

# *Access and Habitat Program Landowner Survey*

## **Results of a Statewide Survey of Participating Access and Habitat Landowners**

**August 22 – September 19, 2004**

### **Final Report for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife**

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by Joel D. Bloom, Ph.D.  
Oregon Survey Research Laboratory

**OSRL**

**OREGON SURVEY RESEARCH LABORATORY**

5245 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

EUGENE, OR 97403-5245

TELEPHONE: 541-346-0824

FAX: 541-346-0388

[osrl@uoregon.edu](mailto:osrl@uoregon.edu)

<http://osrl.uoregon.edu>



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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This document reports a summary of results of a survey commissioned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (subsequently “ODFW”) of Oregon landowners who participate in the Access and Habitat program, or who have done so in the past. The survey was conducted by the Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) between August 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup> 2004.

Questions were developed collaboratively between principal investigator Joel Bloom and other OSRL staff, and ODFW staff including Eric Rickerson, Steve Cherry, and Nick Myatt. Questions were carefully designed to enable ODFW to measure the experiences, perceptions, and needs of landowners participating in the Department’s Access and Habitat Program.

### **II. METHODOLOGY**

- ODFW provided OSRL with a list of 107 participating Access and Habitat landowners in the state of Oregon, representing 108 projects. We attempted to interview everyone on the list.
- The University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory completed 90 confidential telephone interviews with adult Oregonians between August 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004.
- For the total sample, the CASRO-type response rate was 89% and the refusal rate was 2%.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the accompanying “How OSRL Calculates Response Rates and Refusal Rates” for a detailed description of how response and refusal rates are calculated.

- Based on the overall sample size of 90, and the total population of 101 (the total population minus the eight ineligible) the margin of error for a variable with a 50-50 proportional split is 3.4 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level. This means readers can be 95% sure that the true population figure is between 46.6% and 53.4% (i.e., 50%  $\pm$  3.4 percentage points). For a variable with a 90-10 proportional split the margin of error is 2.0 percentage points (i.e., 90%  $\pm$  2.0 percentage points).
- Because of the small size of both the overall population being surveyed, and of our sample, it does not make sense thinking about different margins of errors for subgroups and all data reported here are in actual numbers rather than percentages.

### III. FINDINGS

#### Awareness of Access and Habitat

Respondents were first asked where they have first heard of the Access and Habitat Program:

*How did you first learn about the Access and Habitat Program?*

The results, shown in Table 1 reflect a wide variety of ways in which hunters became aware of it. The most common ways in which landowners heard of the program are ODFW staff, and word of mouth. The 17 “other” responses themselves show a wide variety of other ways (these responses are included in the survey’s “toplines” report.)

ODFW Staff	46
Access & Habitat Council or Board Member	5
ODFW Brochure	1
Advertisement	1
Word of Mouth	18
Other (Specified in “Responses to Open-Ended Questions”)	17
Don’t Know	2
Total	90
Sample Size: 90; Sampling Error: +/- 3.4% (95% confidence interval, 50/50 proportional split)	

Public Hunting as a Part of Access and Habitat Program

The next group of questions asked respondents about whether their project included public hunting:

*Is public hunting access a component of your Access and Habitat project?*

Of the 90 projects in the sample, 69 included public hunting access and 21 did not.

The 69 landowners with public hunting access were then asked a series of questions about their experiences with public hunting, starting with whether they had observed hunters on their property:

*Have you observed, or are you aware of, any public hunters on your land  
During the last 12 months?*

As seen in Table 2, below, a large majority – 58 of the 69 landowners with public hunting access – had observed, or were aware of public hunters on their land in the last 12 months.

Observed Hunters	58
Did not Observe Hunters	11
No Public Hunting	21
Total	90

Next, landowners who had observed (or were aware of) hunters were asked how the number of hunters compared to their expectations. As seen in Table 3, below, shows, the large majority found that their expectations were largely confirmed, with 42 of the 58 landowners who were aware of public hunters on their property feeling that the numbers matched their expectations.

More than Expected	8
About What Expected	42
Fewer than Expected	4
Don't Know	1
Did not Observe Hunters	11
No Public Hunting	21
Total	90

When asked next about whether the number of hunters was too high, too low, or about right, again the majority of landowners felt that the numbers were about right, as shown in Table 4.

