

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

Through HB 2538, the 1993 Oregon Legislative Assembly created the seven member Access and Habitat (A&H) Board. This legislation authorized the A&H Board to review and recommend to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission projects designed to improve wildlife habitat and public hunting access in Oregon. The 2003 Oregon Legislative Assembly reauthorized the program through December 2009. Project proposals are typically submitted by landowners, corporations, organizations and agencies. Applications are initially reviewed by board-appointed regional advisory councils established in six geographic regions of the state. The councils forward proposals to the A&H Board with recommendations to approve or deny projects. The A&H Board provides the next level of project review, and then forwards proposals to the Fish and Wildlife Commission for final consideration and approval to expend A&H Program funds.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Access and Habitat Program provides for public involvement through the regional advisory councils and state A&H Board meetings. The meetings are advertised in advance, notices are published on the department's website and in the program's newsletter and agendas are mailed to interested citizens. There is an opportunity for interested citizens to provide public comment during these meetings. The A&H Board most recently met on April 24, 2007 in Bandon, Oregon.

ISSUE 1

Project Funding Approval

Project 1

#2007-10 Heppner Regulated Hunt Area

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$319,780
- Cooperator Funds: \$144,495
- Total Project Cost: \$464,275
- Applicant: Wilkinson Ranches L.L.C., Mary Madison, Triangle Ranches, Frontier Resources, Robert Jones, David Moody, Steve Cherry – Heppner District Wildlife Biologist
- Location: John Day Watershed District
- Access Duration: 5 Years
- Access Acres: 42,304 acres
- Cooperators: ODFW/OSP (\$144,495)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$319,780 in A&H funds to provide open public hunting access to 42,304 acres of private land for the next five years. This regulated hunt area has provided “welcome to hunt” access for the last 39 years and has been very popular with the hunting public. Hunters

are able to pursue mule deer, elk, cougar and a variety of upland game birds. The current regulated hunt area includes six different landowners that open sections of their land to access.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to recommend this project for approval.

Project 2 #2007-22 Tillamook Bay Wetlands

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$4,700
- Cooperator Funds: \$6,200
- Total Project Cost: \$10,900
- Applicant: Tillamook County
- Location: North Coast Watershed District
- Access Duration: Permanent
- Access Acres: 377 acres
- Cooperators: Tillamook Chapter OHA (\$2,500); ODFW (\$2,150); Tillamook Estuary Project (\$1,000); Tillamook County (\$550)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$4,700 in A&H funds to provide permanent access to 377 acres of tidal wetlands in Tillamook County. A parking area will be constructed to increase access to the area and an informational kiosk constructed to educate the public on the waterfowl hunting and other recreational opportunities.

The North Willamette Regional Advisory Council voted unanimously to recommend this project for approval. The A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project contingent upon modifying the funding request so that A&H funds would be utilized to build the parking area (\$2,500), kiosk construction (\$1,000), construction materials/installation (\$600), and trail/road maintenance (\$600).

Project 3 #2007-08 Lincoln County Forest Protection Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$100,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$456,000
- Total Project Cost: \$556,000
- Applicant: Lincoln County Solid Waste District
- Location: North Coast Watershed District
- Access Duration: 5 years
- Access Acres: 294,372 acres
- Cooperators: Landowner Association (\$163,000); Lincoln County Solid Waste District (163,000); Lincoln County Sheriffs Office (130,000)

- Council Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0; Abstain: 1

The project proposes \$100,000 in A&H funds to provide open access to 294,372 acres of private timberland for five years. This project has been active since 1994, and will continue to assist private landowners by funding a law enforcement officer that patrols these timberlands to prevent illegal dumping and vandalism.

The South Willamette Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project as proposed.

Project 4 #2007-09 City of Ontario Public Recreational Access Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$74,167
- Cooperator Funds: \$9,807
- Total Project Cost: \$83,974
- Applicant: Malheur County Pheasants Forever
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: 10 years
- Access Acres: 800 acres
- Cooperators: Pheasants Forever (\$9,037); ODFW (\$770)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5 ; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4 ; No: 2; Abstain: 1

The project proposes \$74,167 in A&H funds to provide 10 years of open access to 800 acres of the City of Ontario’s property for upland game bird, archery deer and waterfowl hunting during authorized seasons. This area is expected to be very popular with hunters as public hunting opportunities are limited in the area.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted to recommend this project for approval.

