

OREGON *Access Area*
 **HUNTING**
BY
PERMISSION
 Species Permitted to Hunt:

BIG GAME

Hunting seasons and area regulations apply
 Open Dates: **CALL ODFW**
 Contact: Call: 54**541-447-5111**

Access & Habitat Program

2019–2021 Biennium Report



Prepared by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Access & Habitat Program

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Oregon

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January 14, 2021

Dear Oregonians,

This last year challenged Oregonians as few others have, and like you, the Access and Habitat Program (A&H Program) showed resiliency in this time of upheaval. Many Oregonians renewed their love of the outdoors, some utilizing A&H access areas for the first time. It is with pride that I convey the accomplishments of the A&H Program during the 2019-21 biennium.

The basic tenets of the A&H Program is succinctly described in the programs motto: "Landowners & Hunters Together for Wildlife." Hunters wholly fund the A&H Program through a hunting license surcharge, and the sales of raffle, and auction tags. The A&H Program provides hunter access and habitat improvement while fostering the relationship between hunters and landowners.

In an A&H first, the 2020 raffle was held virtually at the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife headquarters to ensure the safety of those who conducted the raffle. Despite all the uncertainty this last spring, a record number of hunters entered the A&H raffle for deer and elk hunts.

In response to the wildfires Oregon endured, the A&H Board approved two Emergency Fire Reseeding projects to reseed over 7,800 acres of burned private land. These two projects will start the recovery process for critical sage grouse habitat and deer winter range. The small grants program, in another first, pooled the resources of several A&H Regions to rehabilitate 2,400 acres burned by the Indian Creek Fire near Juntura Oregon, restoring critical mule deer winter range.

The A&H Program secured federal grant funds from U.S. Department of Agriculture to continue funding Oregon Open Fields projects. The grant ensures the continued hunting access to over 454,000 acres of private land enrolled in the Open Fields program and with the potential to expand hunter access.

While 2020 has brought forth some dark days, both figuratively and literally, it also highlighted the resiliency of Oregon's people and institutions. Thank you for your continued interest and support of this important program.

Sincerely,

Curtis E. Melcher
Director



Executive Summary



About the Access & Habitat Program

The Access & Habitat Program (A&H) was created by the Oregon Legislature in 1993 for the purpose of improving public hunting access and wildlife habitat on private lands. A seven-member volunteer board, appointed by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission), reviews project proposals submitted by private landowners, timber and agriculture corporations, sporting organizations, and public agencies among others, and recommends funding for projects that further the A&H mission. Final funding approval for projects is determined by the Commission.

Funding, Revenue, and Expenditures

Program funding is derived from a \$4 surcharge on hunting and combination licenses, allocations from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's (Department's) Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration (D.E.A.R) programs, and proceeds from the annual auction and raffle of 10 deer and 10 elk tags. Revenues not spent during the biennium are retained in a dedicated reserve account for future expenditure. Projected revenue for the 2019-2021 biennium (through June 2021) is \$3,066,000, including \$1,446,000 from hunting license surcharges, \$800,000 from raffle sales, \$730,000 from auction sales, and \$90,000 from Green Forage and D.E.A.R programs. As of December 21, 2020, program obligations for the 2019-2021 biennium include \$478,842 for administrative activities and \$2,826,441 for project grants (including those carried over from previous biennia). The projected reserve account balance at the end of the biennium is \$1,480,809.

Project Accomplishments: Hunting Access

Approximately ninety percent of A&H projects provide public hunting opportunities on private lands. A&H funded public access to over three million acres of farms, ranches, and forestlands throughout Oregon. Additionally, the A&H program used federal grant funds from the 2014 Farm Bill to provide access to over 454,000 acres.

Project Accomplishments: Wildlife Habitat

Projects active during the 2019-2021 biennium improved habitat on over 26,000 acres of private land. The total acres includes over 16,401 acres in A&H habitat projects, roughly 7,800 acres of Emergency Fire Reseeding projects. A&H's Emergency Fire Reseeding projects reseed critical wildlife habitat after a wildfire. The A&H Small Grants projects contributes approximately 2,400 acres of the habitat improvement total, most of which is also in response to wildfire.

Obtaining the Complete Report

To obtain a hardcopy of the full report contact A&H Program Coordinator Travis Schultz at 503-947-6087 or travis.r.schultz@state.or.us. An electronic copy of the report is available at <https://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/ah/>.



Dixie Meadows Access Area, part of the Oregon Open Fields, photo taken by Andrew Walsh.

Introduction

Access and Habitat (A&H) is an incentive-based program that provides public hunting access and improves wildlife habitat on private lands throughout Oregon. A&H was established by the Oregon Legislature in 1993 and in 2019 the Legislature removed the sunset from the program.

This report to the Oregon Legislature provides an opportunity to reflect on program accomplishments to date for the 2019-2021 biennium.

These include:

- 52 active projects
- Matching funds of approximately \$7.5 million
- Annual hunter access to over 3.1 million acres of private land
- Wildlife habitat improvements on over 26,000 acres

Program Objectives

The A&H Program motto, “Landowners and Hunters Together for Wildlife”, conveys the program’s mission to foster partnerships between landowners and hunters for the benefit of wildlife they both value. The program also seeks to recognize and encourage the important contributions made by landowners to the state’s wildlife resources—stewardship that affects about 45 percent of Oregon’s land base. Improving landowner-hunter relations continues to be a high priority for the Department.

How the Program Works

Program revenue is generated by a \$4 annual surcharge on hunting licenses, proceeds from the annual raffle and auction of special deer and elk tags and a portion of the Green Forage and D.E.A.R. Program funds. The A&H Program provides grants to private landowners, industrial timber companies, sporting groups, natural resource agencies, and others for projects designed to improve wildlife habitat and/or increase public hunting access on private lands. Examples of eligible projects include juniper removal, wildlife forage seeding, water development, noxious weed eradication, wetland restoration, law enforcement patrols, travel management areas, and public hunting leases on private lands.

Anyone wishing to receive a grant must complete an application describing the project and its benefits to wildlife and/or provisions for public hunting opportunities, cooperators, work schedules and procedures, and funding commitments. Project proposals are reviewed first by the appropriate A&H Regional Advisory Council, which sends its recommendations to the A&H State Board (Board).



Widman Permit Box

Council-recommended proposals are reviewed by the Board on a statewide level and projects that further program goals are forwarded to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) for final funding consideration.

