, it also benefits the landowner with cost share assistance. The amount of financial assistance for habitat improvement projects is dependent on the amount of public access allowed by the landowner. Landowners enrolled in ODFW's access programs will have their mid management practice requirement completed by the technician at no cost to the landowner. Expenses for the CRP enhancement will be cost shared between the A&H program, ODFW and FSA.

(c) Select species that will benefit from **habitat** improvements:

Big Game

- Deer
- Elk
- Bear
- Cougar
- Pronghorn
- Bighorn Sheep
- Mountain Goat

Upland Bird

- Chukar
- Mountain Quail
- Valley Quail
- Pheasants
- Forest Grouse
- Turkey
- Gray Partridge
- Sage Grouse

Migratory Game Bird

- Ducks
- Geese
- American Coot
- Wilsons Snipe
- Mourning Dove
- Band Tailed Pigeon

(d) Length of time benefits provided <3yr 3-6yr >6yr

Examples of Project Benefit Duration

Noxious weed.....2yrs Forage planting.....5yrs Aspen fencing.....10yrs
Range fertilization...2yrs Forest thinning.....5yrs Aspen
plant/fence.....10yrs Rx Fire-grassland.....2yrs Aspen (conifer removal)....5yrs Road
closure.....10yrs Rx Fire-forested.....3yrs Juniper removal.....7yrs Road
decommission....10yrs Fence Removal.....10yrs Water Dev/Enhancement.10yrs

(Source: Blue Mountains Elk Initiative Project Evaluation Criteria)

- (e) How will the project benefit public access? If limited access, how many hunters will be permitted?

This project will not specifically address public access. Instead, this project is looking at increasing the quality of habitat available on land that is open to the public through the A&H and other ODFW access programs. Providing better habitat for wildlife will increase harvest opportunities for individuals hunting these areas. Additionally, landowners interested in habitat projects are encouraged to consider allowing public access or enrolling in an ODFW hunt program to reduce the landowner cost share for implementing habitat projects.

- (f) Select species for which public access will provided:

Big Game

- Deer
- Elk
- Bear
- Cougar
- Pronghorn
- Bighorn Sheep
- Mountain Goat

Upland Bird

- Chukar
- Mountain Quail
- Valley Quail
- Pheasants
- Forest Grouse
- Turkey
- Gray Partridge
- Sage Grouse

Migratory Game Bird

- Ducks
- Geese
- American Coot
- Wilsons Snipe
- Mourning Dove
- Band Tailed Pigeon
- Other: Coyote

- (g) If damage related, how will the project alleviate/eliminate the problem?
This is not a damage related problem.

17. **Project Location:** Attach a map and provide description of the location and how to get there from a major highway.

The project focus area is located in the Heppner and Columbia Basin GMU's (#48 and #44). Projects can be located by heading east on I-84 from Portland, take exit 147 onto OR- 74/Heppner Highway, continue traveling south on OR-74 into the project area surrounding the towns of Heppner and Lexington. The boundary starts at the northern border of the Umatilla National Forest and extends north. It encompasses portions of the Rhea Creek, Willow Creek, and Butter Creek watersheds. See map attached.

18. **Procedure:** Specifically describe how the project will be conducted--use separate page for additional information, drawings, or pictures.

The Habitat Technician position operates out of the AG Service Center, home to the NRCS, FSA, and the SWCD. This environment allows instant access to all of the programs the technician will be implementing including appropriate USDA Farm Bill Conservation Programs and planning tools. These programs include the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and grants through Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB). These programs not only offer a means of developing habitat projects, but also provide federal and state financial incentives to the landowners to complete the projects. For Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat projects, the technician has an opportunity to customize wildlife friendly seed mixes and offer ODFW incentives to the landowner to offset the cost of more

expensive seed mixes that benefit wildlife. During CRP signups, the technician will promote the program and discuss potential habitat projects with interested landowners. This will continue to create more projects and foster good relationships with landowners.

