

Oregon's Access & Habitat Board News

Spring 1997



The Access and Habitat Board was created by the 1993 Oregon Legislature and is funded by a \$2 surcharge on hunting licenses. The Board identifies and recommends funding for projects that improve wildlife habitat and facilitate public hunting access on private lands.

WOODS WATCH

A \$66,000 A & H grant is helping to keep over 1.6 million acres of north coast timberlands open to public access

By Jim Yuskavitch

Hunters prowling north coast private industrial timberlands for deer and elk may not realize it, but they can thank the Oregon State Police and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Access and Habitat Program for much of their access privileges.

Private timber companies have traditionally allowed the public to hunt on their lands during big game seasons, providing opportunities for thousands of hunters from nearby communities and cities. Unfortunately, in recent years, garbage dumping, vandalism, trespassing onto closed areas and liability concerns have become an increasing problem for forest owners. These problems have sometimes become so severe that north coast landowners were forced to seriously reconsider their practice of welcoming hunters onto their properties.

But a \$66,012 Access and Habitat Program grant, being used to contract with the Oregon State Police for security patrols on private lands during hunting seasons in the Benson Point Travel Management Area and other private forest lands, will help keep well over a million north coast acres open to the public. Part of an ongoing program, the North Coast Private Lands Access Project is a cooperative effort by ODFW and private landowners in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties to address problems associated with unregulated public access to private timberlands.

The funds will be used to continue current security patrols in the Benson Point Travel Management Area, and to expand patrols to encompass about 1.6

million acres in the Scappoose, Saddle Mountain and Wilson wildlife management units. Participants include the Oregon Department of Forestry, Willamette Industries, The Campbell Group, Evenson Timberland Agency, Longview Fibre, Stimson Lumber Company and other private timberland owners.

Security patrols during hunting season

ODFW will administer the project, which will run from late August to late November 1997. The project's total cost is \$133,233. Additional funding is being provided by participating landowners.

"Many landowners have been involved in the program and have seen the benefits," says ODFW Clackamas District assistant wildlife biologist Don VandeBergh. "The security patrols really give landowners the confidence to allow hunters on their lands."

Bob Teagle, resident forester for Willamette Industries North Coast Division couldn't agree more. "This cooperative A&H project has produced the least amount of vandalism and



Oregon State Police officers patrol forest lands during hunting seasons. Photo by Randy Henry

will be conducted by two retired Oregon State Police officers and three OSP cadets. In return for law enforcement assistance, these private landowners have agreed to continue allowing public access to their properties.

Volunteers from the Oregon Hunters Association, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and ODFW's Master Hunter Program will staff hunter information booths during high hunter use periods.

garbage dumping we have experienced in recent years and has allowed us to experimentally open up another 25,000 acres during the rifle season." Willamette Industries currently keeps about 175,000 acres of its properties in Clatsop and Tillamook counties open to public hunting. "We want people to hunt on our property," he adds. "We need to harvest those animals. It's a win-win situation all around." □

What's New?



Calendar of Events

May 5	Access and Habitat Board Meeting Salem (503) 872-5260 x5349
May 15	Controlled hunt application deadline for deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain goat
May 18	Eastern Oregon Deer Auction Hunt The Dalles Chapter, The Mule Deer Foundation (541) 298-1351
May 31	Eastern Oregon Combination Auction Hunt and Drawing for A&H Raffle Hunts Oregon Hunters Association Convention Eugene Hilton (541) 772-7313
June 6 - 7	Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting Portland (503) 872-5268
June 7	Free Fishing Day
June 20	Results available for controlled hunt drawings (503) 229-5463 or 1-800-708-1782
June 24 - 25	The Sagebrush Steppe: Sustainable Working Environments and Rangeland Health Workshop Burns (541) 573-2064
July 23	Access and Habitat Board Meeting Ontario (503) 872-5260 x5349
July 25	Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission Meeting Ontario (503) 872-5268
July 31	Controlled hunt tag purchase deadline for deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, Rocky Mountain goat