A&H Funding Sources

Funding for the A&H Program comes from three sources:

- \$4 surcharge on annual hunting and combination licenses
- Allocations from the ODFW Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration (DEAR) programs
- Proceeds from the annual auction and raffle of 10 deer and 10 elk tags

July 2019–June 2021 Revenue

Hunting License surcharge*	\$1,446,101
Raffle Tags*	\$799,801
Auction Tags*	\$730,156
Green and D.E.A.R.	\$90,179
*TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,066,237

*Revenue projected through June 2021. Revenue may vary depending upon actual number of hunting licenses sold and auction/raffle revenues.

2019–2021 Program Expenditures

A&H revenues are used to fund approved project grants and administrative expenses, including one permanent statewide coordinator position. Revenues not spent during previous biennia have been retained in a reserve account. Expected revenue this biennium is approximately \$3.1 million. Approximately \$2.8 million has been committed to project grants approved during the 2019-2021 biennium or carried over from previous biennia. Administrative expenses total \$478,842, including funds to install new access area signs and systems to estimate hunter use and satisfaction.

The projected reserve account balance at the end of the biennium will be approximately \$1.4 million.

A&H Project Expenditures

The A&H statute establishes eligibility for projects that provide habitat improvement benefits, hunting access benefits, or a combination of both. The Commission approved 13 projects from July 2019 through December 2020, bringing the total number of projects active during the biennium to 52.

A&H project cooperators contributed about \$7.5 million in matching funds towards projects active during the 2019-2021 biennium. This means that over \$2.78 of cooperator funds were spent on approved projects for every A&H dollar spent.

A&H 2019–2021 Biennium Budget Summary*

	Program Administration	Project Grants	Total
Beginning Available Allocation	\$478,842	\$2,826,441	\$3,305,283
Expenditures to Date	\$278,925	\$1,751,081	\$2,030,006
Remaining Obligations	\$98,720	\$1,041,633	\$1,140,353
Available (additional) Funds	\$101,197	\$33,727	\$134,924

Projected A&H sub-account balance at end of biennium **\$1,480,809***

As of December 21, 2020. Does not include projects scheduled for Fish and Wildlife Commission review April 23 and June 18, 2021.

Access and Habitat Program Accomplishments* | December 21, 2020

	Projects Approved During 2019-2021 Biennium	Total Projects Active During 2019-2021 Biennium	Since Program Inception (1993)
Total Number of Projects	13	52	533
Private Land Hunting Access (acres)	2,093,679	3,151,738	8.7 Million
Habitat Directly Improved (acres)	14,488	24,273	1.6 Million

As of December 21, 2020. Does not include projects scheduled for Fish and Wildlife Commission review April 23 and June 18, 2021.



Prescribed fire conducted as part of the Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat project near Heppner.

The Access and Habitat Board

Oregon Revised Statute 496.228 established a seven-member citizen board to provide oversight of the A&H Program. Appointed by the Commission, the Board consists of three members representing landowner interests, three members representing hunter interests, and one member representing the general public, who also serves as chairperson. The Board reviews A&H project proposals and make formal recommendations for project funding to the Commission. The Board is directed to recommend a mix of projects that balance access and habitat benefits statewide when reviewing grant proposals. Meeting quarterly Board members review applications and conduct other program business.



From left to right: Candy Yow, Amy Patrick, John Breese, Craig Ely, and Willie Bronson. Pictured at right: Morgan Olson.

BOARD CHAIR AND PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG ELY

owns a 166-acre farm on critical winter range in La Grande. Craig retired from ODFW as the Northeast Region Supervisor after 36 years of service with the agency. He is intimately familiar with landowner issues including wildlife damage and the Landowner Preference (LOP) Program from both personal and work experience. Craig has served on a variety of boards and committees, from the Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) to US Forest Service NEPA ID Teams, as well as the Northeast Regional A&H Advisory Council.

LANDOWNER REPRESENTATIVE, JOHN BREESE

and his wife own and operate a certified tree farm and ranch lands near Prineville that has been in his family for over 100 years. Balancing sustainability and profitability, John manages the land to ensure future generations will have the same ranching and forestry opportunities. He has worked with local ODFW staff and the A&H Program on several wildlife projects including; elk collaring, wildlife friendly fencing, spring developments and juniper removal. John has extensive experience working on boards and committees and representing landowners including; representing timber interests on the Crooked River Watershed Council for over ten years, serving on the Central Oregon Department of Forestry Budget Committee, board member of the East Oregon Forest Protective Association and testifying on forestry issues at the Oregon State Legislature.

LANDOWNER REPRESENTATIVE, WILLIE BRONSON

assists in managing a family farm and timberlands in the Willamette Valley. Willie retired after 42 years working as a forester on private timberlands in western Oregon. He is very familiar with animal damage and landowner access issues and the need to involve the hunting public to address those concerns. He served as a representative on the ODFW blacktailed deer working group and OFIC's bear damage co-op. Willie is a board member on the Western Lane Forest Protective Association and the Goshen Rural Fire Protection District. With more than 35 years hunting in Northeast Oregon, he is very familiar with changes to access and wildlife issues in that region.

HUNTER REPRESENTATIVE, CANDY YOW

lives in La Pine with her husband Randy. Growing up on large ranches she knows and understands the ranching/farming life. Candy and Randy have a hunting show airing regionally, nationally, and internationally called, Extreme Desire TV. It is backcountry, do it yourself (DIY), public lands hunting, a bit extreme at times but always real. Candy started the NW Ladies Hunting Camp six years ago to encourage and educate women in the skills they need in the outdoors, an event garnering attention in other states. Candy is a member of RMEF, OHA, NRA, Mule Deer Foundation, and helps at numerous banquets each year to support their efforts. She is also Oregon's representative for the DC Project, women from each state traveling to Washington D.C. to rally for 2nd Amendment rights. Candy is passionate about keeping our wildlife and public lands open for generations to come.

