

APPLICATION FOR GRANT FUNDS

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

I/We, [Bryan Padberg, Quinton Grogan and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Heppner Office](#), hereby make application for financial assistance under the terms and conditions of the Access and Habitat program in the amount of [\\$44,755](#). The total cost of the project is [\\$91,755](#).

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: [ODFW Heppner District office is submitting this project application on behalf of the Heppner RHA landowners.](#)

(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: 02/27/2026

Position: District Wildlife Biologist

ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Application for Grant Funds

1. Project Title: [Nichols Access Area](#)
2. Applicants: [Bryan Padberg, Quinton Grogan](#)
Phone: [Padberg: 253-307-2648](#) [Grogan: 541-571-3551](#)
Grantees: [Bryan Padberg & Quinton Grogan](#) (As will appear on contract/payments)
If private nonprofit, attach IRS letter of 501(c) (3) status
[Bryan Padberg: 10607 Crescent Valley Drive NW, Gig Harbor, WA 98332](#)
[Quinton Grogan: 66790 Hwy 207 Rt. 1, Lexington, OR 97839](#)
3. Location: ODFW Region [East Region](#)
Watershed District / Wildlife Management Unit: [John Day Watershed, Columbia Basin Wildlife Management Unit, HX-01 Deer Hunt Area & NB-02 Deer Hunt Area](#)
County: [Morrow County](#) Township/Range/Section:
[Bryan Padberg: T1S R25E Sec. 23 T1 R26E Sec. 17,18,20,29](#)
[Quinton Grogan: T1 R25E Sec.11, 14,15,19,22,23,24,25,26,27](#)
4. Type of Project:
Habitat Improvement Access Damage
5. Number of acres of habitat to be improved: [N/A](#)
6. Number of acres of access to be provided: [3,310 acres](#)
 Welcome to Hunt By Permission Other _____
7. Proposed Start Date: [02/01/2026](#)
8. Proposed End Date: [01 /31/2031](#)
9. Estimated Cost of Project: [\\$44,755](#)
10. Access and Habitat Fund Request: [\\$91,755](#)
11. Briefly explain what the project proposes to do:

[This project proposes to continue to pay Bryan Padberg & Quinton Grogan \\$2.10/acre for year-round "Welcome to Hunt" hunting access on 3,310 acres of private land in the Columbia Basin Wildlife Management Unit \(WMU\) for a period of 5 years \(2026-2030\) to hunt big game, upland game birds, small game and predators.](#)

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

The Nichols Access Area is a working wheat farm that currently encompasses 3,310 acres near the town of Lexington, OR. The area provides critical winter range for mule deer, along with valuable summer and transitional habitat. In addition to big game, the Nichols Access Area also supports a diverse range of upland bird species, including pheasant, quail, and mourning dove. Pronghorn antelope and a variety of nongame species also reside in the area. ODFW (the Department) collaborates closely with landowners and the local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to maintain and enhance wildlife habitat.

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.

These properties are working wheat farms north and east of Lexington, OR. Comprised of CRP, rangeland and row crop production, these lands provide habitat for mule deer, pheasant, quail, Hungarian partridge, chukar, small game and predators.

Access- Hunter access has been provided on one of the properties in accordance with the Upland Cooperative Access Program (UCAP) as "Welcome to hunt" property for the 2020-2025 hunting seasons. These properties are heavily utilized by the hunting public and support some of the highest deer hunter densities within the NB-02 and Helix 01 Deer Hunt Areas. Additionally, these lands receive some of the highest total upland bird hunter use in the Heppner Area. ODFW (the Department) does not pay access payments for wheat fields in the years that they are fallowed, as they do not provide wildlife habitat. Therefore, the Department only pays for half of the wheat acres per year.

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.

This is a new Access and Habitat project.

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.

Hunter access has been provided in accordance with the Upland Cooperative Access Program agreement under a "Welcome to Hunt" classification for the 2020-2025 hunting seasons. Hunter use is high as the lands fall within the NB-02 and Helix 01 Deer Hunt Areas, which are dominated by private lands. The access area will continue to provide valuable access for public hunters who would otherwise have a difficult time finding opportunities.

