



Access and Habitat Board Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2025
Baker City, Oregon

This Access and Habitat Board meeting minutes are 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>Public</u>
Amy Patrick, Chair	Travis Schultz	Joe Justice, Manulife
Ron Borisch - Landowner rep	Michael Hochspeier	
John Dehler III- Landowner Rep	Bernadette Graham-Hudson	
Nic Callero- Hunter Rep	Steve Cherry, Heppner	
Morgan Olson - Hunter Rep		
Truman Stone - Hunter Rep		
	<u>Regional Coordinators</u>	
Absent:	Ryan Battleson	
Jeff McNerney - Landowner Rep	Andrew Walch	
	David Stroppel	
	Jon Paustian	
	Landon Hardt	

Meeting

On Tuesday, October 21 2025, at 8:00 a.m. Chair Amy Patrick called the Access and Habitat Board meeting to order

Board Member Reports

Truman Stone, Hunter Representative

Commenting on the tour yesterday, from my perspective, it's highly valuable to hear from these landowners. Their passion and vision for what they're doing on their land and how we can partner with them is the highlight of these tours. This is my third trip to northeast Oregon in a month. First for my son's wedding reception in La Grande and then deer hunting. The wedding reception was much more successful than the deer hunting. I want to highlight the EE Wilson youth pheasant hunt where I am a longtime volunteer, however, my dog is the real volunteer. First, I had the privilege of taking David and his dad, Freddie out hunting. David is a hunting and fishing fool; a kid after my own heart, he was able to get both his birds. It was a real treat to take those two out. The second hunter I assisted was a young woman. She got her first bird and had a few misses before she picked up her second bird. I was able to coach her on stance and mounting a shotgun, and she was proud of herself. This was the highlight of my hunting season.

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Morgan Olson, Hunter Representative

The Wallowa Mountains–Hells Canyon Trail Association has almost 2,000 trees cleared from the trails so far this year and over 250 miles of trail maintenance, a big shoutout to all involved. The OHA Union–Wallowa Chapter canceled the women's pheasant hunt this year due to a lack of interest. OHA did support the youth hunt out at Ladd Marsh. We're also preparing for next year's OHA banquet. Grande Ronde Model Watershed has its annual meeting coming up at the end of this month, with a focus on securing funding for projects. Backcountry Hunters and Anglers had many conversations on the Supreme Court decision not to hear the corner crossing case and what it means for public land hunters and public lands in general. So far this fall, there has been some success with big game hunts. It looks like the chukar count is decent in this neck of the woods, not a great hatch, but there are a lot of holdovers from last year. We've had some good fall rains, and it sounds like the fishermen are doing well fishing for salmon.

Nic Callero, Hunter Representative

The last couple of months have quieted down work-wise, with the legislative sessions wrapping up across the West. Several wildlife connectivity priorities that my organization and partner organizations were tracking passed state legislatures. We are gearing up for the next go-around working to secure funding for state agencies to work on connectivity issues despite tight budgets.

On the personal side, I've spent a good chunk of time on the water, filling the freezer with salmon. I fished Buoy 10 and the Yaquina River, where I spent a week with my family. A highlight was my daughter landing her first coho—an exciting and chaotic moment that involved me hooking myself, tangling the line in the prop, and some spirited yelling from my wife. My daughter was hesitant to bonk the fish, but we got it in the boat and enjoyed it later at the table.

I explored a new Access & Habitat plot—the Upper Tualatin/Trask TMA on the coast. It's a great spot with less hunting pressure than other North and Mid Coast areas. I harvested a doe there, adding more meat to the freezer. I've been picking Morgan's brain about Catherine Creek for elk, and I am heading back out that way in about a week.

Ron Borisch, Landowner Representative

On the home front, we completed a slide repair and stream restoration on the Little North Fork Santiam River. We had to place a bunch of riprap down at full bank height and get the blessing from ODFW for in-stream work. That meant many trips out there with a biologist. I thought it was very successful. Basically, the river was going straight, and then during high water, it eroded into the bank, took out part of our road, and was cutting into the bank really hard. Also, conducting road building on Forest Service and BLM lands, which is winding down now. We went to pull our fire truck out and get it ready when we found that somebody had helped themselves to the batteries and the tools. I got a hold of Linn County Forest Protection deputy—an A&H project—and they helped us out. They put

1 up cameras and filed a report with a case number. We also had a number of gates broken into that the
2 deputy responded to. Two gates had all the locks taken off, and a third was destroyed, we had to
3 replace that one. It's been good to have that Linn County deputy program, I really appreciate that
4 A&H project. We are in the process of planting right now, currently fall planting up above 4,000 feet,
5 hopefully completed before the snow sets in.