HUNTER REPRESENTATIVE, MORGAN OLSON

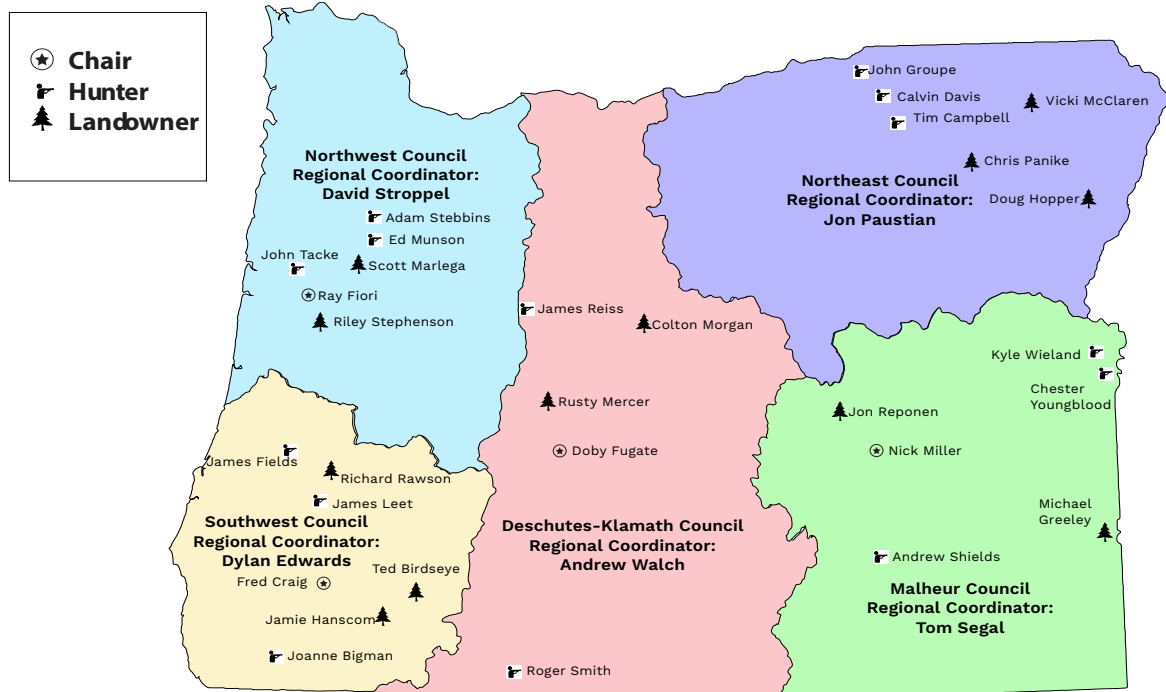
lives in Cove and farms 180 acres in the Grande Ronde valley in addition to his day job as a plant manager for Woodgrain Particleboard. In the past he has produced native seed for both the BLM and USFS. Morgan graduated from Oregon State University with bachelor degrees in Range Management and Crop Science. Morgan has hunted and fished throughout the Western United States and abroad. He is the Oregon Conservation/Habitat Director for Backcountry Hunters & Anglers and Chapter President for the Union/Wallowa Chapter of OHA. Previously, Morgan was a hunter representative and then chair of the Northeast A&H Regional Council giving him great knowledge of the A&H Program.

LANDOWNER REPRESENTATIVE, AMY PATRICK

lives on a small farm down the road from the sixth generation homestead where she was raised near Sublimity. With a background in forestry and farming, she is familiar with landowner issues such as access and damage. As the Outreach Coordinator for the OHA, Amy works with hunters around the state and strives to create relationships between hunters and landowners. She has worked with the ODFW on fish and wildlife issues through participation with the Sport Group Leaders, Western Oregon Landowner and Hunter Elk Management Group, and the External Budget Advisory Committee.

A&H Regional Advisory Councils

Five regional councils serve in an advisory capacity to the A&H Board. The councils provide the initial review of grant proposals and forward their recommendations to the A&H Board. Composed of landowner, hunter, and public representatives, volunteer council members bring grass roots expertise and local knowledge to the review process.



A Message from the Access and Habitat Board Chair

The Access & Habitat (A&H) Program marks its 37th year of providing access and habitat improvements on private property at the end of 2020. Although 2020 has been an especially challenging year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the A&H Program has remained resilient. The statewide board has been unable to meet in person since January of 2020, but the A&H Board has persevered having conducted necessary business through Zoom and conference calls. As of the end of 2020 over 3.1 million acres of private property are open to hunter access and over 26,000 acres of habitat improvements have been recorded in the last two years.

Large land corporate timber owners make up the bulk of private hunter access primarily in Western Oregon and Northeast Oregon. A variety of funding mechanisms open the timber property for access, including providing law enforcement patrols, habitat improvement funds and direct compensation by the acre. Just as the A&H program has adopted and changed to meet landowner needs, the future of access to corporate timber lands remains a concern. The six ODFW regional coordinators are the key contact for landowners willing to participate in the A&H program. The coordinators are an important link to landowners providing guidance and efficient customer service.

Primarily the A&H Program is funded by an annual surcharge on every hunting license sold in Oregon. License revenue generates an average of approximately 900,000 dollars annually. In addition, the 1993 legislation allowed the A&H program to raffle and auction a total of ten deer and ten elk tags to generate program funding. In the 2019-21 biennium, the raffle and auction sales have boosted the program income by roughly \$225,000 with record sales in the fall of 2020- primarily because of COVID-19 restrictions. ODFW also applied for a federal Open Fields grant and was awarded 2.4 million dollars for improving access and habitat improvement projects on private property. Overall the A&H Program will have a stable funding resource for at least the next three-four years.

The seven-member statewide A&H Board comes from a variety of backgrounds and are geographically scattered throughout the state. Each Board member brings to the table a different set of experience and viewpoints that aides in the decision making process. Even with COVID restrictions, the Board has been able to conduct business necessary to keep the program viable and healthy. I look forward to the coming year and being able to meet again for field tours in person to enhance the A&H mission and goals.

Hunting Access Summary

Ninety percent of Access and Habitat projects active during the 2019-2021 biennium included a hunting access component. Information on accessing these properties is made available through a variety of outreach resources including the Big Game Regulations, on the Department's website, and the Oregon Hunting Map, <http://oregonhuntingmap.com/#/map>. The majority of A&H hunting access projects provide opportunities for deer, elk, and upland birds. Some projects also offer hunting opportunities for pronghorn, waterfowl, cougar, bear, wild turkey, coyotes, bighorn sheep, ground squirrels, and western gray squirrel as well as shed collection and breathtaking scenery.

A&H Access Areas (Access Areas) offer access to over 1.35 million acres of private farm, ranch and industrial forest lands in Oregon. The increase in acres from the previous biennium is attributable to the Green Diamond Resource Company TMA receiving a per-acre payment; the Green Diamond property was an Enhanced Patrol area in previous biennia. Some access areas provide public access to inaccessible publicly owned property, for example the Iron Mountain Access Area near Baker provides access to over 4,000 acres of federal property.

The Hancock Forest Management Westside and Eastside Access Projects kept 440,000 acres of timberland open to public hunting access. C2 Ranch and Territorial Youth Deer Hunt projects provide hunting opportunities specifically for youth hunters but most projects are open to all hunters. The ability of A&H to compensate landowners for providing access helps keep working lands in production while providing wildlife managers another tool to mitigate wildlife damage by utilizing hunters.

A&H Enhanced Law Enforcement Patrols (Enhanced Patrol) provide access to over 1.69 million acres of private lands. The majority of the Enhanced Patrol areas are on the west side of the Cascades. Enhanced Patrol areas also provides access for anglers, bird watchers, and anyone that enjoys a day in the forest.

