



Access and Habitat Board Meeting Minutes

April 7, 2026
The Dalles, 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>
Ron Borisch - Landowner rep John Dehler III - Landowner Rep Nic Callero- Hunter Rep Jeff McNerney - Landowner Rep Morgan Olson - Hunter Rep Truman Stone - Hunter Rep Absent:	Travis Schultz Michael Hochspeier Derek Broman - Virtual <u>Regional Coordinators</u> Ryan Battleson Jessica Wilkes David Stroppel Jon Paustian Landon Hardt - Virtual Sara Gregory Deschutes Watershed District Manager.	Dave Pinkerton - Local regional council member. Trevor Cassidy- Weyerhaeuser

Meeting

On Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at 8:00 a.m. Travis Schultz opened the meeting with a request for an ad hoc chair in the absence of a Chair. Morgan Olson made a motion to elect Nic Callero ad hoc Chair. Truman Stone seconded the nomination. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor: Borisch, Dehler, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

Nic Callero Acting Ad hoc Chair Officially opened the meeting at 8:03 am.

Meeting Minutes Review

January 12, 2026

Morgan Olson moved to approve the meeting minutes with corrections and allowing for additional edits for grammar and punctuation. The motion was seconded by John Dehler. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III, 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/2026/April/DRAFT%20Jan%202026%20Minutes%20for%20the%20web.pdf>

Board Member Reports

John Dehler III - Landowner Rep

In Central Oregon we are still working on a lot of Juniper cuts, keeping us busy. Most people are done calving and getting ready for them to turn out to pasture. Might be a little scary this year with lack of water.

Truman Stone, Hunter Representative

Went to the Turkey Federation banquet in Prineville. John and Travis were there with me. We sold an Elk Tag, everything went smooth. I took the opportunity, while I was in Prineville to go by and see John Breess. I had coffee with him and Lynn. Actually, he called while we're having dinner last night and I called back. He said to say hello to everyone. It was good to see John again.

Ron Borisch, Landowner Representative

Update on the Northfork Santiam road closed, it went into effect April 1. The Major construction will start May 1 once the in-work window for winter water expires. Access is off the gates Hill, which is a really steep, windy road. Which limits heavy hauling, mainly just for cars and pickups. Attended the Clackamas Marion forest protection association, where we approve the drone for fire detection, and the first one in the Northwest There were several fires that came up, primarily in the Cascades where they couldn't get eyeballs on it or feet on the ground due to steep terrain. This will help greatly for identifying where the fire is. Typically, we have a lot of lightning strikes, which are in remote areas, and then they tend to grow into big, major fires. Hopefully that'll help. ODF(Oregon Department of Forestry) is going to respond to staff with it. The Drone itself was around \$20,000.00. Not as big as the drones we saw yesterday its American made. They will have to go through the pilot class and get the licensing, probably be 10 or more people trained up with their license. We planted 400,000 seedlings this year. We're done with our planting for the year. We have been doing a lot of road maintenance. Winter has just been horrible for roads up the canyon, so we got a lot of work to do.

Nic Callero, Hunter Representative

The last couple of months have been spent, workwise, focusing on a few specific state legislatures, mainly Utah and Idaho this year. We've been working on providing different bills that offer funding for wildlife connectivity efforts in Utah. We got that bill passed, which is really exciting. So, there's now an annual appropriation for overpasses and underpasses and connectivity work in that state, which didn't previously exist, as well as an account that we set up that allows residents to contribute as well through opt-in registration. A similar fund is percolating in other states to get it across the line moving forward. And then we're doing a lot of work at the federal level too with Surface Transportation bill which is being written right now in the House and Senate. There's a lot of money invested there for wildlife connectivity efforts. A program called the Aquatic Organization Passage Program, which the money is for culvert replacement here in the Pacific Northwest. There's another program called the Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program, which is federal funds that states are leveraging right now along with state funding for overpasses and underpasses. We are looking to redo these programs, that's a long way down the road at the federal level these days. Those are a few things that I've been spending my time on. Thinking about the upcoming fishing and hunting season that are coming up and all the assume tags I probably won't draw.