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8 John Dehler III, Landowner Representative
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10 It's been a pretty mild summer. I've been working with the SWCD which has put several hundred
11 thousand acres into juniper removal grants. It's going to be a big grant cycle. I also worked with the
12 Crooked River Watershed wrapping up our nitrate studies and starting to do some of our flow work
13 there. With OHA, we're still sponsoring the ladies' hunt camp and a youth hunt camp down in Fort
14 Rock. We're big on participating in those. We just finished up the OHA pheasant hunt, which went
15 really well. We had a new location out on the USFS grasslands this year, and I think that's going to
16 work out great. OHA also held its first summer festival for kids. It was a free-range event—no sign-
17 up, no fee. Kids could shoot BB guns and archery. We had a bunch of booths. It was a good time, and
18 I think we're going to try it again.

19
20 Personally, we are 4 of 8 elk tags so far on the ground. We put the fourth one down Sunday afternoon
21 before I headed over here. So, we still have three bull tags and the cow tag left to fill. We were
22 backcountry hunting for blacktails in the wilderness but got run out by the elk.

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25 Amy Patrick, Chair
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27 On the OHA front, it has been a lull between sessions, but we're already gearing up for the 2026 short
28 session. We'll be working again on the transient lodging tax concept that we almost got through the
29 finish line in the last session. We'll be bringing it back again in the short session to see if we can get
30 that handled. It will provide additional funding to ODFW for the State Wildlife Action Plan. There are
31 also components in it for the wolf depredation compensation fund, invasive species response, anti-
32 poaching capacity, wildlife crossings, and several other funding areas. We are going to be working
33 pretty hard to try to secure that in the next session. Other OHA efforts include our Women of OHA
34 program. It is in its second year, and we just completed the second annual event, which was a chukar
35 hunt. We had 24 women out near Prineville for that event on Sunday. On a sad note, one of the first
36 events we did in 2024 was a conservation project where we planted bitterbrush into a burn scar—
37 which then got burned up this year in the Flat Fire. So, we'll be looking to put together another
38 conservation project for next year's event to do what we can. Our Women of OHA program continues
39 to grow, as does our Adult On-Site Learn to Hunt program. Those are fun programs I continue to
40 work on and watch. Personally, I'm in the transition between garden harvest canning and winter
41 canning.

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2 **Meeting Minutes Review**

3 July 16, 2025

4 Morgan Olson moved to approve the meeting minutes with corrections and allowing for additional
5 edits for grammar and punctuation. The motion was seconded by Truman Stone. The motion was
6 approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Dehler, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.
7

8 The minutes files are located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link:
9 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/DRAFT_AH%20Meeting%20Minutes](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/DRAFT_AH%20Meeting%20Minutes%20July%202025.pdf)
10 [%20July%202025.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/DRAFT_AH%20Meeting%20Minutes%20July%202025.pdf)

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12 **Public Comments**

13 No public comments were received.
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15 **Access & Habitat A&H Coordinator Reports**

16 Travis Schultz reported on the following:
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18 Travis reviewed upcoming projects, obligations, and account balances. At the recent Commission
19 meeting, in addition to appointing John to the board, the Commission approved all three projects that
20 were recommended for funding at the July meeting. The NRCS VPA funding opportunity has been
21 delayed due to the federal shutdown, which has also impacted project timelines. Final reporting for
22 Oregon's VPA grant is underway. The department is developing federal grant policies and moving
23 toward implementing a digital grant management system.
24

25 A&H Budget Report

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

28 <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/A-H%20Budget%2012June2025.pdf>