Through the CRP program the Habitat Technician will implement interseeding practices to help turn marginal or unproductive CRP into habitat that is beneficial for wildlife. These interseeding practices count towards the landowner's mid-management requirements and can be completed any time except the last two years of the contract. These projects thus far have been conducted on CRP lands enrolled in ODFW access programs and have been averaging approximately 70 acres in size per project. Projects are implemented by the Habitat Technician and involve mowing, spraying, disking, and eventually seeding the areas with a wildlife friendly seed mix. Seed mixes will consist of a combination of wheatgrass, big bluegrass, basin wild rye, orchard grass, meadow brome, alfalfa, yellow blossom sweet clover, small burnet, and sainfoin. Mixes will be applied at rates from 12 to 15 pounds per acre. Planting will occur either in the spring or fall depending on when a good seedbed has been created. Projects will take approximately a year and a half to complete. See detailed schedule below for project outline.

The technician has access to a 100 HP tractor, Great Plains no-till drill, 1-ton flatbed truck with 24' sprayer, ATV sprayer, broadcast seeder, rotary mower, disk, and various hand tools. Equipment has been provided by partnerships with Columbia Plateau Pheasants Forever, Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation, Columbia Sportswear, ODFW Access and Habitat, ODFW Upland Bird Stamp, ODFW Green Forage, and MSWCD.

- 19. Permits:** Have all of the appropriate permits been secured or applied for? Examples: Water Resources Department for water rights, Division of State Lands for fill-removal or wetlands projects.

No permits are foreseen to be necessary. Any project receiving USDA funds for a ground disturbing practice will have a Threatened and Endangered Species review and a Cultural Resources impact evaluation performed prior to implementation. Projects in CRP lands are exempt from permit requirements.

- 20. Scheduling:** What is the estimated project schedule?

- a. Habitat Work Start Date: 5/1/2023
Habitat Work Completion Date: 4/30/2025
- b. Access Agreement Start Date: N/A
Access Agreement End Date: N/A
- c. List major project activities and time schedule for each:

Activity	Time (month/year)
Planning New Projects: Meet with landowner, create maps, update contracts	January, Year 1
Mow or Disk Plot to Reduce Vegetation	January-March, Year 1
Spraying #1, typically Glyphosate with 2,4-D	March-April, Year 1
Spraying for broadleaves, especially Russian thistle (IF NEEDED)	June-July, Year 1
Spraying #2, Typically Glyphosate	Oct-Nov, Year 1
Spraying #3, typically Glyphosate with 2,4-D	March-April, Year 2
Spraying for broadleaves, especially Russian thistle (IF NEEDED)	June-July, Year 2
Mowing if needed to control Weed Growth	June-July, Year 2
Spraying #4, typically Glyphosate	Oct-Nov, Year 2
Seed Project with No-till drill	Nov, Year 2 – Feb, Year 3
Mow to reduce weeds as suggested by NRCS	May, Year 3
Mow or Burn Project to regenerate growth	Every 5 years after stand is established

Additional Tasks

Plant Food Plots	March Every Year
Monitor Projects	On going
Equipment Repair/Maintenance	On going

21. Participation and Funding: Will other organizations or individuals participate in the project? If so, list and describe participation, and attach letters of commitment or verification of grant awards. Costs listed here must be included in "Other Funds" column of the Project Budget (Section 20).

	Participant	Activity	Cost
1.	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife	Provide 50% of cooperative Habitat Technician Salary	\$90,000 over 3 years
2.	Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District	Provide 50% of cooperative Habitat Technician Salary, Administer Habitat Tech. Position and A&H Grant	\$122,405 over 3 years
3.	Farm Service Agency	Administer CRP program and provide cost-share funds	\$325,000
4.	Natural Resources Conservation Service	Provide Technical Oversight and house position	\$25,000
5.	Private Landowners	Share in implementation and funding	\$100,000

Have any conditions been placed on the funds listed above which may affect the completion of the project? If so, identify and explain. YES NO

22. Project Maintenance and Monitoring:

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

The Habitat Technician will maintain the projects as long as they are included in ODFW's A&H, UCAP, or other access programs. Additionally, landowners in CRP are required to keep their land managed as stated in the CRP contract. A portion of their rental payment from FSA is designated for this management. Landowners not enrolled in the A&H, UCAP or other access program will be in charge of their own maintenance. The Habitat Technician will still provide help to landowners not in these programs per their request.

