



Access and Habitat Board Meeting Minutes

April 8, 2025
Medford, Oregon

This Access and Habitat Board meeting minutes is considered as a draft until approved by the Board.

Notice of these meetings had been published through Oregon Transparency Website and ODFW Website. <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/index.asp>, <http://www.oregon.gov/transparency/Pages/PublicMeetingNotices.aspx>

Those attending part or all of the meeting included:

<u>A&H Board</u>	<u>ODFW Staff</u>	<u>Regional Coordinators</u>
Ron Borisch - Landowner rep	Travis Schultz	Ryan Battleson
John Breese - Landowner Rep	Derek Broman	Jessica Wilkes
Nic Callero- ad hoc Chair	Roxie Borisch	David Stroppel
Jeff McNerney - Landowner Rep		Jon Paustian
Morgan Olson - Hunter Rep		
Truman Stone - Hunter Rep		
Absent: Amy Patrick		

Meeting

On Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 8:00 a.m. Travis Schultz opened the meeting with a request for an ad hoc chair in the absence of Chairman Amy Patrick. Morgan Olson made a motion to elect Nic Callero. Truman Stone seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Breese, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

On Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 8:04 a.m. ad hoc Chair Nic Callero called the Access and Habitat Board meeting to order.

Meeting Minutes Review

January 13, 2025

Jon Breese moved to approve the meeting minutes with corrections and allowing for additional edits for grammar and punctuation. The motion was seconded by Ron Borisch. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor Borisch, Breese, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

The minutes files are located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/DRAFT%20January%202025%20minutes%20for%20the%20web.pdf>

1
2
3 **Board Member Reports**
4

5 Nic Callero, Hunter Representative

6 In the full swing of legislative sessions across the Intermountain West. I don't get to cover Oregon as
7 much and spend the majority of my time in Montana, Nevada and Utah where we have bills that are
8 running there. Mostly focused on funding bills for wildlife and connectivity efforts.; partnering and
9 establishing funds for wildlife crossing work and connectivity modeling. Many of these bills range
10 from anywhere to 10 to 50 million, and it's difficult to ask legislators for funds at times when funds
11 are limited, so need to be flexible. Have had some really good conversations and building momentum
12 in this area in the past five to six years. In addition, we are doing a lot of work in DC (at the federal
13 level), and Travis will talk about the Farm Bill later in the meeting.
14

15 John Breese, Landowner Representative

16 I attended two banquets, OHA in Redmond and Turkey in Prineville. Was surprised at how high the
17 auction deer tags went for. Redmond auction was a record to be beat by the Prineville event. Good
18 to see enthusiasm at both banquets. It is still very muddy on the ranch to get much work done. (I
19 forgot to report at the time, but Greg Jackle, ODFW and our friend, takes youth turkey hunters out for
20 the youth season. So far this weekend, three for three kids getting their first turkey!)
21

22 Morgan Olson, Hunter Representative

23 Busy with Union County OHA. In person and on-line banquets with \$40,000 net proceeds. Focus on
24 youth scholarships in Union/Wallowa county for graduating seniors and trap shooting teams, along
25 with women and youth pheasant hunts, Search and Rescue, and Cattlemen Association for predator
26 control. Local requests for ODFW and OSP – following up with those items.
27

28 Focusing on a lot of legislative stuff in Oregon. Shout out to BHA for making \$30,000 donation to
29 Wallowa Mountain Hills Canyon Trail Association for trail maintenance in Northeast Oregon.
30

31 Trail projects have started (three or four done so far this spring.) Typically, we start down in the Hells
32 Canyon area at lower elevation and work our way up. Still working on a big sign replacement project
33 in NE Oregon. The big focus is the Hells Canyon area where a lot of them burned due to fires.
34 SNOTEL looking at about 150% of average, pretty good snow pack this year. Looking good for
35 water.
36

37 Made a trip to Brownlee last Sunday and lots of bird activity; seeing a lot of pheasants out showing
38 their colors and chukars are starting to pair up. It looks like they wintered well and hopefully we have
39 good nesting conditions this year. Should have good bird numbers coming up this fall.
40

41 Ron Borisch, Landowner Representative

42 Recently elected to the Clackamas Marion Forest Protection Board through Oregon Department of
43 Forestry. A week and a half ago, I was able to view the Scott Livestock Fire seeding project that we
44 funded. The fire scars were very green, but most of this was probably Cheat Grass. The designated
45 seeding areas appeared as a different color indicating a successful seeding/regeneration.
46

1 Attended the Oregon Bow Hunters Statewide Deer Tag Auction in Canyonville which sold for a
2 record \$100,000 but two others went for \$130,000 and \$150,000. There seems to be an appetite for
3 deer tags!