29
30 <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Chart%201.pdf>

31
32 <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Table%201.pdf>

33 No motion required.
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35 **Meeting Dates and Location**

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37 The Board discussed 2026 meeting dates and locations.
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39 January 12, 2026	Salem, Oregon
40 April 6 & 7, 2026	The Dallas, Oregon
41 July 13, 2026	Salem, Oregon
42 October 19 & 20 2026	Lakeview, Oregon

43
44 Morgan Olson moved to approve the 2026 meeting dates and locations as shown above. The motion
45 was seconded by Truman Stone. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor:
46 Borisch, Dehler, Callero, Olson, Patrick, and Stone.
47

1 The meeting location files are located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the
2 following link:
3 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/2026%20Board%20Location%20Histor](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/2026%20Board%20Location%20History.pdf)
4 [y.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/2026%20Board%20Location%20History.pdf)
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7 **Auction Sign-up**

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9 There are eight auctions and the raffle drawing that need to have A&H representation. Each event
10 listed in the 2026 Auction Events Signup generally needs two representatives, as a reminder ODFW
11 staff will also be present at each event. The Big Game Raffle drawing will be conducted in house at
12 ODFW Headquarters following the controlled hunts seed number drawing. This will ensure the best
13 possible video and audio for our viewing audience. Please select those events you wish to attend; any
14 remaining open events will be covered by A&H Program staff. The raffle drawing is the only event
15 that requires both A&H Representatives.

16
17 Discussion followed from board on, no motion required.
18
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20 **Roseberg OHA Permit drawing**

21 Wildlife Division Administrator Bernadette Graham-Hudson drew the permits for the prizes. The
22 winners were drawn first and then after both prizes were awarded, the alternates were drawn.
23

24 **First prize:** Vortex Crossfire HD 10x42 Binoculars

25 Winner: Avery Geary
26 Alternate: Douge Powell
27

28 **Second Prize:** Garmin Etrex 22X GPS

29 Winner: Kurt Dittmann
30 Alternate: Corey Koepsel
31
32

33 No motion required.
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36 Break 9:35 am

37 Meeting Returned 9:46 am
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40 **Regional Council Appointment**

41 David Strppel Northwest Regional Coordinator
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43 David presented two applications for the Northwest Regional Council from Joe Moade and Travis
44 Bower, a current landowner representative.
45

46 After discussion Truman Stone moved to appoint Joe Moade and Travis Bower to the Northwest
47 Regional Council. The motion was seconded by Nic Callero. The motion was approved unanimously
48 with Six (6) in favor: Stone, Patrick, Dehler, Borisch, Olson, and Callero.

1 The regional council member applications are located in the Board packet materials and can be
2 viewed at the following link:

3
4 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/A-
5 H%202025%20Regional Council app%20For%20web Redacted.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/A-H%202025%20Regional%20Council%20app%20For%20web%20Redacted.pdf)
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7 8 **Project Review** 9

10 With Joe Justice, Regional Manager for Manulife, waiting in the meeting room, Chair Amy Patrick
11 moved the Manulife Access Area Northeast project earlier on the agenda.
12

13 Jon Paustiam Northeast Regional Coordinator 14 Manulife Access Area Northeast

15 This is a renewal of a project of the 2022 Manulife Forest Management Access Area NE
16 in the A&H program. Manulife’s land base has remained open to public access throughout the
17 past 50+ years. This project proposes to pay \$1.50 per acre for “Welcome to Hunt” access to a
18 minimum of 250,000 acres in eight Wildlife Management Unit’s (WMU). Grande Ronde and John
19 Day Watersheds / Catherine Creek, Mt. Emily, Sled Springs, Starkey, Sumpter, Ukiah, Walla Walla
20 & Wenaha Wildlife Management Units. Year-round public hunting access will be allowed January 1,
21 2026 – December 31, 2028, encompassing all hunting seasons (i.e. big game, predators, small game,
22 upland bird seasons & waterfowl). The access payment is an increase of \$62,500 per year, \$187,500
23 for the life of the project, over the previous contract amount.
24

25 Ron Borisch moved to approve the project as proposed. The motion was seconded by Morgan Olson.
26 The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Dehler, Callero, Olson, Patrick,
27 and Stone.
28

29 The Manulife Access Area Northeast project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and
30 can be viewed at the following link:

31 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Manulife%20AH%20Application%20
32 026.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Manulife%20AH%20Application%202026.pdf)
33

