

Oregon's Access & Habitat Board News

Spring 2007



The Oregon Legislature established the Access and Habitat Program in 1993 using a \$2 surcharge on hunting licenses. The A&H Board, composed of members of the public, identifies and recommends funding for projects that improve wildlife habitat and facilitate public hunting access on private lands.

When spring arrives, A&H Program wildlife habitat projects bloom

Spring is a busy time for nature as grasses green up, leaves reappear on trees and flowers begin to sprout from the warming soil after the long winter. It is also a busy time for the A&H Program as A&H-funded seeding and fertilization projects get underway to help spring's renewal along. These types of projects are typical of the habitat work A&H funds, whose goals include increasing wildlife forage and cover on private lands, controlling erosion, slowing the spread of invasive plants and acting as diversionary crops to attract big game away from valuable agricultural lands while increasing private landowners tolerance for elk, deer and other wildlife. As an added bonus, these grants often come with conditions that facilitate public hunting use of the properties.

A common scenario for a seeding and fertilization project involves a rancher or farmer who has been playing unwelcome host to large numbers of deer or elk on his property that are eating his hay crops and leaving little for livestock forage. In those situations, the A&H Program can step in and provide some funding to strategically seed and fertilize a pasture. Sometimes the goal is to deliberately create a place for the animals to obtain forage for the purpose of drawing them away from nearby agricultural land. In other cases, seeding and fertilizing provides an extra cutting or two of alfalfa or other hay crops to make up for the crops elk and deer eat over the course of the year.

A case in point is a current project on the McLaren Ranch near Zumwalt Prairie in Wallowa County that received a \$9,575 A&H grant to plant big game forage on 103 acres of ranchlands.

The McLaren Ranch lies on an important big game migration route as they move onto the open grasslands of Zumwalt Prairie in the spring. Up to 1,000 elk have been counted on the property during migration periods. In addition, there is a resident population of up to 100 mule deer along with a summer elk population of about 300 animals.

"This project will produce more desirable forage for big game and hold them on higher ground longer, which will minimize damage to agricultural crops," said A&H Program Northeast Regional Coordinator Jon Paustian.

In return for the grant, the landowner will allow public hunting access for big game and upland birds on a "by-permission" basis for five years.

Those kinds of projects offer a significant benefit because big game animals that park themselves on cropland can put a noticeable dent in a rancher's finances. For example, another Eastern Oregon rancher who just received a \$40,000 A&H grant to create a diversionary forage crop pasture for the up to 100 deer and 200 elk that use his property reports annual hay crop losses of as much as \$10,000.

Another A&H fertilization project of note is conducted annually on seven meadows in Jackson County that are utilized extensively by elk. Elk are present on the properties during winter and spring where they feed on the hay crops, reducing the amount available for the landowners' cattle. Each spring, with funding from A&H and volunteer help and additional donations from the Rogue Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association, these meadows are fertilized to increase the amount of forage produced for the benefit of both big game and livestock. Public hunting access is permitted on five of the meadows.

"These property owners feed a lot of elk and deer," said Vince Oredson, A&H Southwest Regional Coordinator. "We want them to know that we appreciate their contribution and we're willing to help them grow a little more grass."

Seeding and fertilization projects are a mainstay of the A&H Program and effectively address the needs of big game, private landowners and hunters that clearly pays off with long-term habitat, hunting access and landowner relations benefits.



Volunteers from the Rogue Valley Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association unload fertilizer for the annual Rogue Meadows fertilization project in Southwest Oregon. ODFW photo

Seeds available to Malheur County landowners for upland bird habitat projects

Free grass seed is being made available to landowners in Malheur County who are interested in developing upland bird habitat enhancement projects on their properties through a joint program of ODFW and Pheasants Forever.

Private agricultural lands provide important habitat for pheasant, quail and other upland birds. However, upland bird populations have declined in many of Oregon's farming areas due to human development and more efficient farming practices that leave less cover and food for wildlife.

The idea behind the seed bank is to encourage Malheur County landowners to work with ODFW and Pheasants Forever to improve upland bird habitat on their lands by providing them with perennial grass seed and assistance in planning and implementing habitat improvement projects.

"If a landowner has a small parcel that he is willing to plant for cover for upland birds and other wildlife but doesn't have the resources to do it himself, we will help him out," said ODFW district wildlife biologist Walt Van Dyke.

The seed bank project is funded by a \$3,390 grant from the A&H Program along with a \$3,390 contribution from Pheasants Forever.

For more information on developing an upland bird habitat project and qualifying for free seed, contact the ODFW Ontario field office at (541) 889-6975.

Board visits popular A&H waterfowl hunting access project on South coast

During their April business meeting, members of the A&H Board and ODFW staff visited with landowners in the New River basin South of Bandon who are participating in an A&H hunter access project that allows public waterfowl hunting in the fall and spring hunting for Aleutian Canada geese as a management tool to haze the birds. The geese gather on the three properties in large numbers during their annual migrations and one landowner has observed up to 50,000 geese using his field.

The two-year project began last fall and allows a limited number of hunters to book waterfowl hunts, at no cost, on the three properties. The project opens 4,280 acres of private lands in the New River bottoms, one of the best waterfowl hunting areas on the South coast.

The landowners reported the hunts were very popular and all had a positive experience with the hunters, who were respectful of their properties.



