

Summer 2005

Oregon's Access & Habitat Board News



The Oregon Legislature established the Access and Habitat Program in 1993 using a \$2 surcharge on hunting licenses. The A&H Board, composed of members of the public, identifies and recommends funding for projects that improve wildlife habitat and facilitate public hunting access on private lands.

Slash Busters

When deer winter range forage becomes old, decadent and loses its nutritional benefits, what's a wildlife biologist to do? How about calling 'slashbusters?' No, there is nothing paranormal about it. Rather, a slashbuster is a brush cutting head mounted on an excavator to create an especially efficient way to rejuvenate decadent big game forage while reducing forest fire danger.

Members of the Access and Habitat Program Board watched a slashbuster in action on private forest lands owned by Superior Lumber during the Board's April business meeting in Medford.

In southwest Oregon, wedgeleaf ceanothus, also known as deer brush, is among the best forage species for big game. But over time, the ceanothus becomes overgrown and decadent, causing it to lose much of its food value.

"Wedgeleaf ceanothus is a fire-dependent species," explained Vince Oredson, ODFW biologist and A&H Program coordinator for the Southwest Region. "What we really need is a frequent fire regime of 10 to 15 years to regenerate the brush." Because of the risk of damage to resources and human structures it is often not practical to allow wildfires to burn naturally.

The slashbuster offers an effective alternative for natural processes. The 'slashbuster' head chops the decadent ceanothus right down to the ground and the operators are skilled enough to work around small trees that eventually will become valuable for both timber and wildlife.

Once the decadent ceanothus is chopped, it will regrow from seeds. Oredson reports that they get good regrowth from the seeds once the fall rains arrive.

Oredson has used the slashbuster on an A&H project on lands owned by Boise Cascade located within the Jackson Access and Cooperative Travel Management Area — a 51,000-acre area of private and public timberlands kept open for public hunting through a cooperative management arrangement among the landowners, ODFW and the Oregon State Police, and funded in part by the A&H Program. Oredson is planning to use the slashbusters for additional A&H projects in the future.

Although the current focus is on using slashbusters to rehabilitate winter deer range, Oredson plans eventually to use it to improve summer range as well. "Our deer numbers have been low," he said. "So I want to provide the deer with as much habitat as I can." He also noted that the Bureau of Land Management has been using slashbusters to reduce fire danger on lands it manages, which simultaneously improves deer habitat.

"The benefit you get from the slash buster is reducing the decadent ceanothus and the fire danger," Oredson said. That makes it a welcome addition to the wildlife manager's toolbox.



The slash buster is an efficient way to remove decadent vegetation, clearing the way for the regrowth of wildlife forage plants. The top photo shows a slashbuster at work in a private forest in southwest Oregon. In the bottom photo, ODFW biologist Mark Vargas (right) and A&H Program Board member Tic Moore take a closer look at a slashbuster's business end. The middle photo shows the results. Photos by Jim Yuskavitch

2005 A&H Big Game Raffle and Auction Hunts Earn Record Level Dollars

The nearly \$300,000 raised by the A&H Program's 2005 Deer and Elk Auction and Raffle Hunts will be put to good use on projects to provide public hunting opportunities on private lands and improving wildlife habitat.

Winning raffle tickets were drawn at the Oregon Hunters Association convention in Seaside on June 4. The last of the A&H Program auction tags was auctioned at the event as well. The rest of the auction tags were offered at the banquets of various hunter conservation organizations earlier this year.



Funds raised by A&H Program auction and raffle hunts are used for projects that increase hunter access to private lands and improve wildlife habitat. Photo by Jim Yuskavitch

Deer and elk raffle hunt winners will be able to hunt during an extended season that runs from Sept. 1 to Nov. 30, 2005 across multiple management units.

This year's auction hunt program garnered \$196,200 while the raffle hunt program generated \$104,770.



The Access and Habitat Board held its April meeting in Medford, which included visits to view a number of local wildlife habitat and hunter access project sites. In the above photo, Board members discuss wildlife management issues and potential future A&H projects with staff from the Oregon State Police and Bureau of Land Management. Photo by Jim Yuskavitch

This year's raffle hunt winners are:

Statewide Deer Hunt

Casey Brooks
LaCenter, WA

Governors' Combination Deer and Elk Hunt

Travis Ballard
Sutherlin, OR

Northeast Oregon Deer Hunt

Rick Hendrickson
Pendleton, OR

Southeast Oregon Deer Hunt

Shane Spannous
Belgrade, MT

Central Oregon Deer Hunt

Alfredo Julian
Vancouver, WA

Northeast Oregon Elk Hunt

Josh Rinard
Sandy, OR

High Desert Elk Hunt

Ron Stevens
Astoria, OR

Western Oregon Elk Hunt

Dennis McGanty
McMinnville, OR

Statewide Elk Hunt

Brian McDowell
Gates, OR

Calendar of Events

July 26

A&H Board Meeting,
Ontario, 503-947-6087

September 8-9*

Oregon Fish and Wildlife
Commission Meeting, Tillamook
503-947-6044

September 23

A&H Grant Application Deadline
503-947-6087

October 25

A&H Board Meeting,
Teleconference, 503-947-6087

December 2*

Oregon Fish and Wildlife
Commission Meeting, Salem
503-947-6044

* Listed Commission meetings are those where A&H Project applications will be reviewed for final approval.