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35 Break 10:18 am

36 Meeting Return 10:33 am
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38 39 Jon Paustiam Northeast Regional Coordinator 40 Steve Cherry Heppner District Wildlife Biologist (Virtual) 41 Heppner Regulated Hunting Area 42

43 This is a continuation of a long-running project, the Heppner Regulated Hunt Area has existed in
44 various forms for 58 years. The Heppner RHA will provide year-round public hunting access on
45 13,429 acres of private land (2 landowners) by operating a cooperative hunting program. The
46 project proposed is to continue in that “Welcome to Hunt” program. The A&H request is to fund
47 the access payment of \$2.40 per acre for five years through the 2031 hunting season. The RHA
48 is an extremely popular, highly publicized, and very well used hunting area.

1 Nic Callero moved to approve the project as proposed. The motion was seconded by Ron Olson. The
2 motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Dehler, Callero, Olson, Patrick, and
3 Stone.

4
5 The Heppner Regulated Hunting Area project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and
6 can be viewed at the following link:

7 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/A-](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/A-H%20Heppner%20RHA%202026.pdf)
8 [H%20Heppner%20RHA%202026.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/A-H%20Heppner%20RHA%202026.pdf)

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11 Jon Paustiam Northeast Regional Coordinator
12 Steve Cherry Heppner District Wildlife Biologist (Virtual)
13 Heppner Regulated Hunting Area

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15 This project focuses on improving grassland structure and forb diversity, protecting riparian
16 vegetation, and enhancing habitat quality in CRP enrolled lands. The ODFW/SWCD cooperatively
17 funded Habitat Technician position conducts mid-management work in CRP enrolled acreage.
18 Habitat work is only provided for those landowners who allow public hunting access. This
19 incentivizes landowners to enroll their land in a public hunting access program. The project ensures
20 that acreage enrolled for habitat work will focus on benefits to wildlife.

21
22 Morgan Olson moved to approve the project as proposed. The motion was seconded by Truman
23 Stone. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Dehler, Callero, Olson,
24 Patrick, and Stone.

25
26 The Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat project proposal is located in the Board packet materials
27 and can be viewed at the following link:
28 https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Columbia_AH_Application_Packet.pdf

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31 Ryan Battleson Southwest Regional Coordinator
32 Mountcrest Hunt and Habitat

33 The project will allow access to both adult and youth hunters, a total of 14 hunters annually,
34 utilizing the department's Hunt By Reservation system. The project will also create early seral
35 vegetation through ecological thinning of overstocked conifers and decadent dead brush through
36 hand thinning, reduce conifer encroachment around aspen and montane meadows, pile burning,
37 and re-seeding of burn piles with native grass and forbes. Early seral stage timber stands created
38 will benefit browse for black tail deer, upland birds and small mammals, as well as native
39 pollinators.

40
41 Two changes from the application were noted. First, page 16 no mountain quail. Second, update the
42 dollar amount to \$22,040.00 to reflect the removal of the payment for 80 acers of inaccessible public
43 land for consistency across A&H projects.

44
45 Nic Callero moved to approve the project as amended. The motion was seconded by John Dehler.
46 The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Dehler, Callero, Olson, Patrick,
47 and Stone.

48

1 The Mountcrest Hunt and Habitat project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be
2 viewed at the following link:

3 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Mountcrest%20Parsons%20Application](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Mountcrest%20Parsons%20Application%202025-27_9-16-2025%20Final.pdf)
4 [%202025-27_9-16-2025%20Final.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2025/October/Mountcrest%20Parsons%20Application%202025-27_9-16-2025%20Final.pdf)

7 **Regional Coordinators Reports**

9 **Northwest Regional Coordinator Report**

10 David Stropfel

11 Since our last meeting, I attended the Lincoln County Forest Deputy Project coordination meeting,
12 where we met in person for the first time in about five years. Riley Stevenson is now the chair of the
13 project. We're working on a Good Neighbor Agreement that includes meadow restoration and gate
14 installations to support the Forest Service in their Cascade, McKenzie, and Sweet Home districts. I
15 also represented ODFW on the Integrated Pest Management Committee, focusing on aquatic invasive
16 species and CWD testing. We meet about three times a year. I continued work with the Prescribed
17 Fire Work Group to expand training and guidance for staff on burn plans and wildlife resilience. We
18 received a \$36,000 grant to purchase a new John Deere batwing mower for use across multiple
19 wildlife areas and private land restoration projects. The recent federal shutdown has made
20 collaboration difficult with our Fish and Wildlife Service partners. Lastly, the Open Fields Goose
21 Hunting properties in the Willamette Valley will likely not be renewed due to reduced goose damage
22 and minimal hunting activity.