A&H and BMEI Team Up for Blue Mountains Workshops

On a four-day-eight-community circuit, A&H coordinator Beth Waterbury and Blue Mountains Elk Initiative coordinator Bill Mullarkey presented a series of workshops on their respective programs to northeast Oregon landowners, resource agency employees and sportsmen. Conducted in mid-March, the workshops attracted over 100 people interested in elk management programs or developing wildlife habitat enhancement and hunter access projects. The workshops were held in Enterprise, La Grande, Baker City, John Day, Paulina, Madras, Monument and Pendleton.

Both programs award grants toward efforts that promote cooperative management of fish and wildlife resources among private landowners, resource agencies and citizen groups. A&H and BMEI are frequent partners in funding cost-share projects, leveraging available funds, thus maximizing each program's effectiveness. BMEI is a charter organization created in 1990 to improve elk management in the Blue Mountains.

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A&H Reauthorization Legislation on Track

Tucked away between larger-looming issues such as education, state parks and property taxes, House Bill 2188 — the bill to extend the surcharge on hunting licenses which funds the A&H Program — has been making steady progress through the 1997 Oregon Legislature. The bill's first hearing took place in mid-February before the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

In early March, the Committee held a hearing and work session on an amended version of the bill, House Bill 2499. This bill would have required more stringent record-keeping requirements for landowners and limited expenditures for access projects to 50 percent of overall program expenditures (the figure now stands at 81 percent for projects that provide access). The Access and Habitat Board maintained support for HB 2188 in its original form with assurances to sponsors of HB 2499 that reporting concerns would be addressed in the program. The House Committee voted unanimously to support HB 2188 in its original form with an attached budget note directing the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to refine reporting procedures as outlined in a letter from A&H Board Chairman Bussard to Representative Larry Sowa.

HB 2188 moved quickly to the House of Representatives where it passed by a 56-0 "aye" vote, with four legislators excused. The bill has now been referred to the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee for review. As of mid-April, the Senate Committee has not yet scheduled a hearing or work session on the bill.

Auction Hunts Bag Big Bucks

With two auction hunts still to go, the 1997 program has garnered \$83,400 to date, with \$75,060 going to the A&H Program. A total of \$8,340 has been returned to the sponsoring organizations. So far, the Eastern Oregon Deer Hunt, auctioned by The Mule Deer Foundation, has drawn the highest bid at \$22,000. See the calendar for upcoming auction dates.



Project Update

Fish and Wildlife Commission approves 13 new Access and Habitat Projects and a request for additional Landowner Preference Tags at March meeting

1 Ussing Farm Habitat Project

The owners of Ussing Farm have received a \$6,120 grant to enhance upland bird habitat on a variety of small plots on their 230 acre property in Malheur County. Hunter access is by-permission and a youth hunt is pending for this fall.

2 Lost Creek and Little Malheur River Crossings

The Butler Ranch in Juntura has been granted \$16,800 to remove two old, unsafe bridges at Lockhart and Stanbro crossings, on the Little Malheur River, and improve a crossing on Lost Creek in order to maintain safe hunter access.

3 Mule Deer Springs Habitat and Access Project

A \$30,852 grant to rancher Robert Humphrey will be used to improve upland wildlife habitat on his 1,857 acre ranch near Post. The project includes spring development, controlled burning, forage seedings and fencing to improve livestock grazing management. Hunting access is provided to disabled veterans.

4 Dixie Meadow Riparian Improvement and Spring Rehabilitation Project

The Dixie Meadow Company of Prineville has been awarded a \$3,000 grant to improve meadow and riparian habitat on its property along the upper reaches of Lawson Creek, a tributary of Ochoco Creek in Crook County.

5 North Coast Private Lands Access

A \$66,012 grant awarded to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Columbia Region will be used to contract with the Oregon State Police to hire two retired OSP officers and three OSP cadets to conduct security patrols on private lands, which are open to public hunting, in Tillamook, Clatsop and Columbia counties.