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

NRCS and FSA projects will be certified at implementation that they meet "standards and specifications" defined under the Farm Bill. In addition, annual status reviews will be conducted to ensure that the projects still meet quality criteria for the respective program. All USDA monitoring will be conducted by NRCS field staff or certified Technical Service Provider.

ODFW annual mule deer surveys and upland bird brood routes will be utilized in conjunction with hunter surveys to determine improvements in mule deer and upland bird populations.

23. **Project Budget Narrative:** (Provide details; describe in-kind funding; provide narratives here of non-itemized entries in your worksheet.)

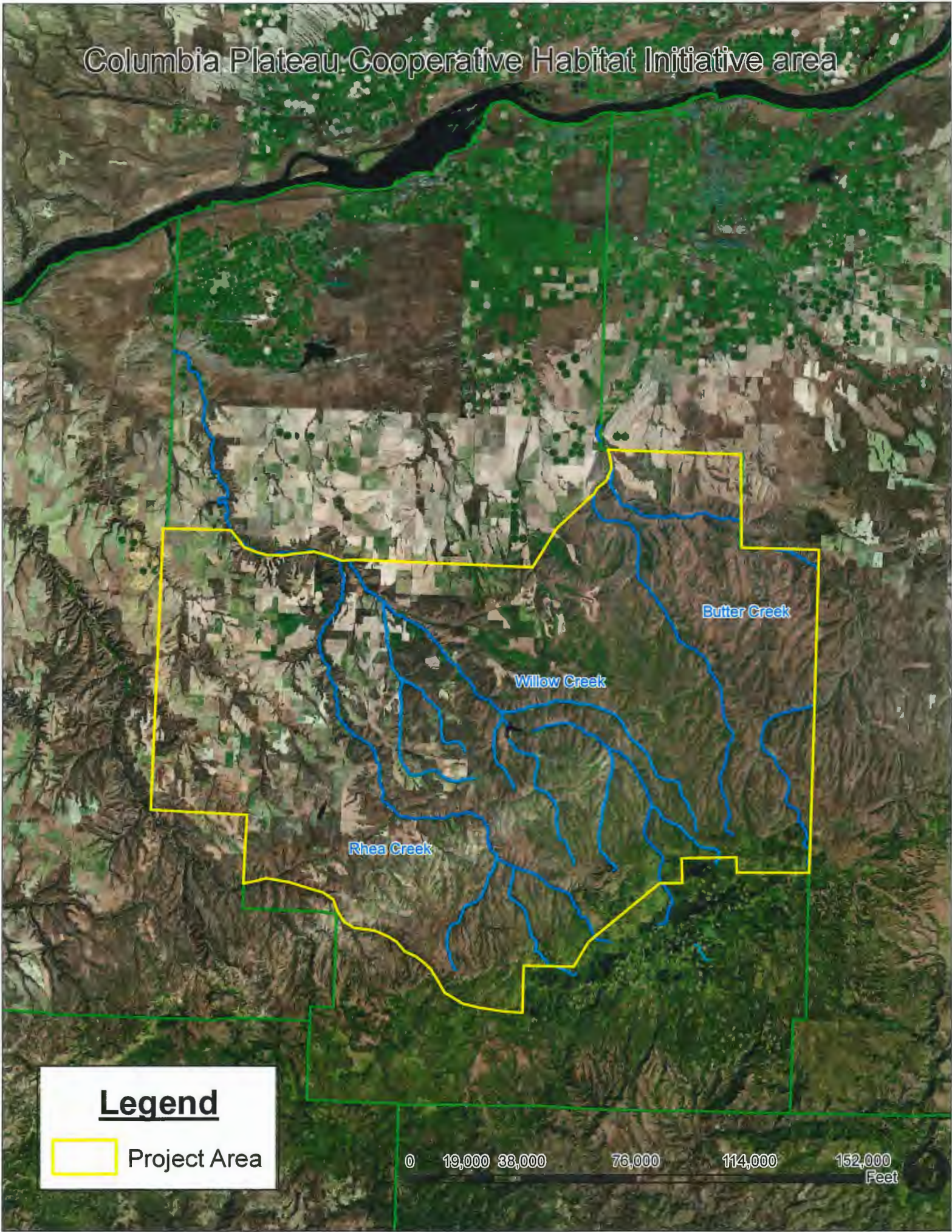
The Wildlife Habitat Technician's salary and benefits will be funded by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District. They will each cover 50% of the salary equaling approximately \$180,000 over the three years. These costs are outlined in the budget below under the administrative section. The remaining \$82,405 in the administrative budget covers additional staff time from Morrow SWCD, FSA, and NRCS. Morrow SWCD District Manager will spend a considerable amount of time managing the technician and the A&H budget. In-Kind funding for staff time from NRCS and FSA is also categorized under the administrative section of the budget. NRCS staff will continue to offer technical oversight and assist the technician when needed. FSA staff administers the CRP and SAFE programs and will assist the technician with contracting habitat projects on land enrolled in these programs. The last budget category covers all supplies needed for the technician to implement the habitat improvement projects. The total costs for the two years amount to \$510,000. These expenses will be split between A&H Funds, FSA, and private landowners. FSA will provide a total of approximately \$300,000 to cost share on eligible habitat improvement projects on land enrolled in their programs. The requested \$110,000 A&H funds will cover the remaining costs not covered by FSA for projects enrolled in a public hunt program. The expenses covered will include seed, herbicide, seedlings, guzzlers, fuel, maintenance, and equipment repairs. The remaining \$100,000 in the supply budget will come from private landowner contributions for projects that do not receive government assistance.