ODFW estimates that this access area will see the same amount of usage as the Social Ridge Access Area properties for deer and upland game bird hunting. Hunter use data will be tracked

with check-in kiosks and access area permits.

16. **Project Objective(s):**

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

Provide "Welcome to Hunt" hunting access for big game, upland game birds, small game and predators on 3,310 acres of private land in the Heppner area (NB-02 and Helix 01 Deer Hunt Area's).

(b) How will the project benefit wildlife habitat?

The project benefits wildlife habitat through the cooperative nature of this program by continuing to provide excellent opportunities for landowners and Department personnel to work cooperatively on habitat improvement projects. Ongoing projects include CRP field improvements, annual grass treatments and invasive weed control to improve habitat for mule deer and upland game birds.

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

<u>Big Game</u>	<u>Upland Bird</u>	<u>Migratory Game Bird</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chukar	<input type="checkbox"/> Ducks
<input type="checkbox"/> Elk	<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Quail	<input type="checkbox"/> Geese
<input type="checkbox"/> Bear	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Valley Quail	<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot
<input type="checkbox"/> Cougar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pheasants	<input type="checkbox"/> Wilsons Snipe
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pronghorn	<input type="checkbox"/> Forest Grouse	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove
<input type="checkbox"/> Bighorn Sheep	<input type="checkbox"/> Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/> Band Tailed Pigeon
<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Goat	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gray Partridge	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sage Grouse	

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

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

In recent years, public hunting access in the Heppner area has steadily declined, primarily due to the growth of fee-hunting operations on private lands. This project plays a critical role in maintaining a "Welcome to Hunt" program on private land that remains open to the public for hunting and other recreational uses- at no additional cost to the public. Access is offered on a "Welcome to Hunt" basis and is available year-round. Beyond preserving public access, the project strengthens relationships between landowners, the Department and the hunting community by supporting responsible use of private lands. By keeping these lands accessible to the public, the project provides significant value to local hunters and outdoor enthusiasts while

promoting long-term conservation and land stewardship.

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

<u>Big Game</u>	<u>Upland Bird</u>	<u>Migratory Game Bird</u>
X Deer	X Chukar	X Ducks
Elk	Mountain Quail	X Geese
Bear	X Valley Quail	<input type="checkbox"/> American Coot
Cougar	X Pheasants	<input type="checkbox"/> Wilsons Snipe
Pronghorn	Forest Grouse	X Mourning Dove
<input type="checkbox"/> Bighorn Sheep	Turkey	<input type="checkbox"/> Band Tailed Pigeon
<input type="checkbox"/> Mountain Goat	X Gray Partridge	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Sage Grouse	<u>Other:</u> Coyote

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

N/A

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

From Lexington, travel north on Hwy 207. Turn right onto Nichols Lane. In approximately ¼ mile, the properties will be on both sides of the road.

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

Access area activities will be conducted year-round, with posting and patrolling occurring mostly during the fall hunting seasons. However, as the area is open year-round, patrols, posting, and project administration occur throughout all months of the year. ODFW East Region Staff will monitor hunter use via the collection of access area permits.

19. **Permits:** Have all 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.

There are no permits necessary for this project.

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

a. Habitat Work Start Date: __/__/____
Habitat Work Completion Date: __/__/____

b. Access Agreement Start Date: 2/1/2026
Access Agreement End Date: 1/31/2031

c. List major project activities and schedule for each:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Time (month/year)</u>
1. All Nichols Access Area activities	Feb 1, 2026 – Jan. 31, 2031

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).

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1. ODFW Wildlife Management	<u>Provide administration, posting, enforcement, and overall project coordination.</u>	<u>\$ 31,500</u>
2. OSP Fish & Wildlife Division	<u>Provide trespass and miscellaneous Social Ridge enforcement Aug 1-Jan 31</u>	<u>\$ 15,000</u>
3. Landowners in kind	<u>Project administration (posting etc.)</u>	<u>\$ 500</u>
4. _____	_____	\$ _____
5. _____	_____	\$ _____
6. _____	_____	\$ _____
7. _____	_____	\$ _____

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?