With the exception of the Linn and Lincoln County projects discussed below Enhanced Patrol projects contract with Oregon State Police Fish and Wildlife Division (OSP) to patrol cooperating private lands. 2020 was the first year that OSP utilized active troopers for the Enhanced Patrol. Previously, OSP had seasonally hired retired troopers to patrol areas. Before and during hunting season the officers enforce wildlife laws and protect against poaching, illegal hunting, theft, vandalism, littering, environmental damage to land, and ensure fire danger restrictions are followed, all to improve the quality of hunting, primarily for deer and elk.

From July 1, 2019 to November 30, 2020 A&H funded over 13,300 hours of trooper patrols on cooperating private lands. A&H troopers made 9,700 contacts, issued 860 warnings, with over 429 citations and arrests.

A&H also partners with the Association of Concerned Landowners in Lincoln County and the Linn Forest Protective Association to partially fund Sheriff Deputies that keep over 690,000 acres of industrial forest property in the two counties open for public access. Without partnerships between private landowners, law enforcement, and the A&H Program large tracts of private timberlands would likely be closed to public entry or convert to a system requiring entry fees.

Habitat Enhancement Summary

The range of habitat improvement projects funded by the A&H Program reflects the diversity of Oregon's landscape; emergency seeding after wildfires, pasture and meadow fertilization, shrub management, seeding to improve grassland habitat structure and forb diversity, noxious weed eradication, and invasive species control. Over 24,000 acres of private land was improved to benefit wildlife. Not included in the acreage is habitat protection through law enforcement, primarily keeping vehicles out of sensitive areas.

Habitat projects benefit a variety of species both game and non-game. The Columbia Plateau Habitat Initiative was renewed as the project will leverage partner funds to span thousands of acres and have landscape-level impacts that benefit many wildlife species, as well as the people who enjoy them. Another renewed habitat project located on the Widman Access Area, endeavors to remove medusahead rye from rangelands and reseed with a forb and bunchgrass seed mix to improve critical habitat for sage grouse in the Baker County Keating sage grouse core area. Habitat improvement projects generally target game species, though all species that utilize the habitat benefit from the improvement work.

Hunter Use Data Critical for A&H Board

The A&H Board faces tough decisions as many long-term access projects will sunset and seek re-authorization. Budget constraints and applications for new projects may limit the number of projects that can be renewed. To help the Board make these difficult funding recommendations, the A&H Program continues to improve and implement measures intended to gather data on hunter use and satisfaction of A&H access projects throughout Oregon.

The primary tool for collecting this information are Access Areas Daily Permits. Permits are available at self-serve permit boxes located at most A&H Access Areas. The A&H goal of providing simple “Welcome to Hunt” access means the permits are voluntary and not required to use A&H Access Areas. To increase the participation in use of the permits A&H has partnered with the Redmond Chapter of Oregon Hunters Association to give away prizes to lucky hunters that submitted a completed Access Area Daily Permit.



Widman Access area

These permits help obtain information on hunter use, species targeted, general harvest data and overall satisfaction with the hunting opportunity. The Board recognizes that some high quality access opportunities may not support as many hunters as other properties, but may be equally as important to the program. Estimates of hunter satisfaction from the permits help provide this important information.

Emergency Fire Reseeding

Each year some portion of Oregon is burned by wildfire, with some years more than others. While fire is a necessary part of establishing or maintaining most vegetation communities, the ability to recover critical habitat is essential to ensure continued survival of wildlife populations. One of the methods the Department can use to address habitat loss due to wildfire is through the Access & Habitat Program’s Emergency Fire Reseeding.

Emergency fire reseeding projects follow a process similar to other A&H projects, however there are some key differences. The Administrative Rules for emergency fire reseeding projects ask that at least one regional advisory council member evaluate the project, the rules allow the A&H board to hold an emergency meeting for the project(s) outside the normally scheduled meetings, and lastly the grants are approved by the Director’s Office rather than the Commission. All of these measures are to allow the process of approval to be rapid as the window to successfully reseed after a fire is very narrow.

These rules allow the A&H Program to be very nimble after a fire to provide the greatest opportunity to successfully improve critical wildlife habitat.

The Administrative Rules for emergency fire reseeding restrict efforts to private lands that provide critical habitat for wildlife, the seed mix utilized must be approved by the local District Wildlife Biologist, equipment needed for the seeding effort must be available, and the project must be completed within the timeframe necessary for successful reseeding of desirable vegetation following a wildfire.

This biennium the A&H Board has approved two emergency fire reseeding projects. First, the J Spear Ranch fire reseeding project near Paisley, Oregon. This project reseeded ~7,100 acres of critical sage grouse habitat and essential mule deer winter range at a cost of about \$132,000 to the A&H program for the seed mix. The landowner provided the aerial application of the seed at a cost of approximately \$80,000.



The seed was applied via helicopter with the first snow of winter providing the seed mix the best opportunity to successfully outcompete invasive species.

The second project approved is the Richard Dodge fire reseeding. This project reseeded approximately 772 acres of big game winter range within the drift fence adjacent to White River Wildlife Area. The project aerially applied the seed mix to the area. This effort matched the rehabilitation work conducted on the White River Wildlife Area. Total reseeding cost is approximately \$39,000, A&H provided the seed mix at a cost about \$27,000 and the landowner provided the aerial application at a cost of ~\$12,000.

A&H Raffle

Each year ten highly-desirable hunts are offered in the raffle with all hunts offering extended seasons across expanded hunt areas with the legal weapon of the winner's choice. A new system was put into place in 2019. The primary change with the new system is that paper tickets are no longer issued, all entries are electronic, and all entries must have a hunt selection at time of purchase. Users are no longer able to buy deer and elk raffle entries without a specific hunt selected. Each entry will receive a unique, random number and customers' entry numbers are available online as part of the user's account. The winning entry for each hunt is generated one digit at a time by drawing a number from a random mixing machine. The digits are populated one at a time from right to left. The first and second alternates are electronically selected by locating the raffle entry numbers closest to and below the winning number, but purchased by an individual other than the winner.