24. Project Budget Worksheet

Project Budget (Provide as much detail as possible)

Totals automatically round to the nearest dollar. Please do not include cents.			
Expense Category	A&H Funds	Cost Share In-Kind/ Cash (Match)¹	Total Project Cost
ADMINISTRATION: Personnel and benefits @ 17%			
Personnel		\$244,614	\$244,614
Benefits		\$17,791	\$17,791
SUBTOTAL (1)	\$0	\$262,405	\$262,405
CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS²			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUBTOTAL (2)	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUPPLIES			
Seed, Herbicide, Seedlings, Guzzlers, Fuel, Maintenance, Repairs, etc.	\$110,000	\$400,000	\$520,000
SUBTOTAL (3)	\$110,000	\$400,000	\$510,000
CONTRACT SERVICES (itemize)³			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUBTOTAL (4)	\$0	\$0	\$0
EQUIPMENT (itemize)			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
SUBTOTAL (5)	\$0	\$0	\$0
Access Payment			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
PROJECT TOTALS	\$110,000	\$662,405	\$772,405

Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative area



Butter Creek

Willow Creek

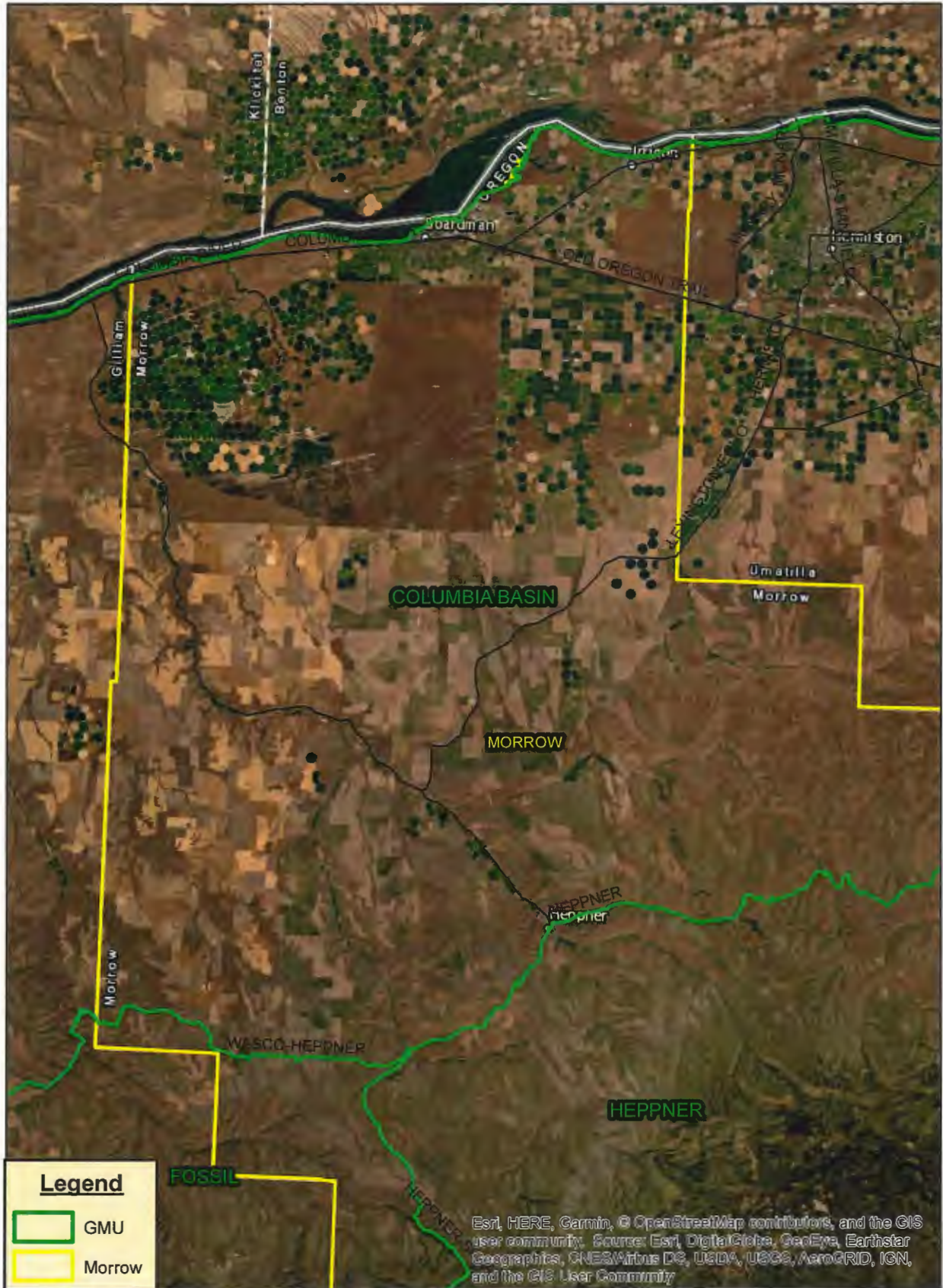
Rhea Creek

Legend

 Project Area

0 19,000 38,000 76,000 114,000 152,000 Feet

Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative Area



Esri, HERE, Garmin, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS user community. Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

0 4 8 16 Miles





Oregon

Kate Brown., Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Heppner District Office

54173 Highway 74

PO Box 363

Heppner, OR 97836

Voice (541) 676-5230

FAX (541) 676-9075

www.dfw.state.or.us/

October 11, 2022

Access & Habitat Board
Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife
4034 Fairview Industrial Drive SE
Salem, Oregon 97302



Dear A&H Board Members:

This letter is in regards to the Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative proposal. I have been working on this project since it was first implemented in 2008. Since that time a tremendous amount of habitat work has been accomplished. This project has worked to improve the upland bird habitat in the local area but has focused primarily on lands that are enrolled in the Upland Cooperative Access, Open Fields and A&H programs.

Additionally this project is creating some very beneficial relationships with the local landowners who are recipients of the habitat work. This project has helped bolster existing relationships as well as establish good working relationships with landowners ODFW and the SWCD had not been able to work with in the past. This project has also helped enroll more landowners into ODFW's hunting programs because the landowners receive a better cost share for habitat work if they are enrolled in one of ODFW's access programs.

