

# Oregon's Access & Habitat Board News

Summer 2009



The Oregon Legislature established the Access and Habitat Program in 1993, funded primarily through 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.

## Columbia Plateau Upland Habitat Initiative

Now in its second year, the Columbia Plateau Upland Habitat Initiative has seen significant progress in improving habitat for pheasants and other upland game birds thanks to the efforts of habitat technician Dennis Newman and the Access and Habitat Program, which awarded a \$145,000 grant to the Columbia Plateau Pheasants Forever (PF) and the Morrow County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in 2008 to help fund the effort for a three-year period. This grant was matched with \$86,434 from PF, Morrow SWCD, and federal cost-share programs for a total project cost of \$231,934.

Morrow County has traditionally been one of the best areas of the state for pheasant hunting, but populations of this popular game bird have been declining, partially due to more efficient farming practices that leave less food and cover for upland birds. The result has been a decline in hunting opportunities.

The goal of the Columbia Plateau Upland Habitat Initiative is to improve upland bird habitat on private land in Morrow and Gilliam counties by directly manipulating habitat and by providing technical assistance and coordination of project funding, materials, equipment, and labor.

Typical habitat improvement projects include grass, shrub, and tree planting, prescribed burning, weed control, and wildlife guzzler installation.

To date, 23 contracts have been established with private landowners for habitat improvement projects on their properties. Completed projects have produced 290 acres of food plots, 344 acres of brood



*The Columbia Plateau Upland Habitat Initiative is working to improve game bird habitat and increase hunting opportunities.*

rearing habitat, seven acres of trees/shrubs, 980 acres of controlled burns, and 17 wildlife guzzlers. In total, these projects have directly improved 4,341 acres of upland bird habitat, providing an indirect benefit to an estimated 37,195 acres. Approximately 90% of completed habitat improvements (over 4,100 acres) have been conducted on property that provides public access through A&H or ODFW's Upland Cooperative Access Program (UCAP).

Because of the potential for large-scale habitat improvement that Newman has demonstrated, the Oregon Hunters Association has contributed an additional \$25,000, the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation an additional \$30,000 and ODFW's Bird Stamp Program an additional \$35,000 to the program. This fall the Portland Metro Pheasants Forever Chapter and Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation will host a fundraising banquet to raise additional funds to help keep the Columbia Plateau Upland Habitat Initiative on track to creating more pheasant hunting opportunities in north-central Oregon.

## 2010 A&H Auction Hunt Sponsors Selected

At its July 2009 meeting in Salem, the A&H Board selected nine hunter organizations to sponsor A&H auction hunt tags at their 2010 fundraising banquets and conventions. Selected organizations for 2010 are:

- ◆ Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation - National Governor's Statewide Combination Deer and Elk
- ◆ National Wild Turkey Federation - Rogue Gobblers Statewide Deer
- ◆ Oregon Hunters Association - State Chapter Statewide Deer
- ◆ Oregon Bow Hunters Statewide Deer
- ◆ Mule Deer Foundation Statewide Deer
- ◆ Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Roseburg Chapter Statewide Elk
- ◆ Safari Club International - Santiam River Chapter Statewide Elk
- ◆ Unlimited Pheasants Statewide Elk
- ◆ Oregon Hunters Association - Lincoln County Chapter Statewide Elk

Successful bidders win a three-month hunting season in nearly every location in the state where hunting is permitted.

Watch for more details and event schedules in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.



## A&H Board Develops New Project Approval Guidelines

After two years of discussions, the A&H Board has developed new guidelines for evaluating and approving project proposals. Based on a scoring system, the new evaluation procedures will help board members prioritize projects for approval, communicate to applicants what makes a good project in the board's view, and facilitate applicants to address key project components in their proposals.

The project evaluation form that has been developed covers a number of specific criteria including:

- ◆ Current habitat conditions
- ◆ Partnerships and project cooperators
- ◆ Matching funds provided
- ◆ Proximity to other A&H properties
- ◆ Targeting of under-represented species
- ◆ Public access opportunities in the area

- ◆ Mitigation of wildlife damage
- ◆ Access provided (private and/or public lands)
- ◆ Special access, such as youth hunts
- ◆ Number of species available to hunt
- ◆ Restrictions on species or season of harvest
- ◆ Impacts on game dispersion/availability
- ◆ Importance of project location
- ◆ Compatibility with ODFW Conservation Strategy

Equal weight is given to access-only and habitat-only projects, but projects that contain both components have a higher scoring potential.

Although this evaluation system relies on scoring, the scores are non-binding and board members may vote on projects based on their own experience and knowledge as well as other factors.

## A&H Board Seeks to Fill Upcoming Hunter Rep Vacancy

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is currently seeking to fill a hunter representative position on the A&H Program Board now held by Duane Bernard, whose term will end on December 31, 2009.

A&H Board members review and recommend wildlife habitat improvement and hunter access projects for funding to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife

Commission. Board members serve four-year terms.

Those with an interest and experience in hunting and wildlife conservation are encouraged to apply. Application deadline is October 12, 2009.