The new system was well received by hunters in 2019 and sales were up slightly from 2018 with total revenue increasing from approximately \$198,000 to almost \$218,000. The new electronic system allowed sales after April 30 for the first time in 2020. Another first for the A&H program, the drawing was livestreamed from ODFW headquarters in Salem due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Total income from the raffle was in excess of \$325,000, an increase of almost 50 percent, or \$107,000 above 2019 sales. Most A&H raffle hunts saw an increase in sales for 2020 but not all as Statewide Deer and Central/Southeast Elk were both down slightly from 2019. The total number of individuals who purchased raffle entries almost tripled from over 1,500 in 2019 to over 4,300 in 2020. The raffle entry sales steadily rose from mid-April and peaked the week of the controlled hunts deadline, May 15th. Almost 50% of the individuals purchasing raffle entries did so for only one hunt, 23% purchased entries for just two raffle hunts, and as the outliers, 0.5% of individuals who purchased entries did so for all nine A&H raffles: four deer hunts, four elk hunts, and one combination deer and elk hunt.

A&H raffle sales were up despite all the uncertainty in the world brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless of the cause of the increase, it was a strong year financially for the A&H raffle program.



Kelly McCommas, statewide elk hunt raffle winner, packing out his bull.

A&H Habitat Small Grant Program

The Small Grants Program provides funding for habitat focused projects. The program disperses the portion of the Department's Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration (D.E.A.R) Program funds biannually dedicated to the A&H program. The funds are distributed evenly to the five A&H Regions, approximately \$7,800 per Region. Projects funded by the A&H Small Grants Program require a minimum 25% non-Department match. Matching funds may include volunteer labor, equipment time, donated materials and/or cash.

The Small Grant funds can be used for match with other grant funds such as OWEB grants, Oregon Wildlife Foundation grants, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration funds, and donations from sporting groups. The matching requirement extends the reach of the funds and fosters cooperation between the Department and other groups working to improve wildlife habitat. There were two projects during the biennium, the Indian Creek Fire Annual Grass Control and Metolious Wildlife Solar Water Development.

This year witnessed another first for the A&H Program: several A&H regions used their Small Grants Program funds on the Indian Creek Fire Annual Grass Control project in the Malheur A&H region.

The Northeast, Northwest, Deschutes and Malheur regions utilized \$23,520 of their Small Grants Program funds and leveraged \$52,000 in Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration funding to fund the rehabilitation work to maintain native bunch grasses in the Indian Creek Fire burned area.

The Indian Creek Fire burned approximately 50,000 acres of high density mule deer winter range and critical sage grouse habitat in the Beulah Wildlife Management Unit during the summer of 2020. The bunchgrass and shrub steppe provides habitat for a host of species in addition to sage grouse and mule deer. Wildfires have the potential to create conditions that favor invasive annual grass, primarily cheatgrass and medusahead, that outcompeted desirable native vegetation.

The Department partnered with the Department of State Lands to apply a selective herbicide that targets invasive annual grasses to reduce their spread. The area to be treated totals roughly 2,400 acres of land with 1,840 acres within the burned area and 560 acres adjacent to the burned area. Department staff will continue to monitor the recovery of the project area to determine if seeding or other actions are required.

While the Indian Creek Fire looks like a very destructive force, it can be beneficial as a natural part of the ecosystem. The fire removed juniper from the burned area, and the burned vegetation released nutrients back to the area.

Native grass species can return quickly and vigorously to the area with favorable weather. The shrub component will take longer to recover, 16-50 years depending on species. With time and selective management, the area will recover benefiting Oregon's wildlife.

The second Small Grants project was the Metolious Wildlife Solar Water Development project located in deer and elk winter range in the Metolious Wildlife Management Unit. The project utilized a pre-existing well on the property to develop a watering site for wildlife. A&H small grant funds, totaling \$6,680, were used to purchase solar panels and a well pump setup. The landowner purchased pipe, a stock tank, and a conex trailer to securely house the well. Local solar and pump contractors donated the labor for the installation. The water now flows to the stock tank and overflows, creating a small patch of mesic habitat. Project cooperators will consider willow plantings after seeing how the site develops next spring/summer.



Indian Creek Small Grants Project

“Oregon Open Fields”

Program Continues to Provide Important Hunting Access

The A&H Program was awarded a \$2.86 million grant in 2020 from the US Department of Agriculture. The grant is administrated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and funding is provided through the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP), a component of the 2018 Farm Bill. VPA-HIP funding provided block grants to states and tribes to implement or expand programs that provide public hunting access to private lands. Habitat improvement projects located on private lands open to public hunting are also eligible. Known locally as “Oregon Open Fields”, the grant will maintain over 454,000 acres of hunting access initiated under previous grants, attempt to expand the program by 176,000 acres, and improve at least 3,400 acres of habitat. While the need for access and habitat projects is recognized statewide, the grant identified several emphasis areas:

Columbia Basin Upland Hunting Program.

The Columbia Basin, which includes Morrow, Gilliam, Umatilla, Sherman, and Wasco counties, is comprised mostly of private lands and has historically provided a large portion of the upland game bird hunting opportunities in Oregon. Upland bird hunting opportunities are important for hunter recruitment; many new hunters begin with hunting upland birds. Ongoing A&H projects have improved game bird habitat in the Columbia Basin through technical assistance partnerships and direct habitat management. Open Fields funds allow landowners in the Basin to continue providing public hunting access to almost 10,000 acres. An Open Fields Coordinator, funded by the grant, manages hunter reservations, administrative duties such as map and sign production and most importantly coordination and outreach with the landowners.

Willamette Valley Goose Hunting Program.

The Willamette Valley supports one of the most complex goose populations in North America, with 7 Canada goose subspecies either resident or wintering in the area. Overall goose numbers have been increasing for the past three decades and agricultural depredation has become severe. Public hunting access has been identified as a key management tool for mitigation of these issues and the steady pressure provided by increased hunter access to these fields hazes geese more effectively than the limited hunting some landowners previously allowed. Open Fields funds provide access to 6 parcels totaling over 3,700 acres and no permission or advanced reservations are required to hunt these properties.

An Open Fields Coordinator, funded by the grant, manages hunter reservations, administrative duties such as map and sign production and most importantly coordination and outreach with the landowners. Project coordination has been instrumental in securing long-term support of participating landowners.

Open Fields Habitat Improvement Projects

Up to 25% of Open Fields funds can be used for improving wildlife habitat on private lands providing public hunting access. Open Fields funding will target habitat improvements aligned with Department priorities including the Mule Deer Initiative, Blue Mountains Elk Initiative, and the Sage Grouse Initiative. To date, an additional 2,900 acres of habitat improvement have been funded under the 2020 Open Fields grant.

Corporate Forest Access Projects.