All habitat projects take time before the benefits are realized. Much of our work is now becoming some very good upland bird and mule deer habitat. With the continued support of the A&H Board and all the other contributors this project can continue to create high quality habitat for the public hunter to utilize in an area that is dominated by private property.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns on this proposal or on the comments in my letter.

Respectfully,

Steve Cherry
District Wildlife Biologist



United States Department of Agriculture

Farm Production and
Conservation

Farm Service Agency
Morrow County Office

PO Box 786
Heppner, OR
97836-0786

Telephone
541-676-9011

Facsimile
855-824-6183

November 7, 2022

To: Access and Habitat Board

The USDA Morrow County Farm Service Agency (FSA) will collaborate with Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) on the Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative projects in Morrow County. The Morrow County FSA has previously collaborated with the Morrow County SWCD on projects in the past and will continue to do so in the future.

The Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative complements our habitat programs such as; State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Both programs preserve the acreage for habitat restoration as well as wildlife improvement and Morrow County FSA office continues to have enrollment in SAFE and CREP, in part due to the Habitat Initiative that has been in place.

Through this grant, the Morrow SWCD and the Wildlife Habitat Technician will be able to increase mule deer and upland game bird habitat across the area. Morrow County FSA will review and approve all planning documentation for each project presented for enrollment. Further, the Morrow County FSA office is responsible for contracting SAFE and CREP acres and funding for those contracts in place at the time of approval.

Sincerely,

Adam Doherty
County Executive Director
Morrow County, Oregon
Ph. 541-676-9011 ext. 105
Fax. 855-824-6183 RA.FSA.ORTThe.efax.6183



Natural Resources Conservation Service
HEPPNER SERVICE CENTER
PO BOX 127
HEPPNER, OR 97836
Phone: (541) 676 - 9011 Fax: (541) 676 - 9624

October 24, 2022

Letter of Collaboration

Access and Habitat Board:

I am writing this letter of collaboration for the Morrow SWCD Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative. The Morrow SWCD has been an important partner in many of the initiatives that NRCS has set forth. These habitat projects fit well with many of the active conservation strategies that NRCS has throughout the county in both upland and riparian habitats. The current Habitat Technician will certify habitat practices on CRP and CREP contract acres.

NRCS will provide technical oversight of planned projects and continue to house the Habitat Technician position in the USDA Service Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Wilson".

Jennifer Wilson
District Conservationist
NRCS-Morrow County



Our Mission: *To conserve, protect, and develop soil, water and other natural resources for the economic and environmental benefit of the residents of Morrow County*

430 W. Linden Way, PO Box 127, Heppner, OR 97836-0127

Phone (541)676-5452 Fax (541)676-9624

November 1, 2022

Access & Habitat Board,

I am writing this letter of commitment for our grant application for supplies and materials in support of the Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative. Since 2007, our partnership with ODFW, FSA, NRCS and private landowners has been an important part of the SWCD's program to improve nesting and escape cover, winter food sources, available water and brood rearing habitat for upland game birds and mule deer. The SWCD also agrees to provide 50% of the funding needed for the Wildlife Habitat position and will provide administration of both grants as in-kind.

We are extremely appreciative of the financial support for materials and supplies this grant has provided over the years and know that without it, this project would not be successful. We look forward to many more years of cooperation to help improve habitat for wildlife.

Thank you for your continued support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Payne", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Kevin D. Payne
District Manager
Morrow SWCD

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: Columbia Plateau COOP Habitat Init. **Project #:** 2023

	Access Acres	Habitat Acres	Habitat Category: 2	Total Score: 26
"Welcome" Private	50,000	>5,000	(range: 1-6; see flow chart on page 4. Not applicable to access-only projects)	Total Possible: 36
By-Permission Private	52,040			
Inaccessible Public*	0			
Accessible Public*	0			

Instructions:

Project Type	Complete these sections			
	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.

