

Summary of Projects Recommended for Funding

The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board met in Salem on February 1, 2013 to review projects requesting funding from the A&H Program. A project must receive at least four supporting votes to be recommended for funding; four Board members attended the meeting. A brief description of the projects, funding requested, access and 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:

#2013-02 Hancock Forest Management Access Program

- A&H Funds: \$147,275
- Cooperator Funds: \$146,648
- Total Project Cost: \$293,923
- Applicant: Hancock Forest Management and ODFW NE Region
- Location: Sled Springs WMU (21% public lands)
Catherine Creek WMU (24% public lands)
Starkey WMU (67% public lands)
- Access Acres: 292,000
- Access Duration: 2 years: April 2013 – March 2015
- Cooperators: Hancock Forest Management, ODFW Enterprise District
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0

The proposed project would provide dedicated ODFW patrol on 158,000 acres of private timberland in northeast Oregon for two years. This land is owned by Hancock Forest Management (Hancock) and motor vehicle use is managed cooperatively by Hancock and ODFW through several Travel Management Area (TMA) agreements, including Noregaard, Shamrock, Whisky Creek, Little Catherine Creek, and Tip Top. The ODFW employee funded through this grant would maintain signs and gates and patrol the areas for road closure violations, resource damage, and wildlife violations.

In return for the dedicated patrol, Hancock will allow continued public hunting access to 292,000 acres. These lands are extremely popular hunting grounds, providing high quality deer, elk, bear, forest grouse, and turkey hunting. The proposal requested \$175,402 for 24 consecutive months of patrol. Due to budget constraints, the A&H Board approved funding for 20 months of patrol to be provided over a 24-month period. This project has evolved through time but has been in place in cooperation with different landowners since 1974.

#2013-03 Fur Mountain Access Area

- A&H Funds: \$5,448
- Cooperator Funds: \$500
- Total Project Cost: \$5,948
- Applicant: Gary Bloomer
- Location: Sumpter WMU (45% public land)
- Access Acres: 2,724 (private); 120 (public)
- Access Duration: 1 season: August 1, 2013 – January 31, 2014.
- Cooperators: Gary Bloomer
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0

The Fur Mountain Access Area has been enrolled in the A&H Program since 2009. The current proposal would provide an additional year of open public hunting access to 2,724 acre of private land from August 1 - January 31, 2013. The A&H Program would pay the landowner \$2.00 per acre.

The Fur Mountain Access Area is located in the southern portion of the Sumpter Wildlife Management Unit, which contains 75 percent private land and has historically been prone to elk damage. A long cow season is in place to address the damage, and increased public access would help to achieve the goals of this management effort. The property supports elk, mule deer, and upland game birds and provides access to 120 acres of previously land-locked public land.

The proposal requested funding for three years of hunting access. However, due to budget constraints, the A&H Board approved funding for one year and requested ODFW staff return next year with estimates of hunter use so the Board can make a more informed decision regarding a longer-term funding commitment. ODFW will use permit boxes and vehicle counters to estimate hunter use on the project.

#2013-04 Prairie Springs Wildlife Watering Project

- A&H Funds: \$7,207
- Cooperator Funds: \$18,197
- Total Project Cost: \$25,404
- Applicant: Grant Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)
- Location: Northside WMU (41% public lands)
- Habitat Acres: 500
- Cooperators: Warm Springs Tribes, Oregon Wildlife, Grant SWCD, landowner
- Council Vote: Yes: 5; No: 0
- Board Vote: Yes: 4; No: 0

The Prairie Springs Wildlife Watering Project would seed 48 acres of rangeland with dryland alfalfa and install a watering trough for wildlife. The 500-acre property currently winters approximately 100 elk and 200 mule deer. The habitat improvements would provide critical forage and clean, year-round water to help support deer and elk herds and alleviate wildlife grazing pressure on nearby irrigated meadows.

A grant application has been submitted to Oregon Wildlife (previously known as Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation) to purchase solar watering system materials; results of that application will not be known until March 2013. The Warm Springs Tribes would support the Grant SWCD technical and administrative efforts for this project. The landowner and A&H would share material and construction costs; A&H would purchase dryland alfalfa seed and the landowner would conduct the seeding.