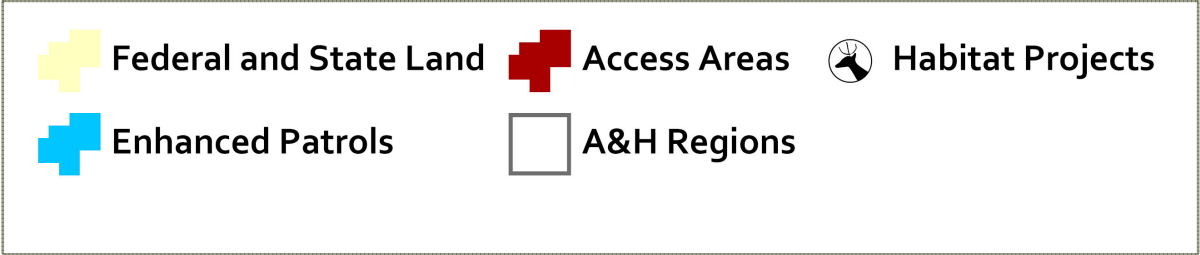
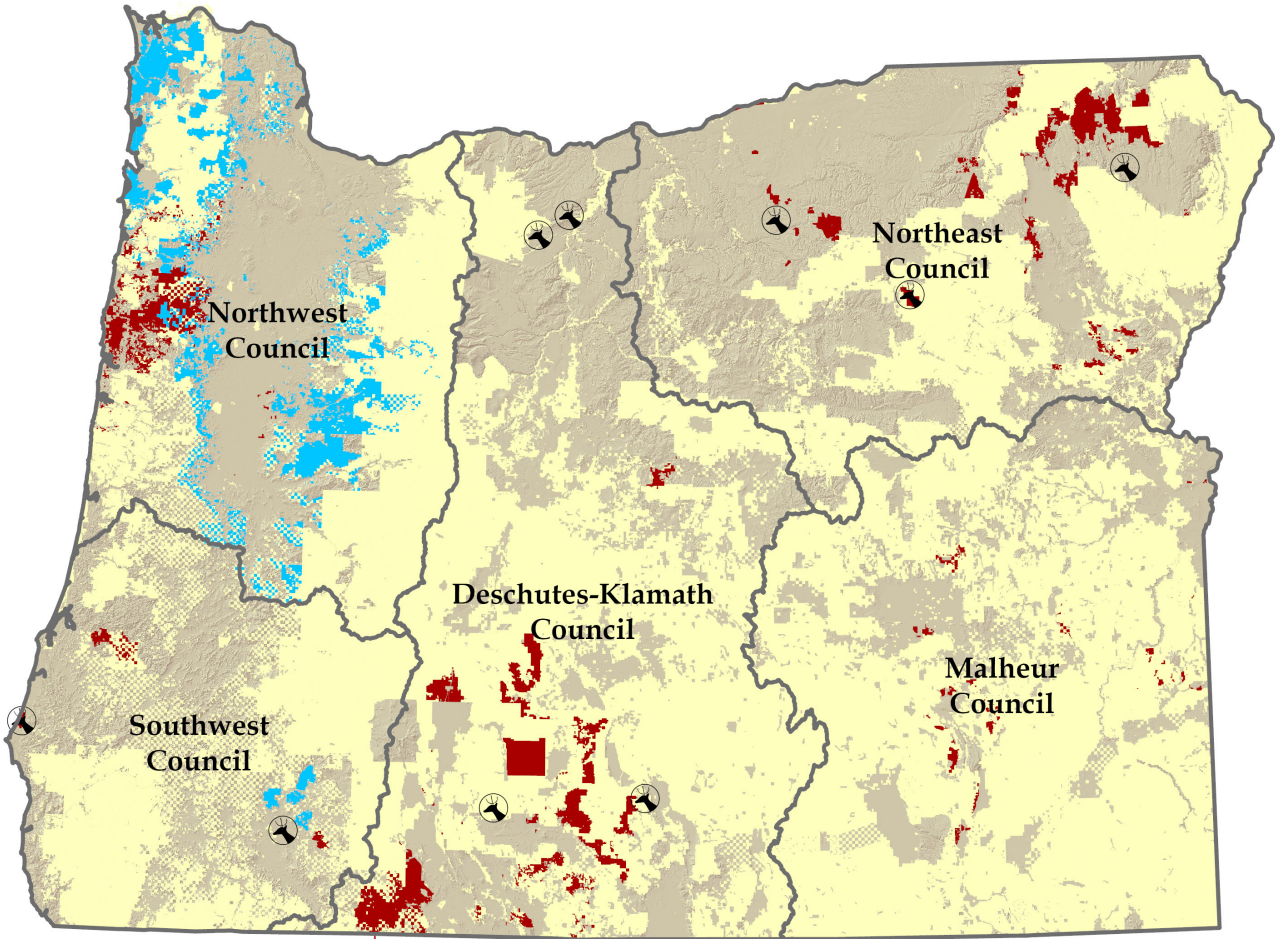
Corporate timberlands provide some of the best hunting opportunities in Oregon. Providing hunting access to these lands is critical for wildlife management objectives and hunting opportunity. In western Oregon, corporate forests provide access critical to thousands of hunters during “general” big game seasons with unlimited tags available over-the-counter. This is a critical component of recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3), goals for youth and new hunters. General seasons are also important to hunters who have traditionally hunted the area and as a fall back option for hunters who did not draw a controlled hunt tag.

The Future of Open Fields

The 2020 VPA-HIP grant will provide funding to the Oregon Open Fields program through the next biennium, 2021-2023. The future availability of VPA-HIP grant funds are dependent on the next federal farm bill. The A&H Program will continue to seek out grant funds to maintain and expand access for hunters and habitat for wildlife.

A&H Project Distribution

The 52 projects approved as of December 2020 are located throughout eastern and western Oregon and are shown below. Projects renewed during the biennium are only indicated once on the map.



2019-2021 Oregon Open Fields Projects

	Project Name	ODFW Watershed District/Region	Open Fields Fund	Cooperator Funding	Total Project Cost	Project Type
1	Calvin Farms Access Area	South Willamette	\$1,800	-	\$1,800	Access
2	Kroph Farms Access Area	South Willamette	\$10,956	-	\$10,956	Access
3	Tenbusch Farms Access Area	South Willamette	\$6,494	-	\$6,494	Access
4	Manning Farms Access Area	South Willamette	\$14,934	-	\$14,934	Access
5	Bunker Hill Access Area	Columbia Basin	\$7,263	-	\$7,263	Access
6	Four Mile Access Area	Columbia Basin	\$9,036	-	\$9,036	Access
7	Social Ridge Access Area	Columbia Basin	\$41,851	-	\$41,851	Access
8	Hancock Forest Management	Northeast	\$750,000	\$1,000,000	\$2,250,000	Access
9	Aspen Valley	Deschutes	\$138,500	\$102,300	\$240,800	Access & Habitat
10	Dixie Meadows	Deschutes	\$83,979	\$99,200	\$185,179	Access & Habitat
11	Desolation Creek	Northeast	\$50,000	\$1,282,256	\$1,332,256	Access & Habitat
12	Hancock FM West	South Willamette	\$255,000	\$315,000	\$570,000	Access

