

Oregon's Access & Habitat Board News

Spring 2010



The Oregon Legislature established the Access and Habitat Program in 1993, funded primarily through a surcharge on hunting licenses and proceeds derived from deer and elk auction and raffle tags. 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.

A&H helps fund habitat restoration on former ranch

A former ranch along the John Day River is on track for extensive habitat restoration with the most recent project just completed on one of the river's tributaries. The restoration project was funded in part by a \$25,200 grant from the Access and Habitat Program.

The Portland-based Western Rivers Conservancy purchased the 8,114-acre former Murtha Ranch in Gilliam County in 2008 and has been working to restore its riparian and upland habitat for the benefit of fish and wildlife. ODFW has been a major partner in this ongoing effort.

Public 'welcome to hunt' access is provided on the property.

In mid-March, the Conservancy, with help from Arlington High School students and a private contractor, planted about 4,000 native trees along Hay Creek.

"Hay Creek is a special place," said Alan Christensen, senior project manager

for the Conservancy. "It's an important summer steelhead spawning stream, and the mainstem [of the John Day River] is extremely valuable for a variety of fish and wildlife."

Last fall, ODFW assisted the Conservancy in weed eradication and provided bitterbrush and mock orange seeds for planting. In early March, Pheasants Forever helped plant native grasses on 70 acres of the property through the Columbia Plateau Upland Initiative, a program funded by the A&H Program to encourage upland game bird habitat improvement on private lands in Morrow and Gilliam counties.

The Initiative accomplishes that goal by directly manipulating habitat and providing technical assistance, and coordinating funding, materials, equipment, and labor.

"We've had a great partnership with ODFW," said Christensen.

The Western Rivers Conservancy will continue to improve and restore habitat on the property over the next several years.

The ranch will eventually become a state park. However, public hunting will continue to be allowed on the property.



Local high school students planted native shrubs and trees along Hay Creek in March. Photo by Jenny DuVander/Western Rivers Conservancy.

A&H Board inspects JACTMA

Members of the Access and Habitat Board toured a portion of the Jackson Access and Cooperative Travel Management Area (JACTMA) near Elk Creek during their April meeting, which was held in Medford.

JACTMA was established in 1995 to increase law enforcement patrols, institute a motorized vehicle travel management system, and implement wildlife habitat projects on more than 50,000 acres of private timberlands in Jackson County. The reduction in garbage dumping, vandalism, poaching and other violations, and resource damage has allowed the timber companies to continue to allow public hunting access to the properties. Road closures have been especially important for reducing soil erosion and damage to wet roads, and improving the overall hunting experience.

The A&H Program has helped fund this hunter access project since its inception.



A tour of a portion of the JACTMA property was an agenda item at the Access and Habitat Board's April meeting in Medford.



2010 A&H auction and raffle hunts garner nearly \$335K

The 2010 Access and Habitat Program auctions and raffle grossed \$334,675, of which \$309,575 will go to the program to fund wildlife habitat and hunter access improvement projects around the state. The auctions brought in \$251,000, while the raffle earned \$83,675.

The sportsman/conservation groups that sponsored the auctions at various banquets and conventions in the past few months keep 10 percent of the auction proceeds. Those groups include the Safari Club International, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, National Wild Turkey Federation, Oregon Bow Hunters Association, Unlimited Pheasants, and Oregon Hunters Association.

Winners of the special tags enjoy an extended season and expanded hunt area. A list of the auction proceeds and raffle winners follows.

2010 Auction Sales

- Statewide Elk- \$26,000 (Safari Club International, Albany, Feb. 6)
- Statewide Deer- \$24,000 (Mule Deer Foundation, Salt Lake City, Feb. 12)
- Statewide Elk - \$26,000 (Mule Deer Foundation/Unlimited Pheasants, Klamath Falls, Feb. 20)
- Statewide Deer - \$33,500 (Oregon Bow Hunters Association, Lincoln City, Feb. 27)
- Governor's Statewide Deer/Elk Combination - \$45,000 (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Reno, March 5)
- Statewide Deer - \$21,000 (National Wild Turkey Federation, Medford, March 20)
- Statewide Elk - \$31,500 (Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Roseburg, Mar. 20)
- Statewide Elk - \$21,000 (Oregon Hunters Association, Lincoln City, Apr. 10)
- Statewide Deer - \$23,000 (Ore. Hunters Association, Canyonville, May 15)