Project 5 #2007-11 Bentz Access Expansion Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$98,210
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$98,210
- Applicant: Mike Bentz (landowner)
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: 10 years
- Access Acres: 4,276
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7, No: 0

The project proposes \$98,210 in A&H funds to expand access to an additional 4,276 acres of private land for 10 years. Currently, the

landowner has 400 acres enrolled in the A&H Program (Bentz Access Area) and has been so impressed with the program that he wanted to add additional acres. The project will provide open access for upland game bird and deer hunting opportunities.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project for approval.

Project 6	#2007-12 Alvord Access Project
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ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$120,125
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$120,125
- Applicant: Ed Davis (landowner)
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: 5 years
- Access Acres: 10,500 acres
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$120,125 in A&H funds to extend this project for an additional five years with an increase in the access fee from \$1.00 to \$2.25/acre per year. This project is very popular with chukar and deer hunters and is considered one of the premier access opportunities in the A&H Program. It has provided open access to 10,500 acres of private land as well as access to 28,200 acres of BLM land along the east base of Steens Mountain.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project for approval.

Project 7	#2007-13 Otley Access Project
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ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$378,582
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$378,582
- Applicant: Charlie Otley (landowner)
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: 10 years
- Access Acres: 16,737 acres
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$378,582 in A&H funds to obtain open access to 16,737 acres of private land on Steens Mountain for a 10 year period. Access will be open from August 1 through March 1 and will provide excellent hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, cougar and upland game birds.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project for approval.

Project 8 #2007-14 Roaring Springs Access Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$203,370
- Cooperator Funds: \$0
- Total Project Cost: \$203,370
- Applicant: Roaring Springs Ranch
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Access Duration: 10 years
- Access Acres: 20,137
- Council Vote: Yes: 3; No: 2
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$203,370 in A&H funds to obtain access to 20,137 acres of private land in the Catlow Valley west of Steens Mountain for 10 years. Open access will be provided from August 1 through March 1 for pronghorn, mule deer, chukar and sage grouse hunters.

The Malheur Regional Advisory Council voted to approve the project, and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project as presented.

Project 9 #2007-20 Lane Sage Grouse Enhancement Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$15,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$22,000
- Total Project Cost: \$37,000
- Applicant: Tom Lane (landowner) and Warner Valley Watershed Council
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 500
- Cooperators: USFWS-Partners in Wildlife (\$20,000); Landowner (\$2,000)
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$15,000 in A&H funds to cut 500 acres of juniper in a mountain big sage brush community. This project will improve sage grouse brood habitat and mule deer transitional/winter range by increasing the number and diversity of shrubs and forbs at the site.

The Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project as presented.

Project 10**#2007-21 Star 1 Trust Habitat Enhancement Project****ANALYSIS**

- A&H Funds: \$52,800
- Cooperator Funds: \$195,722
- Total Project Cost: \$248,522
- Applicant: Melva Stahancyk, Dale Ackler (landowners)
- Location: Deschutes Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 250
- Access Duration: 5 years
- Access Acres: 920
- Cooperators: Landowner, ODFW, Juvenile work crew, NRCS, Crooked River Weed Management Area, Crook County Extension Service
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$52,800 in A&H funds to improve wildlife habitat by restoring a livestock damaged riparian area and thinning juniper to improve critical mule deer winter range. In exchange, the landowner is willing to provide 5 years of by permission access to disabled and youth hunters on 920 acres. The landowner has proposed building blinds that accommodate wheelchair access, as well as agreed to advertise this opportunity to disabled hunters.

The Deschutes/Klamath Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project as presented.