1 Morgan Olson, Hunter Representative

2 Updates on the Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association (WMHCTA). So, at our last
3 meeting, I think I talked a little bit about a fundraiser that we were working on. The Wallowa
4 Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association (WMHCTA), we found a philanthropist that was willing
5 to match three to one on the funds. Anyway, that ended up resulting in a \$700,000 accumulation of
6 dollars for the organization, which is pretty awesome. Big contributors there were OHA and BHA for
7 trail maintenance, so that was really cool. Basically, that will cover all of our fixed costs going
8 forward and executive director's cost for grants filing and things of that nature. So we have some
9 really cool advancements there. With the light snow here this year, we've already started doing
10 several projects there in northeast Oregon. We've already cleared over 200 trees so far this year.
11 Several projects are already underway as far as jumping in and getting trails cleared. The Union and
12 Wallowa County just had our chapter banquet this last Saturday at a new location. It turned out to be
13 great weather and a pretty successful event. As far as the Grand Ronde Model Watershed, we're just
14 in the project review phase locally. With a light winter this year, and the lack of snowpack, there
15 haven't been nearly as many elk in the valley, so I think that's been a relief for a lot of the grassy
16 farmers in the Grande Ronde Valley. A lot of the animals are hanging up on the hill, which has been
17 good for farmers and ranchers, so that's good news there. However, we'll see how the spring
18 progresses. Hopefully we will continue to get some rains and keep thing from burring up this
19 summer.

20
21 Jeff McNerney, Landowner Representative

22
23 Common theme, lack of snow is a concern come July and August for the mid-Columbia area. I
24 apologize that I wasn't on the tour yesterday; I had eye surgery last week.

25
26 Looking at the crops, you guys can see everything's blooming around here. The Dalles and Hood
27 river right now, are probably 10 days ahead normal, so it's an early bloom. We are going to have a
28 potentially for a lot of frost events. Which means spending a lot of money on propane. Which makes
29 us all nervous as farmers. Diesel has gone up recently, our fertilizer costs too. Fortunately, I bought
30 most of my fertilizer six weeks ago, but I had to buy some more here within the last week, it gone up
31 \$200 a ton. You see the diesels prices is above six bucks. It's hard to run 20 tractors and pay \$6.50 a
32 gallon of diesel. I just close my eyes and hope you guys will eat more pairs and cherries.

33
34 We're really concerned, about the potential silt in our irrigation systems this July and August, will
35 deal with that when it comes. In Hood River Valley, we're pretty confident that we'll still have
36 enough snowcap on the mountain to take care of the commercial farms. Homeowners are going to
37 have dry lawns for sure. The Dalles district pull out of the Columbia, generally not too concerned as
38 well. We are seeing a lot of turkeys running around on the farm. Hood River and Wasco counties
39 have a lot of turkeys. It seems like they're always increasing, so that should turn out pretty good.

40
41 Seeing a lots of resident elk herds still. You know, the lack of snow did help us initially, but it's
42 surprising how many resident elk we actually have. Got a call from one of my brothers and we had
43 about 150 head of elk inside a 20-acre enclosure in blueberries. We left the gate open. They just park
44 there and they just literally live around these farms. I saw a elk heard yesterday morning coming
45 home. They've habituated to live down around the farms is kind of a pain for most of us.

46
47 A couple of hunters did voice some concerns about upcoming elk application with Manulife closing
48 access, except fee hunting. Whether in Sled Springs or Chesnimnus, I'm not sure where they all are

1 at. There's some concern that it's going to maybe push hunters to some of the other units. So
2 repercussions of what happens, we'll see what happens. Everybody used to draw an elk tag with two
3 points may not happen in some units.

4
5 I had some buddies hunting some bobcats with dogs. One of his dogs got chewed up significantly by
6 a wolf in the lower Mount Hood National Forest, close to Hood River County Forest. He saw the
7 wolf right across the road from him, got the dog back. The dog lived. People are just seeing more
8 signs of wolves in Mount Hood National Forest and the Hood River County Forest. I actually saw
9 some wolf tracks about three weeks ago.

10
11 Lastly, I'm pretty good friends with some of the Hood River County commissioners, and they talked
12 to me about getting a lot of pressure coming from recreationists. Hood River County has become a
13 playground for Multnomah County, and the amount of tourists and the amount of people coming in
14 with mountain bikes. It used to be just windsurfers on the river, but now they want to hit the forest as
15 well. So mountain bikers and ATVs they're actually lobbying the county commissioners to put in
16 more bike trails, more ATV trails in the county forest. I'm not sure about Green Diamond area, I don't
17 think Green Diamond would let them in. So, those of us that try to protect access for hunters, there's a
18 lot of pressure from the majority of people who don't. They want to ride their bikes, hike and
19 recreate. So that's an issue that, luckily several of our county commissioners are trying to fight.