To receive a free subscription to *Oregon's Access and Habitat Board News* just fill out this form and mail it to: Access and Habitat Program, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 3406 Cherry Avenue, N.E., Salem, OR 97303

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5 New A&H Program Grants Approved

Nearly \$350,000 awarded for five new A&H Program projects at the June 10 Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting

1 Coombs Canyon Regulated Hunt Area

A \$13,664 grant will be used to pay landowner Steve Wolfe \$0.50 per acre and to fund a retired Oregon State Police trooper to provide law enforcement patrols on the 12,000-acre property near Pendleton. In return, the landowner will allow public hunting access to the property for upland birds, coyote, antlerless deer and a youth buck hunt.

The A&H Program has been funding this hunting access project since 1999.

2 Heppner Regulated Hunt Area

In existence since 1967 and funded by the A&H Program since 1994, the Heppner Regulated Hunt Area provides year-round public access for hunting deer, elk, turkey, pheasant, quail, chukar and Hungarian partridge along with a variety of other outdoor recreation activities.

The area is located near Heppner and encompass 45,668 acres of private lands.

A \$60,000 A&H grant will be used to pay participating landowners \$1 per acre in return for public access to their properties. The area is also patrolled by the Oregon State Police and ODFW personnel.

3 McBride Ranch Access Project

This hunter access project provides a \$101,500 grant to pay a Malheur County landowner \$2 per acre annually for a period of five years. In return, the landowner will allow year-round, open public hunting access to his 10,100-acre ranch.

The property offers hunting opportunities for mule deer, pronghorn, chukar, Hungarian partridge, sage grouse, pheasant, coyote and ground squirrel.

4 ~~Blue Mountain Cattle Co. Access Project~~

~~A \$79,550 grant will be used to pay Harney County landowner Tom Petty John \$1.50 per acre annually for year-round, open hunting access to 5,270 acres of his property for the next 10 years. The project is located adjacent to Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service lands as well as the Urizar Access Project. This property and surrounding public lands will improve access to more than 22,000 acres of additional hunting opportunities for elk, deer, pronghorn, bear, cougar, quail and chukar.~~

Project Canceled

5 ~~Urizar Access Project~~

~~This project provides a \$93,670 grant to pay landowner Martin Urizar \$1.50 per acre annually in return for year-round, open public hunting access to 6,211 acres of his property near Hines. Hunting opportunities include elk, deer, pronghorn, bear, cougar, quail and chukar. Due to adjacent public lands and the presence of another A&H project, this project opens up an additional 22,000 acres to public hunting.~~

Project Canceled

Have an Idea for an Access and Habitat Program Project?

If you are thinking about applying for an A&H Program grant, A&H regional coordinators can provide you with valuable advice on maximizing your chances of success. To get started on the application process contact your nearest regional coordinator.

Northwest Region

Rick Boatner, Portland 503-621-3488
Nancy Taylor, Corvallis 541-757-4186

Southwest Region

Vince Oredson, Central Point 541-826-8774

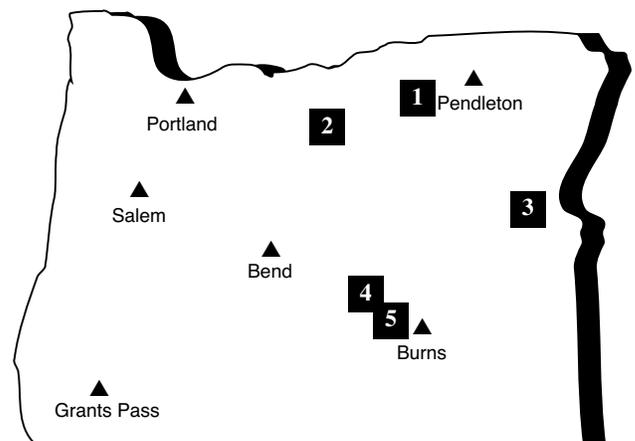
High Desert Region

Larry Pecenka, Bend 541-388-6444
Dan Gonzalez, Hines 541-573-6582

Northeast Region

Jon Paustian, La Grande 541-963-2138

Project Locations



Access and Habitat Board
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 3406 Cherry Avenue, N.E.
 Salem, OR 97303-4924



For information on applying for an Access and Habitat Program grant contact Nick Myatt, A&H Program Coordinator, 3406 Cherry Avenue N.E., Salem, OR 97303-4924 503-947-6082

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