For more information contact A&H Program staff at (503) 947-6087.

### Calendar of Events

#### October 2

Tag deadline for western Oregon deer centerfire, black bear, cougar

#### October 16

Tag deadline for Cascade elk centerfire  
*All ODFW offices closed – state furlough*

#### October 20

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

#### October 27

Tag deadline Rocky Mountain elk centerfire

#### December 11\*

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

\*Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings where A&H business is being conducted.

## 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

Dave Nuzum, Tillamook 503-842-2741  
Jim Young, Corvallis 541-757-4186

#### Southwest Region

Vince Oredson, 541-826-8774  
Central Point

#### High Desert Region

Crystal Strobl, The Dalles 541-296-4628  
Dan Gonzalez, Hines 541-573-6582

#### Northeast Region

Jon Paustian, La Grande 541-963-2138

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### A&H on the Web

[www.dfw.state.or.us/AH](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/AH)



## 8 A&H Projects Approved in June

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved 8 new A&H projects at its June 2009 meeting in Salem.

### **Rufenacht Land and Cattle Company Access Area**

A \$15,153 grant will pay the landowner to permit public hunting on 5,647 acres of private property from August 1, 2009 to July 31, 2010. An additional \$600 will be dedicated for maps and signs, and another \$1,000 will be used to construct two kiosks identifying the hunt area.

The property is located in the Sumpter Wildlife Management Unit and offers a variety of hunting opportunities including pronghorn, mule deer, elk, bear, coyote, cougar, turkey, forest grouse, and California quail.

### **Imnaha River Canyon Access Area**

The Nature Conservancy was awarded a \$14,774 grant to hire an ODFW seasonal employee who will patrol 6,673 acres of the organization's land in the lower Imnaha River Canyon during hunting season, mainly within the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area. Also included in the grant amount are funds for vehicle fuel and maps.

The Nature Conservancy will allow public hunting access to its holdings in the area, which will also substantially improve access to about 45,000 acres of adjacent public lands.

Hunting opportunities include mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, bear, cougar, coyote, wild turkey, waterfowl, and upland birds.

### **Lost Valley Ranch Regulated Hunt Area**

Owners of the Lost Valley Ranch will receive a \$15,207 grant to allow public hunting to 6,336 acres of their land from August 1, 2009 to March 31, 2010. In addition, \$600 will be used to print and distribute project area maps to hunters.

Located within the Fossil Wildlife Management Unit, the property offers hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, predators, small game, wild turkey, and upland birds.

### **Timbers/Spring Butte Travel Management Area**

A \$24,498 grant will provide funding for Oregon State Police patrols on 33,450 acres of private timberlands from August 2009 to January 2010. This access project has been funded by the A&H Program since 2000 and includes road and guzzler maintenance and wildlife and public use monitoring, in addition to law enforcement patrols.

Located in the Paulina Wildlife Management Unit, this project provides hunting opportunities for deer and elk.

### **New River Aleutian Goose Project**

A \$24,750 grant will continue this popular waterfowl hunting access project in the New River basin on the South Coast. The funds will compensate four landowners with fertilizer required to maintain 1,800 acres of pasture that are decimated by a large migrating population of Aleutian Canada geese each spring. In return, the landowners provide public access for waterfowl hunting on an advance reservation basis.

The A&H Program began funding this project in 2006.

### **C2 Ranch Habitat Improvement**

The owners of the C2 Ranch will receive a \$5,000 grant to chemically treat Himalayan blackberry on a 200-acre pasture to increase forage for deer. In addition, the landowner will cut 20 acres of decadent ceanothus and fertilize 60 acres.

In return for the grant, the landowners will provide seven youth deer hunts and three youth spring turkey hunts during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 seasons; each hunter will be provided with a guide. The C2 Ranch is located within the Rogue Wildlife Management Unit.

The A&H program has been funding this project since 2007.

### **Palomino Butte Access Area**

A \$19,738 grant will open 7,343 acres of private land and 640 acres of land-locked public lands to public hunting from August 2009 to July 2010. Of the total grant, \$18,238 will be paid to the landowners and the remainder will be used to produce and post hunt area signs and print maps of the hunt area.

The property is located within the Juniper Wildlife Management Unit and offers hunting opportunities for mule deer, elk, pronghorn, coyote, and sage grouse.

### **Irwin Habitat Project**

An \$8,400 grant will be used by landowner Jeff Irwin to develop a 1.5-acre pond to provide a water source for mule deer, upland birds, and waterfowl habitat on his property in Malheur County.

Because there is no perennial water source on the property, big game cross the adjacent highway to gain access to irrigation ditches, increasing the number of animals killed by vehicles each year. In addition, waterfowl that nest along the irrigation ditches are vulnerable to predation. Construction of the pond will increase waterfowl rearing success and reduce mule deer mortality from collisions with motor vehicles.

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 A&H Program Coordinator Matt Keenan at 3406 Cherry Avenue N.E., Salem, OR 97303-4924, 503-947-6087

**Oregon's Access and Habitat Board News, Summer 2009, Vol. 14, No. 3**

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