20 21 **Public Comments**

22 No one on the call at this time.

23 24 **Access & Habitat A&H Coordinator Reports**

25 Travis Schultz reported on the following:

26 Travis reviewed upcoming projects, obligations, and account balances. Commission approved all
27 projects that were recommended for funding at the January meeting. The NRCS VPA funds have
28 been approved waiting for a funding application this fall. Funding available late 2027 and 4.2 million
29 for a project 25% on habitat 10 % personnel. Move Willamette to Federal funds more to advertising
30 and timber. Travis reviewed the Open Fields projects with the board and related costs. Travis also
31 outlined the Large Timber projects and inflation concerns for price per acre.

32 33 **Budget:**

34 A&H Budget Report

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

37 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/April%20Budget%20for%20the%20web.p](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/April%20Budget%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
38 [df](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/April%20Budget%20for%20the%20web.pdf)

39
40 Discussion followed from board on budget process and grant funding. No motion required.

41 42 **Coordinator Reports**

43 Travis Schultz, A&H State Coordinator

44 45 Evaluation Form

46 In 2008, the A&H Board developed and approved the evaluation form currently used to assess project
47 proposals. Aside from minor adjustments made in 2009, the form has remained unchanged since its
48 original adoption.

1 This agenda item provides the Board with an overview of the evaluation form's history and its
2 traditional use in reviewing project proposals. Staff will outline the issues identified during recent
3 application cycles, present a draft set of improvements to address those issues, and highlight several
4 key questions where Board direction is needed. The purpose of this topic is to inform the Board,
5 ensure clarity on the proposed updates, and solicit feedback before finalizing any changes.

6 Discussion followed from board on Evaluation Form. No motion required.
7
8

9 Payment Increase

10 The Department's Economics Team evaluated inflation since the Board approved payment rates in
11 2008 and identified two update options. Both options reflect substantial inflation-driven adjustments
12 to current payment rates.

13 Over several meetings in 2008, the A&H Board approved the payment table currently used to
14 evaluate landowner payments. Although an update to the program's payment structure has been
15 needed for several years, the Board postponed this work due to uncertainty surrounding federal
16 funding. With the program's financial situation now stable, the Board is able to proceed with
17 updating the payment structure.

18 The Payment increase is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following
19 link:

20 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Payment%20and%20Eval%20Form%20fo](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Payment%20and%20Eval%20Form%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
21 [r%20the%20web.pdf](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Payment%20and%20Eval%20Form%20for%20the%20web.pdf)

22 Discussion followed from board on Evaluation Form. No motion required.
23

24 Break 10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
25

26 Grant Management Software Purchase

27 AmpliFund is a cloud-based grant software solution with a secure applicant portal, customizable
28 program workflows, integrated communications, modern data and document management tools,
29 scalable performance, flexible reporting, and strong security features including encryption, and audit
30 logging. The system will also support comprehensive user management to ensure efficient,
31 accountable grant administration. The cost for the subscription will be \$16,304.35 per year,
32 \$32,608.70 for the first two years. Implementation costs totaling \$19,339.03 for a total cost of
33 \$51,947.73.

34 Over two years ago the department initiated an effort to replace outdated, manual grant processes
35 with a modern, cloud-based Grants Management System (GMS). The department reviewed several
36 options from several companies and other agencies and ultimately selected AmpliFund as our grant
37 management system (GMS). This new system will streamline the entire grant process—from
38 announcing funding opportunities to reviewing applications, issuing awards, tracking payments,
39 monitoring compliance, and reporting results. System implementation will begin with three
40 department grant programs, A&H, Oregon Recreation and Conservation Fund, Private Forest Accord
41 and is expected to take three to four months.

42 Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the Grant Management Software Purchase project as
43 proposed. Jeff McNerney seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of
44 Borisch, Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

45 46 2027 Recommended Raffle and Auction Hunts

Travis presented the Proposed 2027 Auction tags: No changes from last year. Also, no changes for Raffle from last year.

Auction Hunts:

- 1 Governor's Statewide Combo Hunt, 1 deer and 1 elk.
- 4 A&H Statewide Deer Hunts
- 4 A&H Statewide Elk Hunts

Raffle Hunts:

- Governor's Statewide Combo Hunt, 1 deer and 1 elk
- Statewide Deer Hunt
- Southeast Oregon Deer Hunt
- Central Oregon Deer Hunt
- Northeast Oregon Deer Hunt
- Statewide Elk Hunt
- Northeast Oregon Elk Hunt
- Central/Southeast Elk Hunt
- Western Oregon Elk Hunt

The season for all hunts runs from August 1 to November 30, 2026.