Project 11**#2007-07 Upland Habitat Initiative for Columbia Plateau****ANALYSIS**

- A&H Funds: \$145,500
- Cooperator Funds: \$86,934
- Total Project Cost: \$232,434
- Applicant: Columbia Plateau Pheasants Forever Chapter and Morrow SWCD
- Location: John Day Watershed District
- Cooperators: Columbia Plateau Pheasants Forever, ODFW, NRCS, Morrow SWCD, Landowners
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 2

The project proposes \$145,500 in A&H funds to hire a full time habitat specialist for three years to work with private landowners to improve upland game bird habitat on private land. This person will be an employee of Pheasants Forever and will be responsible for assisting landowners with writing grants and providing on-the-ground technical assistance.

The Northeast Regional Advisory Council voted unanimously to approve the project, and the A&H State Board voted to approve the project as presented with three stipulations: 1. Assurance that National Pheasants Forever is supportive of the project; 2. Annual report of expended funds; 3. Quarterly report of landowners assisted and acres improved.

Project 12 #2007-23 Chandler Family Ranch Oak Woodland Restoration

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$9,374
- Cooperator Funds: \$19,176
- Total Project Cost: \$28,550
- Applicant: Chandler Family Ranch, LLC
- Location: Southwest Region
- Habitat Acres: 65
- Access Duration: 5 years
- Access Acres: 1,350
- Cooperators: NRCS EQIP Program (\$9,376), Landowner (9,800), ODF, Coquille Watershed Association, ODFW
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$9,374 in A&H funds to restore a 65 acre oak woodland and provide by permission access to 1,350 acres of private land. Oak woodlands have been identified in the Oregon Conservation Strategy as a key strategy habitat for restoration and are considered rare in Coos County. This habitat will be utilized by the existing small elk herd and resident deer as well as other wildlife species

The Southwest Regional Advisory Council and the A&H Board voted unanimously to approve the project as presented.

Project 13 #2007-16 Peila Seed and Fertilizer Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$52,117
- Cooperator Funds: \$34,880
- Total Project Cost: \$86,997
- Applicant: Jack Peila (landowner)
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 320
- Access Duration: 5 years
- Access Acres: 2,000
- Cooperators: Landowner (\$34,880)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 6; No: 1

The project proposes \$52,117 in A&H funds to seed and fertilize an alfalfa pivot that is heavily used by resident pronghorn antelope. In return, the landowner will provide five years of by permission hunting access to 2,000 acres of private land for pronghorn hunting.

The Southeast Regional Advisory Council voted unanimously to fund the project at a reduced rate (½ the requested fertilizer cost), while the A&H Board voted to approve this project as originally presented by the applicant.

Project 14

#2007-17 Robertson Seed and Fertilizer Project

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$30,100
- Cooperator Funds: \$17,440
- Total Project Cost: \$47,540
- Applicant: Joseph Robertson (landowner)
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Habitat Acres: 160
- Access Duration: 5 years
- Access Acres: 320
- Cooperators: Landowner (\$17,440)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 2

The project proposes \$30,100 in A&H funds to seed and fertilize an alfalfa pivot that is heavily used by resident pronghorn antelope. The landowner has agreed to provide five years of by permission hunting access to pronghorn on 320 acres.

The Southeast Regional Advisory Council voted unanimously to fund the project at a reduced rate (½ the requested fertilizer cost), while the A&H Board voted to approve this project as originally presented by the applicant.

Project 15

#2007-19 A&H Project Assistant

ANALYSIS

- A&H Funds: \$7,000
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,500
- Total Project Cost: \$8,500
- Applicant: Dan Gonzalez (ODFW Habitat Biologist)
- Location: Malheur Watershed District
- Cooperators: ODFW (\$1,500)
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project proposes \$7,000 in A&H funds to pay two months of salary for a seasonal employee to post signs at access areas. This individual will work prior to hunting season in order to post signs on all the A&H access

projects in Malheur and Harney Counties.

The Southeast Regional Advisory Council voted unanimously to fund the project as presented, while the A&H State Board voted unanimously to fund this project at double the requested funds.

DRAFT MOTION

I move to approve the recommendations of the Access and Habitat Board for project funding.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

June 8, 2007