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Name _____

Street/P.O. Box _____

City/State/ZIP Code _____

Calendar of Events

June 8*

Oregon Fish and Wildlife
Commission Meeting, Salem
503-947-6044

June 22

A&H Grant Application Deadline
503-947-6087

July 24

A&H Board Meeting,
Salem, 503-947-6087

September 6-7*

Oregon Fish and Wildlife
Commission Meeting, Klamath Falls
503-947-6044

September 14

A&H Grant Application Deadline
503-947-6087

October 15-16

A&H Board Meeting,
Burns, 503-947-6087

* Listed Commission meetings are those where A&H Project applications will be reviewed for final approval.

Have an idea for an A&H Project?

If you have an idea for a project that increases public hunting access to private lands and/or improves wildlife habitat contact the A&H Regional Coordinator nearest you for advice and assistance on applying for an A&H grant.

Northwest Region

Troy Laws, Tillamook 503-842-2741
Jim Young, Corvallis 541-757-4186

Southwest Region

Vince Oredson, 541-826-8774
Central Point

High Desert Region

Larry Pecenka, Bend 541-388-6444
Dan Gonzalez, Hines 541-573-6582

Northeast Region

Jon Paustian, La Grande 541-963-2138



Four New A&H Project Grants Approved

F&W Commission awards \$87,335 for new projects at March 2007 meeting

1 Abiqua Basin Hunter Access Project

A \$5,201 A&H Program grant will be used by the Capitol Chapter of the Oregon Hunters Association to continue an ongoing hunter access project on 40 square miles of timberlands owned by Longview Fibre near Silverton in the Abiqua basin.

OHA volunteers have been opening and closing gates to the property during big game hunting seasons since 1992, helping to reduce vandalism, garbage dumping and other illegal activities.

A&H Program funds will be used for printing maps, signs and reimbursing volunteers for mileage expenses.

2 Carmen Pasture Conversion and Weed Treatment

Wallowa County rancher Cory Carmen received a \$39,280 grant to convert 200 acres of agricultural lands that have been heavily grazed by elk and deer into a permanent pasture. This will provide big game with a year-round source of forage while diverting the animals away from other vulnerable grain croplands. About 800 acres surrounding the pasture will be treated for weeds. The project will also benefit upland game birds.

In return for the grant, the landowner will allow hunting access to 2,000 acres on a "by-permission" basis for five years.

3 Sheep Mountain Habitat Enhancement and Access

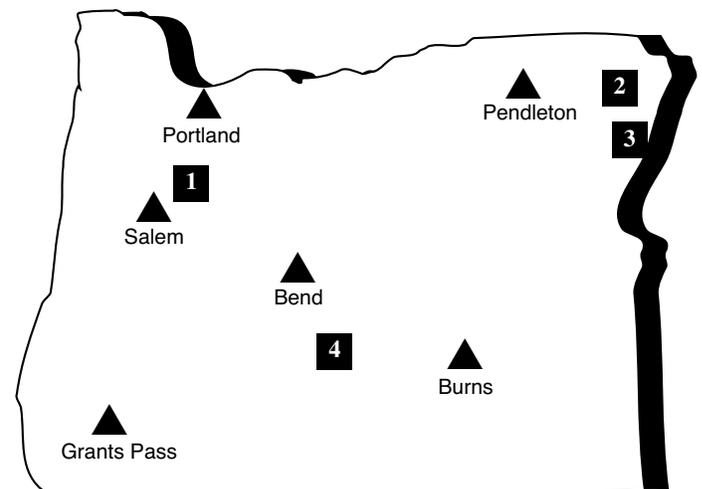
Baker County ranch owner Linda Mallery-McClean will use a \$12,854 grant towards building one mile of cross fence on her property to facilitate a grazing management plan that will improve habitat and forage for upland game birds and winter range for deer, elk and bighorn sheep.

In return for the grant, five years of public hunting access to the property will be allowed on a "by-permission" basis.

4 Crop Damage Restoration

A \$30,000 grant will be used to fertilize agricultural lands owned by LeeRoy Horton, of Fort Rock, to replace haycrops lost to large herds of deer and elk that forage on his lands. As many as 300 elk and 1,000 deer use the property during the winter. Horton will also switch from growing alfalfa to Timothy grass, whose root system holds the soil more effectively to reduce erosion.

Project Locations



Search underway for new A&H Program Coordinator

ODFW is in the process of interviewing candidates for the open position of A&H Program Coordinator, which was vacated by Nick Myatt who left to become the department's district wildlife biologist in Baker City. He is taking the place of George Keister, who recently retired. Greg Jackle, Assistant District Wildlife Biologist from ODFW's John Day office is the interim A&H Program Coordinator until a permanent coordinator is hired.

Steve McClelland appointed to A&H Program Board

Steve McClelland, of Cove, was appointed to the A&H Board by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at its March 2007 meeting to serve as a Hunter Representative. He has been a hunter for most of his life and is active in many sportsman's and natural resources organizations including Ducks Unlimited, Oregon Cattleman Association, Society for Range Management, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Grande Ronde Model Watershed and as a 4-H leader.

McClelland is Manager of rangeland resources for Forest Capital Partners.

He replaced former Board member Bob Lund who relocated out of state earlier this year.

Access and Habitat Board
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 3406 Cherry Avenue, N.E.
 Salem, OR 97303-4924



For information on applying for an Access and Habitat Program grant contact Greg Jackle, Interim A&H Program Coordinator, 3406 Cherry Avenue N.E., Salem, OR 97303-4924 503-947-6087

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