2019-2021 A&H Grantees and Cooperators

Alan Haga	Ecotrust Forest Management	J Spear Ranch
AP Timber, LLC	Farm Service Agency	Jamey Knapp
Avery Family Forest	Fir Farm	Jenkins Ranches Inc.
Baker County Weed Control	Forest Investment Associates	Jerry & Karen Carlson
Betty Opie	Frank Timber Resources	Jim Kamph
Betty Udell, Bert & Betty Family Tree	Freres Timber Inc	Joel Rice
Bill Hammel	Fruit Growers	John Hancock Life Insurance Company
Blue Meadow Ranch	Fun Forest LLC.	John Swenson
Boston Timber Opportunities, LLC	Gabe Azevedo	Jolene Juhl
C2 Cattle Company	Gary & Kathy Bloomer	Kevin Conroy
Campbell Global	Giustina Land & Timber	Kortge Wheat & Cattle
Cascade Timber Consulting	Giustina Resources, LLC	Lewis & Clark Timber
Columbia Cascades Timberlands	Giustina Woodlands LTD.	Lincoln County Sheriffs Office
Cory Carman	Golden Pond Timberlands Inc.	Lincoln County Solid Waste District
Daniel & Joyce Gover	Green Diamond Resources Company	Linda Bentz
David Moody	Hampton Affiliates	Linn County
Davis Ranches & Farms	Hancock Forest Management	Linn County Sheriffs Office
Desolation Creek LLC.	Hancock Resource Mgt.	Linn Forest Protective Association
Don Dryer	Happy Valley Tree Farm	Lone Rock Resources
Duncan MacKenzie	Iron Horse Timber, LLC	Lost Creek Timber

Habitat Acres	Private Land Hunting Access (Acres)	Access Duration (years)	Access End Date	Private Landowners Affected	Columbia	Willamette	Habitat
-	150	5	3/10/2021	1		1	
-	913	5	3/10/2021	1		1	
-	541	5	3/10/2021	1		1	
-	2,137	5	3/10/2021	1		1	
-	1,345	5	1/31/2021	1	1		
-	1,506	5	1/31/2021	1	1		
-	7,039	5	1/31/2021	4	1		
-	250,000	5	12/31/2021	1			
\$3,850	8,000	3	12/31/2019	1			1
\$800	5,835	3	12/31/2019	1			1
\$230	13,440	3	6/30/2019	1			1
	190,000	3	6/30/2021	1			

Lowden Family LLC.	OSU, College of Forestry	Tom Davis Livestock, Inc.
Luke Shaw	Perry Beebe	Triangle Ranches
M.R. King Ranches	Phil Kaser	Tri-County CWMA
Mark Mackenzie	Rex Nelson	Troy Ranches
Mary Madison	Richard Dodge	Tumac Lumber
Mealey Timber Co.	Rick McKenzie	Ty Temple
Melcher Family LLC.	Robert Jones	US Forest Service
Melcher Logging	Robert Krein	Vern Brown Jr.
Morrow SWCD	Robin Hill LLC	Weyerhaeuser
Murphy Timber Investments, Inc.	Rocky Mtn Elk Foundation	Weyerhaeuser Columbia Timberlands
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Rosboro LLC.	Weyerhaeuser Company
Nestucca Forests, LLC	Roseburg Resources, Co.	Widman Ranches
OHA	Ross Opie	Wilkinson Ranches, LLC
OHA, Emerald Valley Chapter	Salliee Fay & Sherman	William Ford IV
OHA, Rogue Valley Chapter	Sam MacKenzie	William Otley
OHA, Umpqua Chapter	Seneca Jones Timber Company	
OR Dept of Forestry	Starfire	
OR Resource Management	Starker Forests Inc.	
OSP	Stimson Lumber Co.	
OSU Research Forests	System Global Timberlands, LLC	

2019–2021 Access and Habitat Projects

	Project Name	ODFW Watershed District/Region	A&H Annual Cost	A&H Project Duration (years)	A&H Project Biennial Cost	Cooperator Funding
1	Linn County Forest Deputy	S Willamette	\$12,000	5	\$12,000	\$837,324
2	North Coast TMA	North Coast	\$147,120	4	\$175,000	\$397,541
3	Pine Creek Ranch Access	Malheur	\$29,050	5	\$58,100	\$400
4	Iron Mountain Access	Northeast	\$12,067	5	\$24,134	\$2,500
5	Virtue Flat Access	Northeast	\$12,757	5	\$25,514	\$2,500
6	Divide Ridge Access-Gover	Northeast	\$2,184	5	\$4,368	\$2,500
7	Divide Ridge Access-Carlson	Northeast	\$696	5	\$1,392	\$1,000
8	Heppner Regulated Hunt Area	Northeast	\$95,096	5	\$190,192	\$59,000
9	Mackenzie Access, Mark	Malheur	\$8,582	5	\$25,164	\$1,500
10	Mackenzie Access, Duncan	Malheur	\$11,551	5	\$23,102	\$1,500
11	Mackenzie Access, Sam	Malheur	\$1,536	5	\$3,072	\$1,500
12	Desolation Creek Access	Northeast	\$29,030	3	\$38,707	\$54,636
13	Hancock FM East Side Access	Northeast	\$200,000	5	\$400,000	\$349,635
14	Lincoln County Forest Patrol	North Coast	\$27,000	5	\$54,000	\$576,965
15	Columbia Plateau Coop. Habitat	Northeast	\$30,000	3	\$30,000	\$728,405
16	Troy Ranches Access	Northeast	\$9,228	5	\$18,456	\$2,500
17	MR King Ranches Access	Northeast	\$8,055	5	\$16,110	\$2,500
18	Otley Access	Malheur	\$31,219	5	\$62,438	\$2,500
19	Lawen Access-Juhl	Malheur	\$3,650	5	\$7,300	\$2,500
20	Kueny Ranch Access	Malheur	\$10,530	5	\$21,060	\$2,500
21	Bentz Access	Malheur	\$8,659	5	\$17,318	\$2,500
22	Hancock FM West Side Access	South Willamette	\$105,000	3	\$258,000	\$255,000
23	Coos Mt TMA	Umpqua	\$39,789	3	\$79,578	\$18,567
24	Owsley Canyon Access	Northeast	\$870	3	\$870	\$1,500
25	Smutz Access Project	Northeast	\$3,535	3	\$3,535	\$1,500
26	Carman Ranch Habitat	Northeast	\$16,517	3	\$4,955	\$79,865
27	GDRC NE Access	Grande Ronde	\$22,041	3	\$37,470	\$4,500
28	Jenkins Access	Malheur	\$24,800	3	\$49,600	\$3,000
29	Alvord Ranch Access	Malheur	\$10,000	3	\$20,000	\$24,915
30	Widman Access Project	Northeast	\$34,870	3	\$69,740	\$161,506
31	Jackson Access & Coop TMA	Rogue	\$25,173	3	\$50,346	\$86,250
32	Territorial Youth Deer Hunt	Umpqua	\$1,798	3	\$3,596	\$6,624
33	Emergency Fire Seeding Wasco	Deschutes	\$66,000	2	\$14,622	\$2,124,963