4
5 We had some major damage to one of our road graders up the Quartzville corridor. The grader was
6 parked through a locked BLM gate. They stole all of the LED lights and cut the battery harness but
7 couldn't get the very heavy batteries out. The cost was over \$5500 dollars and put our grader
8 unusable for three days for repairs. Linn County Sheriff Klein, who is with the A&H project-Linn
9 County Forst Deputy program, came right out and took a report and installed trail cameras, but the
10 thieves haven't returned.

11
12 Submitted a grant application through ODFW for high priority fish passage and fish screening. We
13 have a culvert on a medium fish creek which is a tributary to the South Fork of the Alsea River that is
14 failing. The Alsea is a major salmon and steelhead river. We were performing road maintenance
15 when we discovered the culvert with over half of the road fill washed out. I discovered the grant
16 online, which had a very short window to apply.

17
18 Truman Stone, Hunter Representative

19 Getting caught up on projects and getting ready for turkey season. Been doing quite a bit of work on
20 SB1068, which involves rural fire districts to expand coverage area in response to big fires in this part
21 of the state. To annex additional territory in the rural fire districts, I presented on that at Oregon Fire
22 District Directors Association. It's been good work for rural Oregon getting fire coverage extended.

23
24 Jeff McNerney, Landowner Representative

25 As a landowner representative on the board, my report entails the current state of growers in Hood
26 River and Wasco counties. Tree fruit orchards are starting to reach full bloom. The Dalles cherries are
27 in 50% bloom and Hood River pears are at 25% bloom. Now is when growers need to be diligent
28 with frost control to protect the coming crop. We personally have 25 Wind machines (10 acres each)
29 that we operate on cold nights. All growers are finishing pruning and beginning pesticide sprays
30 along with ground fertilizations. The ground conditions are extremely slick and muddy with all the
31 rain we have received.

32
33 The Oregon farming community came together recently to battle HB 2548. Lobbying a proposal to
34 further government overreach on the farming community. Myself, along with hundreds of growers
35 across Oregon, testified and/or wrote letters to the sub-committee on this. For now, we seem to have
36 been successful in our fight. Both Oregon and Washington tree fruit growers fought, with the help of
37 the NW Horticulture council, to reinstate local USDA tree fruit scientists that were probationary at
38 our research stations. We were successful.

39
40 Turkeys are out in good numbers in both counties.

41
42 Finally, I personally drew an Alaska Mountain Goat tag. The unit is the Chugach range which is a
43 physically challenging range. Time to get in shape!

44
45 **Public Comments**

46 No one on the call at this time.

47
48 **Access & Habitat A&H Coordinator Reports**

1 Travis Schultz reported on the following:

- 2 • Marcus Thompson promoted to another position at headquarters.
- 3 • Commission approved the two projects presented at the March 14 Commission meeting:
4 2025-2027 OSP Enforcement and Linn County Forest Deputy Program.
- 5 • Update for Regional Coordinators: the Federally Funded Accountability and Transparency
6 Act (FFATA) requires reports for projects over \$30,000. In addition to the form a Unique
7 Entity Identifier is required when we provide federal funds of over \$30,000 to a company
8 rather than an individual. Complicating this is Section 1619 of the Farm Bill which
9 determines what information we can provide and under what circumstances. Travis is working
10 with NRCS to determine what information we can provide on the FFATA form. As a
11 reminder we must be very cautious on what information we send out on federally funded
12 projects and ensure that we do not violate Section 1619. Travis noted that if anyone has
13 questions on public information requests to contact him. Working through this and will get
14 more clarity on Federally Funded Transparency Act for projects over \$30,000.