2010 Raffle Winners

- Statewide Combination Deer and Elk – Alfredo Julian, Vancouver, Wash.
- Statewide Deer – Robert Hall, Los Gatos, Calif.
- Southeast Oregon Deer – Raymond Wurdinger, Dayton
- Central Oregon Deer – Lawrence Grassman, Christmas Valley
- Northeast Oregon Deer – Russell Bingaman, Imbler
- Statewide Elk – Gerald Warnock, Portland
- Northeast Oregon Elk – Benjamin Arata, Amargosa, Nev.
- Central/Southeast Oregon Elk – Michael Sheets, Redmond
- Western Oregon Elk – Kenneth Wallace, Cottage Grove

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Calendar of Events

July 20

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

September 2*

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

September 7

A&H Grant Applications Due
503-947-6087

October 18-19

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

*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

Larry Pecenka, Bend 541-388-6444
Meg Eden, Prineville 541-447-5111
Dan Gonzalez, Hines 541-573-6582

Northeast Region

Jon Paustian, La Grande 541-962-1838

A&H on the Web

www.dfw.state.or.us/AH



A&H continues to expand and maintain public hunting access to private lands

The Access and Habitat Program continued to provide public hunting access on private lands when 15 A&H hunting access grants totalling \$757,951 were approved by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at its March 2010 meeting. These projects make available 170,917 acres of private lands in eastern and southwestern Oregon to public hunting opportunities.

These access properties include a variety of habitat types such as industrial timberlands, rangelands, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Hunting opportunities include elk, deer, pronghorn, cougar, bear, upland birds, waterfowl, and small game.

In addition, some projects also improve access to adjacent public lands, such as The Nature Conservancy's Imnaha River Access project, which allows easier access to 45,000 acres of public lands in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area.



Sage grouse are one of the many species available to hunt on A&H private lands access projects.

Project	Acres	Access
<i>Grande Ronde Watershed District</i>		
Forsea Ranch Access Area	9,329	5 yrs.
Widman Access Area	8,430	5 yrs.
Owsley Canyon Access Area	435	5 yrs.
Smutz Access Project	1,414	5 yrs.
Rufenacht Access Area	4,727	5 yrs.
Bloomer Access Area	2,724	3 yrs.
Imnaha Canyon Access Area	6,673	2 yrs.
Troy Ranches Access Area	5,696	1 yr.
<i>Malheur Watershed District</i>		
Jenkins Access Area	13,233	5 yrs.
Palomino Butte Access Area	7,343	3 yrs.
Bentz Access Area	400	2 yrs.
McBride Access Area	10,100	5 yrs.
<i>John Day Watershed District</i>		
Lost Valley Ranch RHA	6,336	5 yrs.
<i>Umpqua Watershed District</i>		
Sutherlin Access Project	89,600	3 yrs.
Territorial Youth Deer Hunt	4,477	3 yrs.

Mule deer habitat improvement project begins on Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area in Grant County

Nearly 1,135 acres of critical mule deer habitat on the Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area will be improved by removing encroaching western juniper as the result of a project that began in early May and funded in part by a \$50,000 grant from the Access and Habitat Program.

The 42,000-acre Phillip W. Schneider Wildlife Area, located in Grant County south of Dayville, is owned and managed by ODFW and is part of a larger area within the Murderers Creek basin that provides nearly 120,000 acres of important winter mule deer range.

As many as 30,000 mule deer historically spent the winter in the Murderers Creek basin, but over the years fire suppression, intensive grazing, and topsoil erosion converted the original shrub and grassland habitat to one dominated by western juniper, which decreased habitat quality for mule deer, elk, and other wildlife.

The project will involve cutting and stacking encroaching junipers, then burning the piles in a couple of years after they

have dried out. Because deer and elk will seek out junipers for shade during hot weather, some of the older, larger trees will be left.

"Removing the junipers will help stimulate bitterbrush, grass and forb growth," said Greg Jackle, ODFW assistant district wildlife biologist for the John Day Watershed District. "Because junipers use large amounts of water, removing them will also keep more water in the soil to be utilized by other plant species."

The Access and Habitat Program has funded a number of habitat projects in the Murderers Creek basin including past juniper removals and a five-year project by volunteers from the Oregon Hunters Association who planted thousands of native shrubs to increase the available big game forage.

The Murderers Creek Wildlife Management Unit is a focus of ODFW's Mule Deer Initiative, a program to increase Oregon's mule deer populations, which have been declining throughout the West in recent years.

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, Spring 2010, Vol. 15, No. 2
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 3406 Cherry Avenue N.E., Salem, OR 97303-4924

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