There are no changes from last year's auction and raffle hunts.

The proposed raffle and auction hunt 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/2026/April/2027%20Rec%20Auction%20and%20Raffle%20Tags.pdf>

Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the 2027 Recommended Raffle and Auction Hunts project as proposed. Ron Borisch seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor Borisch, Breese, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

Southwest Regional Council applications

<https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Regional%20Advisory%20Council%20web.pdf>

Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the Southwest Regional Council applications proposed. Seconded Truman Stone. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

Project Review:

Due to time and accommodation of our guests from Weyerhaeuser, Trevor Cassidy the project has been moved up in the agenda.

Weyerhaeuser Access Area

David Stoppel Northwest Regional Council

Trevor Cassidy- Weyerhaeuser

This former Open Fields project will provide public access to approximately 171,372 acres of Weyerhaeuser managed forests for a period of three years. Access would be a combination of motorized use and non-motorized use. Access would be allowed during designated fire season as

declared by the Oregon Department of Forestry, motorized use will be open during Industrial Fire Precaution Level (IFPL) 1 and 2, walk in access in IFPL 1-3 and all public access would be closed for IFPL4. The Mill Creek and the S-Line gates will be closed during the entire duration of fire season. The access project will also provide increased access to BLM, USFS and State Lands. Other recreational activities besides quality hunting include fishing, sightseeing, hiking, biking, foraging for berries and mushrooms, and swimming.

Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the Weyerhaeuser Access Area project as proposed. Seconded John Dehler III. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

The project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Weyerhaeuser%20for%20the%20web.pdf>

Break for lunch 11:50 a.m.

Bunker Hill

Jon Paustian Northeast Regional Council

Tracy Scruggs Heppner Field Office

This is also a former Open Fields project that provides “By-Permission” hunting access to 985 acres for upland game bird hunting in a unit that is almost exclusively private. The Brown family has a long history of habitat improvement on the property, including forage and shrub plantings and guzzler installations dating back to the late 1950s, along with a longstanding tradition of allowing controlled hunting access. The property provides essential seasonal habitat for mule deer, pronghorn, upland game birds, and various nongame species.

Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the Bunker Hill project as proposed. Ron Borisch seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

The project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Bunker%20Hill%20for%20the%20web.pdf>

Four Mile Access Area

Jon Paustian Northeast Regional Council

Tracy Scruggs Heppner Field Office

The Four Mile Access Area, originally enrolled in the Columbia Basin Open Fields project in 2012. The project provides 1,506-acres of Welcome to Hunt access for five years in a unit that is almost exclusively private. The access areas’ proximity to Carty Reservoir next to the Boardman powerplant makes it an awesome goose hunting area. The property has several irrigated circles and provides access for geese, upland game birds, deer, and pronghorn, in addition to wildlife viewing.

1 Morgon Olson made a motion to approve the Four Mile Access Area project as proposed.
2 Seconded Ron Borisch. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch,
3 Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

4
5 The project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link:
6 <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Four%20Mile%20for%20the%20web.pdf>
7

8 **Nichols Access Area**

9 Jon Paustian Northeast Regional Council

10 Tracy Scruggs Heppner Field Office
11

12 A new a A&H project, Nichols Access Area is a year-round “Welcome to Hunt” property, providing
13 public access on 3,310 acres for five years in a unit that is almost exclusively private. The project
14 habitat is made up mostly of CRP enrolled lands and provides access for upland game birds, deer,
15 coyotes, and pronghorn. The access area provides access to pheasant making it very popular with
16 hunters.

17
18 Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the Nichols Access Area project as proposed.
19 Seconded John Dehler III. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch,
20 Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

21
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/2026/April/Nichols%20for%20the%20web.pdf>
25

26 **Social Ridge**

27 Jon Paustian Northeast Regional Council

28 Tracy Scruggs Heppner Field Office
29

30 Social Ridge Access Area provides 6,219 acres of “Welcome to Hunt” access on private land for five
31 years in a unit that is almost exclusively private. It is a former Open Fields funded project that
32 provides opportunities for big game, upland birds, small game, and predators. It experiences high
33 hunter use for deer and upland birds each year. Upland game bird hunters travel to the area from all
34 over Oregon. The property is active dryland wheat farm, the project is not paying for fallowed
35 ground.