Too Many Hunters	7
About Right	46
Too Few Hunters	1
Can't Tell	2
Don't Know	2
Did not Observe Hunters	11
No Public Hunting	21
Total	90

Next, landowners were asked to estimate roughly how often public hunters hunt on their property. As shown in Table 5, this question produced a bimodal distribution, with large numbers of properties in both the highest category (60 times a year or more, with 18) and a more moderate category (5-19 times, with 15). A broad range of experiences, from no hunters at all, to a great number of hunters, is represented in the program.

60 Times or More	18
40-59 Times	11
20-39 Times	8
5-19 Times	15
1-4 Times	3
Never	1
Don't Know	2
No Public Hunting/Did not Observe	32
Total	90

When asked what species are hunted on their Access and Habitat properties, by far the predominant response is "Big Game," with 27 in this category. No projects were hunted exclusively for game birds and only one was hunted exclusively for waterfowl, but large numbers of projects were hunted for waterfowl or game birds in combination with big game (see survey topline for a complete listing of "other" responses).

Big Game	27
Waterfowl	1
Combination, Other	29
No Answer	1
No Public Hunting/Did not Observe	32
Total	90

Next, landowners were asked if they had ever had any problems with public hunters using their land. 21 reported having had problems, while, 36 reported no problems. Responses to the open-ended question on what these problems were show problems in a number of areas, including leaving gates open, littering, shooting their livestock, shooting too close to buildings, damaging property, and inappropriate use of four-wheel drive all-terrain vehicles. (Complete responses are in the survey topline document.)

How the Access and Habitat Program has Met Landowners' Needs

Next, all landowners in the sample were asked a number of questions related to how well the Access and Habitat Program met, or is meeting, their needs. As shown in Table 7, the large majority of landowners surveyed do feel that the program met, or is meeting, their needs. The topline document includes a complete transcription of responses to a follow-up question on ways in which landowners said the program either met or did not meet their needs.

Yes	77
No	4
In Between	7
Don't Know	2
Total	90

When asked to rate their overall experience with the program, 84 landowners rated the experience as positive, with only 3 rating it negative, 2 in between and one "no answer." Table 8 breaks it down further, showing 61 rating the program very positive and only one rating it as very negative. This appears to be a strong vote of confidence in the program, but does not tell the whole story, since even many landowners who evaluated the program positively did express problems or dislikes about the program in other questions. A complete evaluation of responses to the open-ended questions – including the questions that immediately follow this one – will thus be of great value to the Department in developing a more complete and nuanced sense of the participating landowners' evaluations of the Program.

Very Positive	61
Somewhat Positive	23
In Between	2
Somewhat Negative	2
Very Negative	1
No Answer	1
Total	90

The open-ended questions include:

*What do you LIKE about participating in the Access and Habitat Program?*

*What do you DISLIKE about participating in the Access and Habitat Program?*

*What Improvements would you like to see in the Access and Habitat Program?*

*Is there anything else that you would like to say about the Access and Habitat Program?*

Responses to these open-ended questions are included in the survey's topline report, and provide a wealth of information on landowners' evaluations of the programs, including stories of specific incidents, both positive and negative. It is the nature of responses to these sorts of questions, that they do not lend themselves to presentation in this sort of report, but the information contained in them is very valuable indeed, with regards to both the positives and negatives of the Program.

Just before the end of the survey, landowners are asked whether they would "consider becoming involved in an Access and Habitat program again in the future." This is perhaps the most important question for evaluating individuals' happiness or unhappiness with the program. Here again, the result appears largely positive, with 73 landowners saying they would consider future participation, five saying they would not, and another 11 saying that it would depend.

Yes	73
No	5
It Depends	11
No Answer	1
Total	90

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

The survey produces a number of findings, including:

- Landowners learned of the Access and Habitat Program from a variety of sources;
- Most projects involve public hunting, and most of public hunting involves big game;
- Most landowners have seen about the number of hunters they expected, and describe that number as "about right;"
- Most landowners feel that the Program has met their needs and are happy with the program, the largest group being very happy with it;
- Most landowners would consider participating in the future;
- Behind the overall very high levels of satisfaction are a great many individual stories, including identification of some problem areas, and some excellent suggestions for improvements.