15 **Budget**

16 A&H Budget Report

17 Travis Schultz presented the A&H budget to the Board. The budget files are located in the Board
18 packet materials and can be viewed at the following link:

19 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/April%202025%20Budget%20for%20the
20 %20web.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/April%202025%20Budget%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
21

22 Discussion followed from board on budget process and grant funding. No motion required.
23

24 **Coordinator Reports**

25 Travis Schultz, A&H State Coordinator

26 2023 Farm Bill

27 Travis reported that this was supposed to be passed in 2023. Travis attended the North American
28 Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Kentucky in March and attended all the agriculture
29 work groups. A lot of conversations with a great group of people who work in public lands
30 management. Many Midwest states have entire departments within their Fish and Wildlife agencies
31 that do nothing but Farm Bill lobbying and tracking. The budget reconciliation that legislation is
32 going through has been difficult. Most people think the farm bill will be passed in 2026, although
33 some are still stating it can happen in 2025.
34

35 Nic added that the voluntary habitat program piece that gives us access to these funds was
36 reintroduced as a bipartisan bill. It will move through the committees that have jurisdiction and will
37 eventually get tapped into the farm bill as a whole. There is a strong coalition in DC working on this
38 bill, led by David Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and a host of other sporting groups.
39

40 Open Fields

41 Travis reviewed the Open Fields projects with the board and related costs. Travis also outlined the
42 Large Timber projects and inflation concerns for price per acre. Travis stated that we need to come up
43 with a way to evaluate and prioritize large timber projects, and asked the Board to let him know if
44 they have ideas. The Access & Habitat program is statutorily obligated to do access and habitat
45 projects. Hoping to get federal funds and bridge gap between the two.
46
47
48

1 Travis will work initially with Regional Coordinators to develop a draft plan and then move forward
2 with the board to decide how they want to proceed. Travis would like to complete this by fall.

3
4 10 minute break:

5 Readjourned at 9:30 a.m.
6
7

8 Auction/Raffle Update:

9 Travis presented the current raffle sales to the Board and discussed the ad campaign for the raffle this
10 year. The raffle and auction updated files are located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed
11 at the following link:

12 <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/Auction%20and%20Raffle%20Updates%20for%20the%20web.pdf>
13
14

15 **2026 Recommended Raffle and Auction Hunts**

16 Travis presented the Proposed 2026 Auction tags: No changes from last year. Also, no changes for
17 Raffle from last year.
18

19 Derek explained 2026 Proposed Eastern Oregon Deer Hunt areas and how ODFW is moving away
20 from Wildlife Management Units to reflect individual deer herd ranges, providing the Commission
21 approves the change. Discussion followed on how this will be communicated to the public. Derek
22 said it will be important for ODFW to make sure the hunt boundaries are very obvious to hunters and
23 avoid any OSP conflicts with hunters.
24

25 Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the 2026 Recommended Raffle and Auction Hunts as
26 proposed. John Breese seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor:
27 Borisch, Breese, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.
28

29 The proposed raffle and auction hunt files are located in the Board packet materials and can be
30 viewed at the following link:

31 <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/2026%20Recommended%20Auction%20and%20Raffle%20Tags.pdf>
32
33

34 **Project Review:**

35 Ryan Battleson presented presentations on the following two project proposals:
36

37 New River Access Area

38 The New River Access Area is a cooperative program between several private landowners and
39 ODFW to maintain public hunting access on private lands and increase access to public land. The
40 area provides hunting opportunities for waterfowl and addresses significant agricultural damage.
41 There will not be an increase in the overall costs to the A&H program from the past 2023-2025
42 agreement. Multiple conservation and sporting groups are contributing match funding.
43

44 Greg Coelho, resident of Gold Beach Oregon, called in to the meeting to give testimony in support of
45 continuing this project. He stated that the New River Access Area means a lot to hunters and that it is
46 a privilege to be able to access this habitat area. He thanked the board for hearing his testimony.
47

1 Ron Borisch made a motion to approve the New River Access Area as an access only project
2 excluding all references to habitat work or applying fertilizer in the project application. Truman
3 Stone seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with five (5) in favor: Borisch, Breese,
4 Callero, McNerney, and Stone. (Morgan Olson temporarily left call.)
5

6 The project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link:
7 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/New%20River%202025-
8 27%20Application%20for%20the%20web.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/New%20River%202025-27%20Application%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
9

10 Jackson Cooperative Travel Management Area – 2025-2028

11 Longstanding project and would like to continue it. This would be a three-year agreement (previous
12 projects were two years.) Additional acreage will help to secure continued hunting access. Great to
13 see a contiguous chunk of cooperating partners, encompasses ODFW’s “especially sensitive” winter
14 range designation in Jackson Co. Good to see another cooperating partner (TTG Forestry). This was
15 discussed extensively at our Feb 28th meeting, but there were still a few more pieces needing to fall
16 together before the council was ready to vote. There are clear breakdowns for the acreage for the
17 different tracts that could be easily pulled out if the statewide board felt the need to do so.
18