36
37 Morgan Olson made a motion to approve the Social Ridge project as proposed. Jeff McNerney
38 seconded. The motion was approved unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III,
39 Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

40
41 The project proposal is located in the Board packet materials and can be viewed at the following link:
42 [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Social%20Ridge%20for%20the%20web.p](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Social%20Ridge%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
43 [df](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/AH/minutes/2026/April/Social%20Ridge%20for%20the%20web.pdf)
44

45 **2023-05 Carman Ranch Access and Habitat**

46 Jon Paustian Northeast Regional Council
47

48 Amendment to the original project.

1 To use the per allocated funds for seeds to cattle virtual collars and elector fencing.

2
3 Morgon Olson Made the motion to approve the request for Carmen Ranch to reallocate seed funds
4 toward Virtual Collars and elector fencing. Seconded Ron Borisch. The motion was approved
5 unanimously with six (6) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III, Callero, McNerney, Olson and Stone.

6 7 **Regional Coordinators Reports**

8 9 **Southwest Regional Coordinator Report**

10 Ryan Battleson

11
12 Reported on southwest projects, noting that Manulife isn't planning any access policy changes. While
13 Lone Rock and Silver previously preferred more enforcement over the OSP grant model, we're
14 giving it more time before making any decisions. I shared that three OHA chapters, statewide,
15 Umpqua, and Emerald City chapters are supporting the territorial youth hunt. Giutina continues to
16 manage access on a small Sierra Pacific and donated another LOP deer tag. New River access, and
17 that Rogue Reserve is on board with our first hunt-by-reservation in two weeks plus a youth hunt this
18 coming weekend. I explained we're still working through insurance at Mountcrest. I've offered to
19 connect them with other insurance carriers. I highlighted recent habitat work on the Commission field
20 tour and Blacktail Foundation proposal where I plan to provide habitat work if match funded. I also
21 described our planned 10–15 acre prescribed fire at the OSU College of Forestry demonstration forest
22 near Gold Hill, in collaboration with partners and with an eye toward getting more forestry
23 contractors certified so we can expand prescribed fire work, along with an upcoming 30-acre burn
24 site and support for a conservation easement project that's still moving forward.

25 26 27 **Deschutes-Klamath Regional Coordinator Report**

28 Jessica Wilkes

29
30 Thank you everyone for coming on the tour yesterday. I enjoyed it, especially getting to hear from
31 Mike about the new technologies and seeing how those projects turned out, as well as comparing
32 them with the project we visited with Chase. So if you guys didn't get the chance to meet one of our
33 regional council members from the local area. He was able to come along and get a better feel for the
34 program and meet you guys. Sarah, my boss's boss was also able to attend. For district updates from
35 the Bend District, we conducted our own counts in February and had record Metolius in the upper
36 districts, and that we're currently doing sage-grouse ground surveys, where numbers look similar to
37 last year but conditions are very dry. Which raises concerns about survival. I explained that I'm
38 working to grow the program in the region by scheduling meetings with district biologists in the Mid-
39 Columbia, like Andrew and Trent, to discuss potential access projects and follow up on the project
40 we saw with a landowner, and I'm also trying to get meetings with our NRCS liaisons, who have
41 more face time with private landowners, to gain more traction there. I mentioned that I've been
42 talking with OHA about ways to raise local awareness of the Access to Habitat program, recruit more
43 landowners, and make sure hunters know this program exists. I also described my involvement with
44 wildlife crossings in Central Oregon, where in the Bend District we currently have the only existing
45 wildlife undercrossing in the state. We work with OSU–Cascades to monitor wildlife use and track
46 success, coordinate with ODOT on maintaining the exclusion fencing, and continue to fundraise for
47 the Bend to Suttle Lake initiative, which would add new overcrossings in the Black Butte area.
48 Finally, I talked about upcoming habitat work, including research projects this summer looking at elk

1 calving habitat on the Deschutes National Forest by measuring vegetation in calving areas and
2 comparing it to managed elk habitat areas, and examining how fuels management and recreation
3 disturbance interact by using trail cameras and acoustic monitoring devices to monitor wildlife
4 presence and absence, and I closed by thanking everyone again and saying I'm looking forward to the
5 October tour in the Plymouth area.