This project is an access project with minimal long-term commitments. ODFW and the landowner will work cooperatively to address any maintenance needs.

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

Hunter use, satisfaction, and harvest information will be monitored annually by ODFW East Region Staff. Entry point kiosks and "voluntary" check-in / check-out stations will be monitored during the hunting and access seasons to collect and resupply A&H Access Area Daily Permits and area maps. ODFW and the Oregon State Police will include the property in the areas that are being patrolled during the hunting and access seasons. ODFW and the landowner will work cooperatively to post signs on the property and resolve any issues that may arise from the use of the property.

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

ODFW will provide administrative oversight of the Nichols Access Area, including posting signage and conducting regular patrols to ensure compliance with area-specific and statewide hunting and fishing regulations. The Oregon State Police (OSP) will support enforcement efforts by addressing hunting violations and other regulatory infractions.

The landowner will contribute by maintaining additional signage and ensuring that their agricultural operations can continue alongside public use of the property.

Project Budget (Provide as much detail as possible)

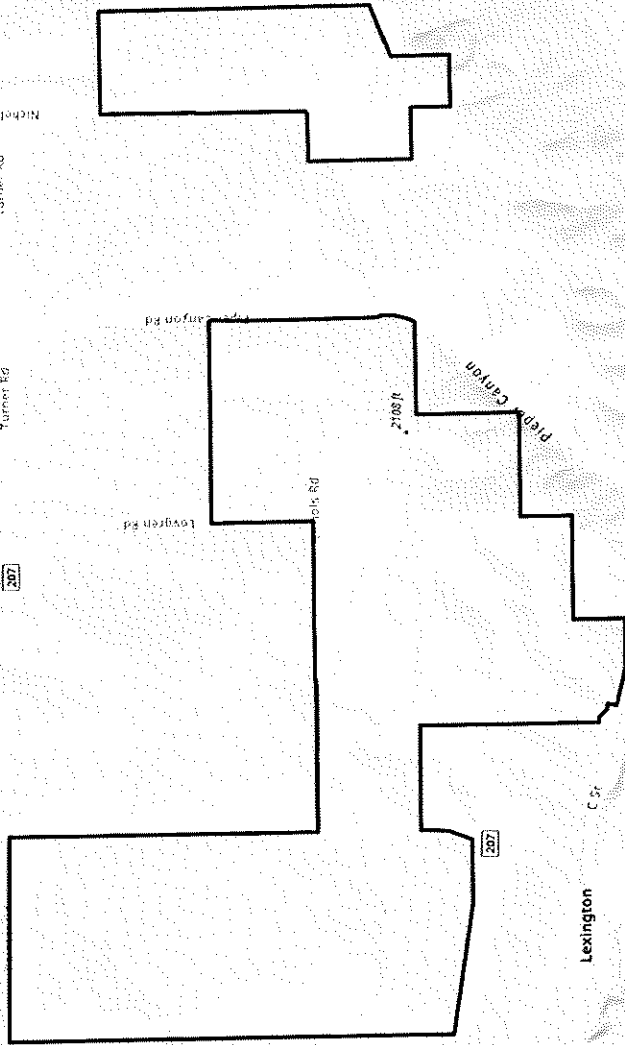
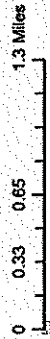
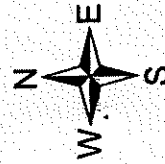
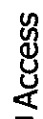
Totals automatically round to the nearest dollar. Please do not include cents.			
Expense Category	A&H Funds	Cost Share In-Kind/ Cash (Match) ¹	Total Project Cost
ADMINISTRATION: Personnel and benefits @ ___%			
ODFW, OSP, Private landowners (Heppner RHA cost estimates)		\$47,000	\$47,000
SUBTOTAL (1)		\$47,000	\$47,000
CONTRACT SERVICES (itemize)³			
Commercial Liability insurance reimbursement (Will only reimburse actual cost up to \$1,000 for both landowners)	\$10,000		
Access Payment			
Padberg: 810 @ \$2.10/ac for 5 years Grogan: 2,500 @ \$2.10/ac for 5 years	\$ 8,505 \$ 26,250	\$47,000	\$47,000
PROJECT TOTALS	\$44,755	\$47,000	\$91,755