19 Nic Callaro made a motion to approve the Jackson Cooperative Travel Management Area as
20 proposed. Ron Borisch seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor:
21 Borisch, Breese, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.
22

23 The project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link:
24 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/2025-
25 28_JACTMA%20Application%20for%20the%20web.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/April/2025-28_JACTMA%20Application%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
26

27 **Regional Coordinators Reports**

28 **Northeast Regional Coordinator Report**

29 Jon Paustian
30

31
32 Met with Manulife several times over past couple months. Big change coming in how we do
33 business with them. Initial conversations building in some inflationary costs to the access payment.
34 They have 32,000 acres outside of Spokane, Washington and were offered \$6 an acre. That sets a
35 precedent with some of their value-added services. Local staff have been transparent and pretty good
36 to deal with but not sure how much longer we will be able to keep them in at \$1.25 or up the stakes
37 and increase their payment. Tough conversations internally that need to be held. We have them
38 through the 2025 season. Potentially in 2026 they would leave Sled Springs land in and then begin
39 shopping their lands outside of Sled Springs. That will create a lot of angst amongst our constituent
40 groups. If they are going to lease land, they’d rather lease it to an individual and do just one
41 contract. Joe Justice, who is at the local level, doesn’t want to do this and wants to stay in the
42 program, but pressure from above getting strong. Going to be a hurdle – won’t be able to give \$6. If
43 they go a different route and try to lease land out on their own, we will get push back from
44 constituents. We have done business with them since the 60’s when it was owned by Boise Cascade
45 and that was five to six companies ago. Not having solidified the Farm Bill funds, it will need to be
46 navigated.
47

1 Got one insurance certificate for access area and tracking down another for insurance for his land.
2 May have to come back with amendment to contract to pick up insurance cost.

3
4 Hoping to get back to work full time in another week or so.

6 **Deschutes-Klamath Regional Coordinator Report**

7 Jessica Wilkes

8
9 Jessica thanked Ryan for his great presentations and said she was sorry to miss the tour and being at
10 the meeting in person. Jessica gave the following updates:

11
12 Emerg seeding fire project at Tygh Ridge/Friend in progress and going well. Not yet completed due
13 to weather challenges. Jessica shared pictures of the drones and equipment being used for the project.
14 Drone owner (Mike) has been very passionate about the drones and using them for landscape
15 applications. He will be coming to Deschutes district May 28 near Brothers to present a workshop on
16 how drones can be used for natural resources (i.e., seeding, spraying.)

17
18 Working with Travis on the Fort Rock amendment to do some additional habitat work on Open Fields
19 Project. The project goal is to enhance understory vegetation within a drainage by reducing conifer
20 density and canopy cover in up to 100 acres. In addition to drought conditions, conifer densities (i.e.,
21 lodgepole, ponderosa pine, white-fir, juniper, etc.) within Smoke Creek have increased resulting in a
22 reduction of understory plant species quality and diversity, facilitating in a reduction in key forage
23 and cover for mule deer. By removing encroaching conifers in the ephemeral drainage, grass, forb
24 and shrub quantity and quality should improve. Shrub species that will benefit from conifer removal
25 include: bitterbrush, mountain mahogany, ceanothus sp., rose sp., ribes sp., and greenleaf manzanita.

26
27 Currently in the middle of conducting sage grouse surveys. Population numbers seem to have
28 increased since last year. This is the third year in a row that precipitation has increased and leks that
29 previously weren't occupied are now occupied.

30
31 Metolius Winter Range Acquisition is being transferred to Oregon Wildlife Foundation (OWF) so we
32 can reimburse private landowners. Unforeseen cost of \$5000 for OWF to go through title clearance,
33 etc., but we received that money and put in a grant from OHA and got the funds to cover that. Now,
34 with OWF, funds are secured for it to eventually get transferred to Forest Service. No timeline yet for
35 completion to Forest Services.

37 **Northwest Regional Coordinator Report**

38 David Stoppel

39
40 David said that in the past few weeks he has been approached for a couple of different A&H projects.
41 Justina Resources and Justina Timber asking for some money to install gates to help manage access
42 on properties. Rough estimate is a couple of thousand. Will bring request to July A&H meeting.

43
44 Also approached by Mason, Bruce and Gerar. A biologist there is managing the Avery family
45 properties and have been in our programs a long time as private land projects. This is part of the
46 Willamette Private Lands project. They are asking for rock for road maintenance, but do not know
47 what that amount is yet.