Food:	coorridoors.
Water:	Numerous springs, creeks & guzzlers
Cover:	Primarily managed rangeland with shrubs and riparian areas

Project Score	Access Fee Assessment		
	Private Land	Inacc. Public	Acc. Public
1	1	n/a	n/a
1	1	n/a	n/a
1	1	n/a	n/a

2. *Partnerships*

Partners contributing financial or in-kind support:

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

0	1	n/a	n/a
0			
0			
1			

		Access Fee Assessment			
		Project Score			
3. Matching Funds	Total matching funds (monetary and in-kind)	1			
	> 1% matching funds.....	1			
	> 25% matching funds.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
	> 50% matching funds.....				
4. Damage	Project would mitigate current damage to private property:	0			
	Wildlife damage occurring on private property.....	0			
	Landowner participates in ODFW damage control programs.....				
General Total		7	5	0	0
<i>General Possible</i>		<i>12</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>5</i>

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. Public Land	Project located in Wildlife Management Unit with <50% public land.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
6. Private access	Private land access type:				
	Project would provide access to private land.....	1			
	Private land access would be on a "Welcome to Hunt" basis.....	1			
7. Public access	Access through private lands would:				
	improve access to public land.....	0			
	provide access to otherwise inaccessible public land.....	0			
8. Special Access	Project would provide special youth or disabled hunter access opportunities.....	0	0	n/a	n/a
9. Species Permitted	Species groups include big game, waterfowl, upland birds, turkey, and predators/varmints.				
	2+ species groups available and permitted.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
	4+ species groups available and permitted.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
10. Under-rep. Species*	Project provides access to under-represented species in the watershed.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
11. Harvest Restriction	Landowner would not restrict sex or species permitted for lawful harvest.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
12. Season Restriction	Landowner would not restrict access to any hunting season(s).....	1	1	n/a	n/a
13. Dispersion	Property would provide access to animals pushed off of publicly accessible land during hunting season.....	1	1	n/a	
Access Total		9	7	0	0
<i>Access Possible</i>		<i>12</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>7</i>
Payment Fee Total			12	n/a	n/a

* 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.....

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

1

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)..... 0

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.)..... 0
Project will help establish or maintain a wildlife habitat corridor or otherwise reduce fragmentation on landscape level..... 1
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:
Improve sagebrush-steppe habitat for big game and upland game birds.

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

<u>Estimated Abundance</u>			
Species	Pre-treatment	Post-treatment	
Mule Deer		>25%	Habitat Total
Pheasant		>25%	<i>Habitat Possible</i>
			Grand Total
			<i>Total Possible</i>

10

12

26

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**



ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Regional Advisory Council Project Proposal Review

ODFW Region / A&H Regional Council: East Region / Northeast Council

Project Proposal Title: Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative

Applicants(s): Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District

Date of Council Review: December 15, 2016

Type of Project: Access X Habitat X Other Damage

Motion: Chris Panike made a motion to approve the project as proposed. Doug Hopper seconded the motion.

<u>Council Member</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Vote</u>
Tim Campbell	Chairman	Yes
Chris Brown	Landowner Representative	Yes
Doug Hopper	Landowner Representative	Yes
Chris Panike	Landowner Representative	Yes
Tom Baker	Hunter Representative	Absent
Calvin Davis	Hunter Representative	Yes
VACANT	Hunter Representative	VACANT

Disposition of Vote: Motion passed 5:0

Project Strengths:

- This project is heavily supported at the local level by private landowners, ODFW Hoppner District Office, NRCS, SWCD, Pheasants Forever and OHA. There is a very strong commitment all of the individuals and organization involved to make sure that this project continues to be a success.
- This position and its location allow for “one stop shopping.” Being housed with the NRCS and SWCD offices is highly advantageous to the resources and its many users.
- The primary focus for habitat work is on CRP lands enrolled in the UCAP and/or RHA programs. This project is proposing to work directly in CRP enrolled lands which ultimately will continue to improve habitat for upland game birds and mule deer alike. Increasing huntable wildlife species on properties that are already enrolled in agency hunt programs should be strongly supported.
- This is an excellent opportunity to further provide recreation in an area of the state that receives heavy use from sportsman.

Project Concerns:

- None