Nichols Access Area Welcome to Hunt



Wilderness Society
Landowners & Hunters
Together for Wildlife
Habitat Restoration and Stewardship

**Nichols
Access
Area**



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FOC, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

Department of Fish & Wildlife

Heppner District Office

54173 Highway 74

Heppner, OR 97836

Voice (541)676-5230

Fax (541)676-9075

March 4, 2026

A&H Board
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE
Salem, OR 97302

Dear Board members:

This letter is in regard to the A&H grant applications for the Social Ridge, Bunker Hill, Nichols and Fourmile access areas that the Department and the landowners have submitted for your review. I would like to take this opportunity to endorse these projects in the hopes that the Board will approve these access areas. These proposals will continue to provide public access in the Columbia Basin Wildlife Management Unit, which is ninety-one percent private land. These properties receive a tremendous amount of use for big game and upland bird hunting as they are some of the few places for the public to hunt. As more private lands move to a fee hunting based option, these properties continue to be very important to the hunting public. I strongly urge the Board to fund these projects.

Please feel free to contact me at (541) 676-5230 if you have any questions or concerns on these proposals or on the comments in my letter.

Respectfully,

Steve Cherry
District Wildlife Biologist

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: Nichols Access Area

Project #: 2026

	Access Acres	Habitat Acres	Habitat Category: 	Total Score: 16
"Welcome" Private	3,310		(range: 1-6; see flow chart on page 4. Not applicable to Access-only projects)	Total Possible: 36
By-Permission Private				
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.

	Project Score	Access Fee Assessment		
		Private Land	Inacc. Public	Acc. Public
Food: <u>Managed rangelands with row crop production.</u>	1	1	n/a	n/a
Water: <u>Guzzlers, seeps, springs and stock ponds.</u>	1	1	n/a	n/a
Cover: <u>Managed rangelands with shrub component.</u>	1	1	n/a	n/a

2. Partnerships

Partners contributing financial or in-kind support:

1 or more Sports groups.....	0	1	n/a	n/a
3 or more Sports groups.....	0			
Educational programs / non-governmental organizations.....	0			
Other government agencies or ODFW programs (i.e. OWEB, R&E).....	1			

3. Matching Funds	Total matching funds (monetary and in-kind) > 1% matching funds..... > 25% matching funds..... > 50% matching funds.....	Project Score	Access Fee Assessment	
		1	1	n/a

4. Damage	Project would mitigate current damage to private property: Wildlife damage occurring on private property..... Landowner participates in ODFW damage control programs.....	0		
		0		

General Total	7	5	0	0
<i>General Possible</i>	12	5	5	5

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
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6. Private access	Private land access type: Project would provide access to private land..... Private land access would be on a "Welcome to Hunt" basis.....	1			
		1			

7. Public access	Access through private lands would: improve access to public land..... provide access to otherwise inaccessible public land.....	0			
		0			

8. Special Access	Project would provide special youth or disabled hunter access opportunities.....	0	0	n/a	n/a
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9. Species Permitted	Species groups include big game, waterfowl, upland birds, turkey, and predators/varmints. 2+ species groups available and permitted..... 4+ species groups available and permitted.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
		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
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11. Harvest Restriction	Landowner would not restrict sex or species permitted for lawful harvest.....	1	1	n/a	n/a
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12. Season Restriction	Landowner would not restrict access to any hunting season(s).....	1	1	n/a	n/a
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13. Dispersion	Property would provide access to animals pushed off of publicly accessible land during hunting season.....	1	1	n/a	
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Access Total	9	7	0	0
<i>Access Possible</i>	12	8	8	7
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