48

1 District Biologist at Newport had some ideas for Habitat projects. Not sure if there will be enough
2 time to get things lined out to use the extra VPA-HIP dollars that Travis has set aside for habitat
3 work. There is a private family timber company needing \$30,000 worth of work. Not sure how soon
4 we can pull this together.

5
6 Have been working with district bios, OSP and landowners to plan for the July Alsea/Stott TMA.

7
8 New intern coming on in May – former Marine. He is finishing his wildlife degree at OSU. Looking
9 forward to having him start as shorthanded with staff and getting close to field season.

10
11 Recently I met with partners at USFWS. We have two private land partner program biologists in the
12 Willamette Valley. Together we work on private land restoration projects. This year we have 14
13 projects lined up (approximately 1700 acres). It's a really nice collaborative partnership we have
14 going. With everything going on with Federal positions, one of the biologists just announced he is
15 taking an early retirement. He has 26 years of experience with habitat restoration (been working with
16 him for 15 years) so it will be a big loss.

17
18 Also involved with a prescribed fire workgroup. Working on our internal guidance document for
19 staff. We are hoping to finalize that guidance by this fall. Need some direction on if we can get an
20 internal agreement with ODF so they can sign off on staff training and plans and possibly write burn
21 plans for us. At a crucial point there and hoping to get some guidance from ODFW headquarters to
22 move forward in the next few months,

23
24 Nothing new to add about Manulife. Local Manulife staff been good to work with but pressure
25 coming from higher up. Lots of uncertainty.

26 27 **Southwest Regional Coordinator Report**

28 Ryan Battleson

29
30 Ryan commented that he was happy that board members were able to join the tour so he could show
31 them around. Ryan gave the following updates:

32 33 SW Regional A&H Updates

- 34 • Next SW Regional Council is set to meet June 6 in Central Point
- 35 • Territorial Youth Hunt was paid the final payment (including completion report) earlier this
36 spring.
- 37 • Giustina Resources donated 1 LOP tag for the Territorial Youth Deer Hunt to Oregon Hunters
38 Association (Statewide) for auctioning off at their annual banquet.
- 39 • Planning to start processing last payments and completion report for New River Access Area
40 ranchers so can close out the 2023-2025 agreement.
- 41 • Working with two private landowners for two potential A&H properties. Both properties are
42 held in Conservation Easements but are open to a limited hunt by reservation opportunity,
43 paired with habitat work. Ryan will be submitting these at the July A&H meeting.

44 45 46 47 48 Rogue Watershed Habitat and District Updates

- 1 • Rogue District Office just held it's annual youth turkey clinic the weekend of April 5-6. Two
2 lucky hunters will be getting to go on a guided hunt with Rogue Valley OHA and an ODFW
3 biologist.
- 4 • Manulife on the south coast will not be renewing the "Rogue River" access permit. This area
5 represented a lot of the elk harvest for the Sixes unit in Curry County. They stated they are
6 going a different direction. What that will be is unknown at this time.
- 7 • Federal staffing reductions have forced the USFS to reallocate the Rogue District's Good
8 Neighbor Authority Special Project Agreement funds (FY25) from working on conifer
9 encroachment and thinning around montane meadows. The funds were planned for hiring
10 contract crews to cut and pile the vegetation but now will be going toward contracting for the
11 pile burning from last year's work, this coming springs work, and next year's work. In total it
12 will be around 500 acres. Federal staff was originally going to do a lot of the burning in-
13 house, but with staffing reductions, this work will likely be going to contract.
- 14 • Putting together next year's Pittman Robertson Grant. One project will focus on oak
15 enhancement in the Little Butte subbasin on BLM lands to support some of the work that the
16 Klamath Siskiyou Oak Network is also doing in the area. ODFW Submitted a matching grant
17 application to the Blacktail Deer Foundation asking for 25k to support a 75k ask from PR.
18 Plan is to treat at least 100 acres of oak woodland and mixed conifer forest with the PR funds.
- 19 • Finished our upgrades to wildlife friendly fencing at Southern Oregon Land Conservancy's
20 (SOLC) Rogue River Preserve and Pompadour Bluff Properties (funded through PR). This
21 was all done with volunteers associated with SOLC. OSU students also came down on their
22 spring break and helped to finish the Pompadour Bluff property.
- 23
24
25

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15pm by Ad Hoc chair Nic Callero.
