

Summary of Projects Recommended for Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in Lakeview on October 18, 2011 to review projects requesting funding from the A&H Program. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended for funding; six of the seven Board members attended the meeting. A brief description of each project, funding requested, access and/or habitat benefits provided, and Board and Council votes are listed below. If major issues were raised they are discussed below.

The Board recommends funding the following projects:

#2011-25 Pine Creek Mule Deer Forage Enhancement

- A&H Funds: \$45,000 – funded through Oregon Open Fields
- Cooperator Funds: \$66,500
- Total Project Cost: \$111,500
- Applicant: Don Dryer
- Location: Malheur River Wildlife Management Unit (WMU)
(69% public lands)
- Habitat Acres: 495
- Access Acres: 12,000 (provided via existing agreement)
- Cooperators: Landowner, Natural Resource Conservation Service,
Mule Deer Foundation, Bureau of Land Management
- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would enhance mule deer forage on the Pine Creek Ranch, a current A&H Access Area in the Malheur River WMU. Project activities include cutting, piling, and burning western juniper and thinning ponderosa pine on a total of 495 acres. Removing competing conifers will enhance mule deer forage by increasing aspen suckering and shrub seedling survival. This project would complement existing conifer removal activities on adjacent BLM lands in critical mule deer and sage-grouse habitat. A&H funds would be used to treat approximately 200 acres of the total project area and cooperators would fund the remainder.

A&H funding would be provided through the Oregon Open Fields program, a block grant that A&H received from the USDA's Farm Service Agency in 2010. One identified purpose of Open Fields is to improve wildlife habitat on private lands that provide public hunting access funded by state administered access programs such as A&H and the Upland Cooperative Access Program. The Pine Creek Ranch Access Area provides deer, elk, pronghorn, predator, turkey, and quail hunting access to 12,000 acres of private rangeland on a Welcome to Hunt basis.

#2011-26 Alvord/Kueny Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$47,250
- Cooperator Funds: \$1,000
- Total Project Cost: \$48,250 (\$2.25 per acre of private land per year)
- Applicant: Paul Davis and Mike Davis
- Location: Steens Mt. WMU (64% public lands)
- Access Acres: 10,500 private; 28,200 public
- Access Duration: 2 years: August 1 – March 1, 2012-13 and 2013-14
- Cooperators: Landowner, ODFW, Oregon State Police
- Council Vote: Yes: 6; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The Alvord and Kueny Ranches have been enrolled in the A&H program for the past seven years; this project would maintain access for an additional two years. The area provides Welcome to Hunt public access to 10,500 acres of private land and improves access to 28,200 of public (BLM) land. The project area provides excellent hunting opportunities for a variety of wildlife species, including mule deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, chukar, California quail, coyote, rabbit, bobcat, and cougar. The area supports an estimated 1,200 – 2,500 hunter use days per year. It is the highest priority access project for the A&H program in the Malheur region.

This project was originally proposed to provide five years of continued hunting access for a total A&H cost of \$118,125. In an effort to reduce program costs, the A&H Board approved this project for two years and requested that ODFW staff solicit funding from additional cooperators to help pay for the remaining three years of access. Board members clearly indicated this is a high priority project that they hope to continue beyond March 2014.

ODFW staff will post the site with Access Area signs and monitor hunter use and compliance; Oregon State Police will assist with hunter patrols as available. The landowners will maintain roads and fences as needed for continued public access.

#2011-28 Murphy Ranch Well Project

- A&H Funds: \$14,928 – Funded through Oregon Open Fields
- Cooperator Funds: \$10,700
- Total Project Cost: \$25,628
- Applicant: Martin Murphy LLC, Murphy Ranch, Lake County
Umbrella Watershed Council
- Location: Wagontire WMU (85% public lands)
- Access Acres: 5,000 private; 10,000 public
- Access Duration: 4 years: January 2012 – December 2015
- Habitat Acres: 15,000 (indirect benefit of water improvement)
- Cooperators: Landowner, Lake County Umbrella Watershed
Council, ODFW – Klamath Watershed District
- Council Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0

The proposed project would install a permanent well to provide year-round water for sage-grouse, pronghorn, mule deer, and other wildlife that utilize the shrub-steppe habitat surrounding the project area. The closest alternate water source is located two miles away; this project would affect animal distribution on an estimated 15,000 acres. The property is located in Wagontire WMU, where water availability is the primary habitat management challenge. Cooperators would fund project administration and drilling of the well; A&H funds would be used to purchase materials to case the well and transport water to a stock water tank.

The landowner has agreed to allow four years of Welcome to Hunt public access to 5,000 acres of private land and 10,000 acres of adjacent BLM land. This section of private land is the only motorized access for deer, pronghorn, bighorn, quail, and chukar hunters accessing BLM sections of Diablo Mountain from the southwest. A&H funding would be provided through the Oregon Open Fields program, a block grant that A&H received from the USDA's Farm Service Agency in 2010. One identified purpose of Open Fields is to improve wildlife habitat on private lands that provide public hunting access through state administered access programs such as A&H.