Access and Habitat Project Evaluation - Appendix

Under-represented Species

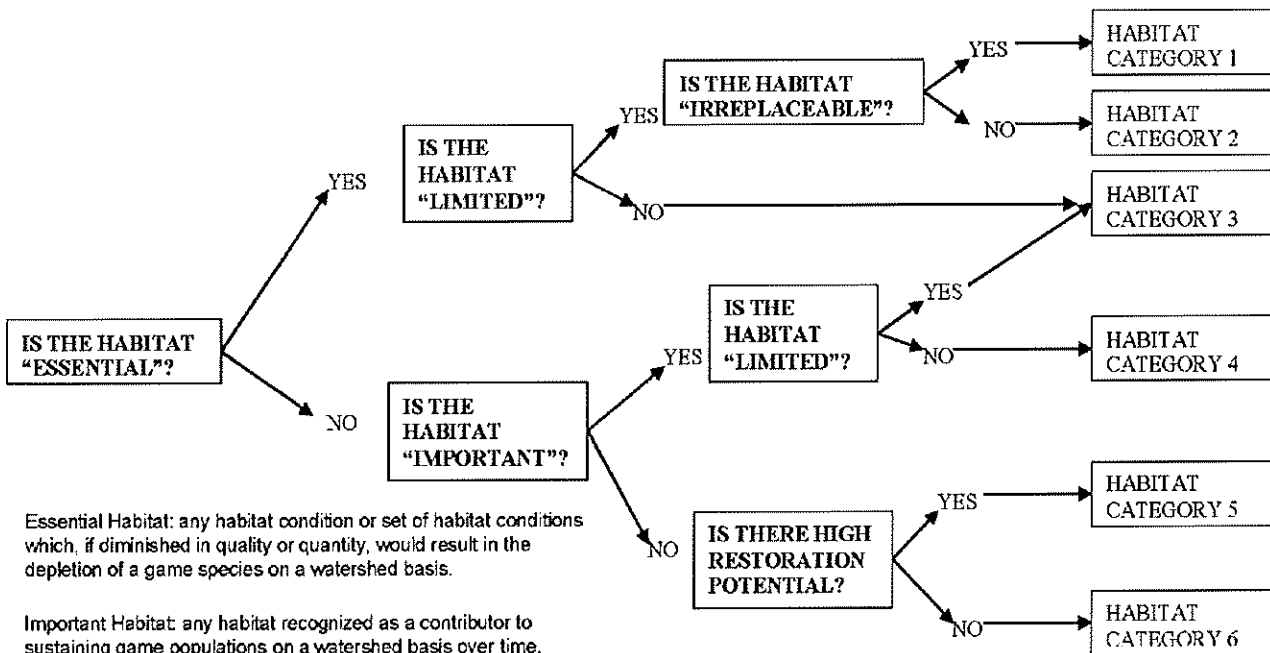
Definition: game species that exist in the watershed district in huntable numbers, but that the general public does not have reasonable hunting access to (via public land, current A&H properties, etc.)

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

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

A&H Habitat Category Flow Chart

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



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

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

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

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

Payment Tables

Table 1: Proposed Per-acre Access Payment

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

Table 2: Proposed Total Access Payment Calculator

Access Type	Score	\$/Acre	Acres	Payment
Private Welcome	12	\$3.00	3,310	\$9,930.00
Private Permission	12	\$1.80	0	\$0.00
Inaccessible Public	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
Accessible Public	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
Total Payment:				\$9,930.00



ACCESS & HABITAT PROGRAM

Regional Advisory Council Project

Proposal Review

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

Project Proposal Title: Nichols Access Area

Applicants(s): Brad Padberg, Quinton Grogan & ODFW Heppner District Office

Date of Council Review: March 11, 2026

Type of Project: Access X Habitat _____ Other _____

Motion: Russ Elms made a motion to approve the project as proposed. Chris Panike seconded the motion.

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

Disposition of Vote: Motion passed 5:0

Project Strengths:

- This property has historically been enrolled in some form of an ODFW access program (A&H, UCAP, Open Fields) and will continue to be available for public use as a year-round "Welcome to Hunt" property in the Columbia Basin Wildlife Management Unit.
- Project provides year-round access to 3,310 acres of private lands in a unit that is comprised of only 5% public lands.
- Access period encompasses all big game, small game, upland game bird, and predator hunting seasons.
- Extremely popular, highly publicized, and very well utilized hunting area.

Project Concerns:

- None