Total Project Cost	Private Land Hunting	Habitat Acres	Project End Date	Overall Type	Improved Public Land Access	Wildlife Damage Assistance	Affected Pvt. Landowners
\$849,324	389,500		6/30/2020	Access	1	1	20
\$572,541	473,539		12/31/2019	Access	1	1	10
\$58,500	12,104		3/1/2021	Access	1	1	1
\$26,634	3,342		1/31/2021	Access	1		1
\$28,014	7,087		1/31/2021	Access	1		1
\$6,868	910		7/31/2021	Access	1		1
\$2,392	250		7/31/2021	Access	1		1
\$249,192	39,625		1/31/2021	Access			4
\$26,664	3,576		3/1/2021	Access	1		1
\$24,602	6,813		3/1/2021	Access			1
\$4,572	640		3/1/2021	Access			1
\$93,343	13,440		9/30/2019	Access	1		1
\$749,635	250,000		12/31/2021	Access	1		1
\$630,965	301,400		6/30/2022	Access	1		1
\$758,405		5,000	4/1/2020	Habitat			0
\$20,956	5,696		1/31/2022	Access			1
\$18,610	4,475		1/31/2022	Access		1	1
\$64,938	15,417		4/1/2022	Access			1
\$9,800	1,690		4/1/2022	Access			1
\$23,560	5,850		3/1/2022	Access			1
\$19,818	4,276		3/1/2022	Access			1
\$513,000	190,000		12/31/2020	Access			1
\$98,145	63,000		6/30/2021	Access			3
\$2,370	435		1/31/2021	Access			1
\$5,035	1,414		1/31/2021	Access			1
\$84,820	2,628	960	1/31/2021	Access & Habitat		1	1
\$41,970	22,041		7/31/2021	Access			1
\$52,600	12,957		3/15/2021	Access			1
\$44,915	3,532		3/1/2021	Access			1
\$231,246	7,435	600	1/31/2021	Access & Habitat			1
\$136,596	16,558	3,065	6/30/2021	Access & Habitat			1
\$10,220	4,477		12/1/2021	Access			1
\$2,139,585		4,400	11/30/2020	Habitat			7

2019–2021 Access and Habitat Projects

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	Project Name	ODFW Watershed District/Region	A&H Annual Cost	A&H Project Duration (years)	A&H Project Biennial Cost	Cooperator Funding
34	C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement	Rogue	\$10,140	2	\$20,280	\$217,311
35	East Lane Travel Management Area	S Willamette	\$13,500	2	\$27,000	\$5,600
36	New River Aleutian Goose Project	Rogue	\$15,750	2	\$31,500	\$75,600
37	Lawen B Opie Access	Malheur	\$2,990	3	\$5,280	\$200
38	Lawen Brown Access	Malheur	\$880	3	\$1,760	\$66
39	Lawen R Opie Access	Malheur	\$3,292	3	\$6,584	\$200
40	Lawen Temple Access	Malheur	\$1,090	3	\$2,180	\$130
41	Glass Hill Access Rice	Northeast	\$1,640	3	\$3,280	\$1,000
42	Willamette Private Lands TMA	S Willamette	\$75,000	1	\$75,000	\$14,842
43	Weyerhaeuser Access Area	S Willamette	\$82,956	5	\$82,956	\$205,000
44	North Coast TMA	North Coast	\$191,240	4	\$191,240	\$94,300
45	Linn County Forest Deputy	S Willamette	\$24,000	5	\$24,000	\$546,585
46	Desolation Creek LLC Access Area	Northeast	\$32,256	5	\$32,256	\$54,636
47	C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement	Rogue	\$4,675	2	\$4,675	\$54,328
48	J Spear Ranch Fire Reseeding	Klamath	\$132,000	1	\$132,000	\$80,000
49	Richard Dodge Fire Reseeding	Deschutes	\$27,292	1	\$27,292	\$11,580
50	Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative	Northeast	\$25,000	3	\$25,000	\$242,668
51	Green Diamond Resource Company TMA	Desch/Klam	\$149,435	3	\$298,870	\$87,333



Total Project Cost	Private Land Hunting	Habitat Acres	Project End Date	Overall Type	Improved Public Land Access	Wildlife Damage Assistance	Affected Pvt. Landowners
\$237,591	9,500	588	1/5/2021	Access & Habitat			1
\$32,600	39,825		11/4/2021	Access	1		1
\$107,100	3,540	1,200	6/30/2021	Access & Habitat	1	1	5
\$5,480	1,495		3/10/2022	Access			1
\$1,826	440		3/10/2022	Access			1
\$6,784	1,646		3/10/2022	Access			1
\$2,310	545		3/10/2022	Access			1
\$4,280	911		1/31/2022	Access			1
\$89,842	472,423		12/31/2020	Access	1		20
\$287,956	92,173		6/30/2025	Access			1
\$285,540	473,539		12/31/2024	Access	1		12
\$570,585	389,500		6/30/2025	Access	1		1
\$86,892	13,440		7/31/2025	Access	1		1
\$59,003	9,500	588	1/5/2023	Access & Habitat			1
\$212,000		7,100	12/15/2020	Habitat			1
\$38,872		772	12/30/2020	Habitat			1
\$267,668		5,000	4/30/2023	Habitat			20
					1		
\$386,203	599,029		3/31/2023	Access			1



Aspen Valley Project Area

Access & Habitat Program

2019–2021 Biennium Report



Access & Habitat Program

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MyODFW.com

2019–2021 A&H Brochure Cover Photo taken at Aspen Valley Access Area. Brochure back photo is a four month progression of a prescribed fire habitat project conducted as part of the Columbia Plateau Habitat project. The uppermost photo is immediately after the burn in March, middle photo is after spring green-up, and the lower photo is in June with lush growth. Prescribed fire is an important tool for habitat restoration.

Brochure content and maps provided by A&H Coordinator Travis Schultz.



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