6 7 **Northwest Regional Coordinator Report**

8 David Stroppel
9

10 I'm getting geared up for field season right now. Our crews are heading out this spring to work on
11 wildlife area field projects, and I just got my list of private land projects with the Fish and Wildlife
12 Service. Every year we team up with them and pool about 15 people to work across roughly 2,500
13 acres in the Willamette Valley. It's a great partnership where we can run each other's equipment and
14 really get good restoration work done. I'm also bringing on a college intern for 10 weeks this summer
15 so they can get some solid habitat experience. I just lost Dylan Edwards as A and H Coordinator on
16 April 1; he's now the hunt-by-reservation coordinator through the end of the next fiscal year, but I've
17 got enough folks lined up to keep things moving and our equipment working. Right now, I'm mainly
18 focused on getting crews hired, trained, and out in the field. I've got my PR grant report due Friday,
19 plus planning documents for next fiscal year and a quick turnaround on reporting everything we did
20 over the past year. One last big thing on my plate is the new John Deere batwing mower we were able
21 to get to replace one of our older Bush hogs. It should arrive next month through the state contract,
22 and we're really happy about that after 15 hard-working years on the old one. I really appreciate the
23 district's support for the warehouse and this project.

24 25 **Northeast Regional Coordinator Report**

26 Jon Paustian
27

28 I talk about the absolute flood of solar project requests coming in around this big private transmission
29 line that's under construction, with companies sending KMZ files and expecting us to tell them what
30 the impacts are for free, even though their polygons overlap 100% with core sage-grouse and other
31 key habitats and burn up a ton of our staff time. Some walk away after we do the work, others come
32 back asking what it will cost them. The line runs from Hanway, Idaho to Boardman, Oregon, right
33 through core habitat, along the interstate, over the Blues, and through important winter range. With
34 several private landowners still fighting it. I have two upcoming volunteer events, an aspen project on
35 the Elkhorn Wildlife Area and our annual event with Steel Corporation. Steel brings people, saws,
36 tools, and PPE and we just feed them, with past turnout ranging from about forty to nearly a hundred
37 people, plus help from Morgan's group and pre-assembly work from the Hilgard Youth Authority so
38 we can focus on placement and cleanup. It is a long but productive day. I wrap up by saying the Blue
39 Mountain Forest Plan revision is still hot and heavy, but I don't have much faith in the next draft
40 because there's almost no mention of elk, zero mention of elk security or travel management, and it's
41 already badly overdue, so I expect a couple of groups will file suit as soon as it comes out and the
42 whole thing will drag on even longer.

43 44 **Malheur Region**

45 Landon Hardt
46

47 I've been working on the Bents access area, it is being transferred from Linda Benz to her daughter
48 Erica, who fortunately is enthusiastic about staying enrolled, so we're just grinding through the

1 paperwork. Paul Davis is currently having conversation with ODFW and concerns about cougar and
2 deer in the Steens. He is working with HQ director's office now. We've also got solar projects that
3 we're working through with the companies because of sage-grouse and other impacts. On the habitat
4 side, I have lined up an intern to help compare protein content and nutrition from last year's burned
5 forage with a 2016 burn to see if we can justify more burning for mule deer habitat. I've been doing
6 sage-grouse lek counts for weeks now and it looks like there's a small decline that matches slightly
7 below-average chick production. There are still birds, but it's bone dry this year with almost no
8 snowmelt, and I'm pretty concerned some winter range may burn if we don't get rain. Our bighorn
9 work continues, we collared 23 sheep in the Pueblos. Lost two to cougars, the rest look good and a
10 couple in the Steens near a domestic allotment, and we're planning to catch and move those Steens
11 animals this winter, likely sending them to British Columbia to avoid pneumonia issues. On a lighter
12 note, next week is the Harney County migratory bird festival where I'll be teaching a tracking and
13 sign class at Idlewild Park, and I'm also helping with The Wildlife Society's field skills workshop for
14 college students, covering things like necropsy and basic field skills, which will be a nice change of
15 pace.

16 **Board Final Comments**

17 Truman moves that the board, endorse Nic's application for chair position and instruct Travis to
18 convey that endorsement to the Commission.

19 Morgan Olson made a motion to approve Nic endorsement from the board. Ron Borisch seconded.
20 The motion was approved unanimously with Five (5) in favor of Borisch, Dehler III, McNerney,
21 Olson and Stone.
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28 The meeting was adjourned at 1:11. pm by _____.