6 Zumwalt/Sheep Divide Elk Hazer

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and six Wallowa County ranchers have received a \$2,000 grant to hire a technician to haze elk off of private lands in Wallowa County, and onto adjacent public lands. In return for participating, landowners allow public access for antlerless elk hunting.

7 Sled Springs Cooperative Access Project

The Boise Cascade Corporation and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife were granted \$16,600 to hire a seasonal technician to patrol and collect hunter harvest data on 200 square miles of company lands located in the Sled Springs Management Demonstration Area, Wallowa County.

8 Morgrass Regulated Hunt Area

A \$5,000 grant was awarded to the Morgrass Grazing Association to purchase fencing for improved livestock grazing management and to develop a regulated hunting program on their grazing lands near Long Creek in Grant County. The grazing association will allow up to 20 hunters per day by permission to their 9,000 acre property during the 1997 big game hunting seasons.

9 Alder Creek Habitat Improvement

Alder Creek Ranch was awarded a \$5,000 grant to improve forage for bighorn sheep and other big game by treating infestations of leafy spurge with herbicides as an alternative control to grazing domestic sheep on their property in Baker County. This will reduce the threat of passing disease from domestic sheep to local bighorn sheep.

10 Ungulate Management to Enhance Grazed Seasonal Rangeland Ecosystem Study

A \$20,000 grant has been awarded to the Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center to continue an ongoing study to determine the effects of elk and livestock grazing to develop beneficial grazing management techniques on private rangelands in lower Hells Canyon and the Wallowa Valley.

11 Hartwig Ranch Habitat Project

Mike Hartwig has been given a \$6,243 grant to develop high quality forage on his Benton County ranch and to reduce elk depredations on adjacent lands.

12 Thomas Creek Access Project

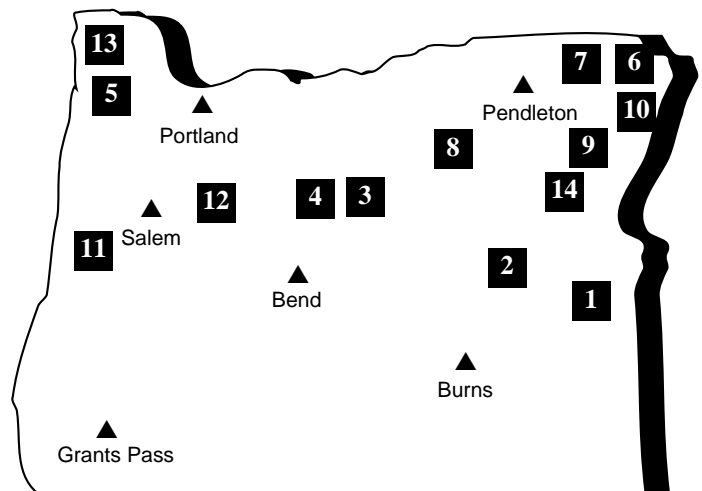
A \$1,200 grant awarded to the Capitol Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association will fund an ongoing volunteer effort to monitor access to 16,000 acres of Longview Fibre Company timberlands in the Thomas Creek area 40 miles east of Salem during hunting seasons.

13 Boiler Ridge Farm Fertilization

Landowner Phil Layman has been awarded a \$2,775 grant to improve pasture forage for elk and to create new pastures on his Boiler Ridge Farm located in Clatsop County.

14 Request for Landowner Preference Antlerless Elk Tags

North Powder ranchers Chris and Donna Heffernan were granted four additional landowner preference antlerless elk tags for providing significant public access and beneficial wildlife habitat programs on their property in Union County.



Access & Habitat Board
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
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Get Involved

For information on applying for an Access and Habitat grant contact Beth Waterbury, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, P.O. Box 59, Portland, OR 97207 (503) 872-5260 x5349

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