25 **Deschutes-Klamath Regional Coordinator Report**

26 Andrew Walch

27 The big project in the Central Region is the Green Diamond Access Project. We are working with our
28 counterparts in the Klamath office as the local contact. We're scheduling our first meeting soon and
29 plan to have a new contract ready for the January meeting. Recent wildfires in Jefferson and
30 Deschutes counties have especially impacted the Metolius area. We've had three different fires: the
31 Grandview Fire, the Alder Springs Fire early this summer, and then the Flat Fire in August. I've
32 authorized small grant funds to help PG&E treat fire and dozer lines. The Flat Fire did burn two
33 properties that were part of the 300-acre grassland acquisition that the board helped fund last year.
34 We did get some A&H grant money to help get seed on the ground in the worst areas. Hunting season
35 is here, with early winter weather on the east side of the Cascades. This year was the first time we
36 authorized a mountain goat tag in the Cascades since reintroductions began in 2010. The person who
37 drew that tag checked in their goat last week—a beautiful 10½-year-old billy. It's going to be close to
38 a state record. Also, the state raffle goat tag was harvested in the Cascades.

41 **Malheur Region**

42 Landon Hardt

43 Start with A&H and habitat projects that I have been working on. The federal shutdown has limited
44 some projects for me, The Trout Creeks sagebrush reseeding work and delayed about \$100,000 in
45 G&A funding. My plan is to buy bulk seed from the forest service nursery and store them for later
46 use. Both Pine Creek and McKenzie access areas are up for renewal, I plan to bring those in January.
47 Steven Hammond approached me with interest to potentially put part of his ranch in the A&H
48 program, so I'm working through the details with him. Looking for a landowner representative for my

1 regional board after a previous candidate backed out. On the wildlife side, we've had abundant water
2 this year, creating great duck and goose hunting conditions, and early deer tag data shows success
3 rates similar to last year, around 30%. This is the first year for our district to have a mandatory CWD
4 check station at Riley Junction Store. Increase in turkey population and they have moving into town,
5 so I've been trapping and relocating them back to forested areas. Personal note I got to go out during
6 archery season and was able to get a deer.

9 **Southwest Regional Coordinator Report**

10 Ryan Battleson

11 I've been busy managing several wildlife conservation projects in the region. We've been working on
12 multiple fronts, including securing contracts in New River, handling insurance concerns for ranchers,
13 and preparing for hunting seasons. We're also working on road closures, entrances, and distributing
14 new maps for the east side—25,000 acres of Jackson. For the Territorial Youth Deer Hunt, all the
15 hunters have had their permits sent to them. Our habitat projects have been significant, with a major
16 seed giveaway distributing 5,160 pounds of seed to 175 landowners. The Western Rivers
17 Conservancy is exploring potential land acquisitions, including a 1,400-acre property near the
18 proposed Cascade National Monument site. We're working with various stakeholders, including the
19 Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, the Siletz Tribe, the Cow Creek Tribe, and Jackson County Parks.
20 Our team has also been repairing infrastructure, like the pheasant pen, and preparing for upcoming
21 hunting permits and conservation efforts.

24 **Northeast Regional Coordinator Report**

25 Jon Paustian

26 I just finished a comment letter on the Blue Mountain Forest Revision Project and have a meeting
27 Friday on another project. The big news is that the Bear Creek property, which was toured last
28 October, was able to secure a legacy conservation easement. We're also partnering with the Wallowa
29 Research Department of Agriculture and OWEB (Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board) on a pilot
30 project for noxious weed control following timber harvest activities. It looks like we might receive
31 \$2.6 million to implement the project.

34 The meeting was adjourned at 12:07 pm by Amy Patrick.
