Oregon’s Access & Habitat Board News

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.

GUARDIANS AT THE GATE

Funded by the Access and Habitat Board, a volunteer patrol program keeps private forest lands open to hunting.

By Jim Yuskavitch

Oregon hunters have long been guardians of our wildlife through the millions of dollars they contribute toward wildlife management. But in the western foothills of the Cascade Mountains, hunters are involved in two Access and Habitat projects that have made them literally “guardians at the gate,” in a successful effort to keep 40,000 acres of industrial timberlands — which also happen to be prime big game habitat — open to public hunting.

The two project areas are the 24,000 acre Abiqua Basin located 12 miles southeast of Silverton in Marion County and the 16,000 acre Thomas Creek area, 10 miles southeast of Lyons in Linn County. Both parcels are second-growth forest lands owned by Longview Fibre. The company traditionally keeps these lands open to the public for hunting during the big-game rifle seasons, which generally run from the first week in October through the first week in November.

It all began back in 1992. “It happened to be a bad fire year and we closed down the Abiqua Basin to the public because of the fire danger,” explains Dick Stonex, Silver Creek Falls Tree Farm manager for Longview Fibre. “Later in the season we got a break in the weather and opened it up again.” Unfortunately, that unleashed a rash of vandalism on their property ranging from equipment being used for target practice to stolen CB radios. The problem became so bad that contractors working in the basin had to hire extra personnel to guard jobsites.

“By the end of the hunting season I had about had it,” continues Stonex. “I had a notion to permanently close down the area. I realized that it wasn’t the hunters who were causing most of the problems. But the vandalism was getting out of hand.”

One day, Stonex was explaining the situation to local Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists, who suggested that he contact the Oregon Hunters Association and other area hunters to see if they would be interested in a volunteer security patrol program. Stonex set up a meeting with local hunters, explained the problems his company was having and invited them to set up a volunteer patrol project that might help continue to keep the Abiqua Basin open to the public. In response, a group of hunters from the Silvertown area — led by locals Steve and Nori Kaser — and some members of the Oregon Hunters Association from Salem stepped forward to help.

The plan was simple. Volunteers get out on the site early in the morning during the hunting season, opening the gate to the property an hour or so before daylight, and closing it an hour or two after dark. Volunteers sit in a vehicle by the gate and keep track of who enters the property. Later in the day, they drive through the area to monitor hunting activity. The idea is to maintain a visible presence in order to discourage vandalism. Volunteers concentrate primarily on weekends, although they are able to field volunteers on some weekdays as well.

“We had some complaints from hunters at first,” says Sandy Sanderson, president of OHA’s Capitol Chapter in Salem. “But when we explained to them that without the patrol program the area would be shut down to hunting, they not only supported us, but even offered to help.”

Results were encouraging. Incidents of vandalism dropped. So in 1993, when the OHA Capitol Chapter asked Stonex if he had any other areas that would benefit from a patrol program, it just so happened that he did.

“I had been having problems with vandalism on about 16,000 acres of our property on Thomas Creek,” relates Stonex. “The timber was just about at the age when we were thinking about doing some pre-commercial thinning and bringing in some equipment. So when the OHA group asked me if there were other areas where they could help, I said yes.”

The Oregon Hunters Association has been patrolling the Thomas Creek area every hunting season since 1993, with about 22 of their members volunteering on a regular basis. The Abiqua Basin patrol program has been going strong since 1992, with volunteers coming from the ranks of Silverton-area hunters.

“It’s really worked well,” says Stonex. “The littering and vandalism have pretty much diminished.” As far as Stonex is concerned, he wants to continue the program indefinitely. And the volunteers feel the same way.

In fact, this year volunteers from the Capitol Chapter of OHA have purchased a couple of two-way radios to better assist lost hunters. They also bought magnetic signs for their vehicles that proclaim ‘OHA Volunteer’ to increase their visibility with the public.

The A&H Program has funded both efforts since their inception, most recently providing the Abiqua Basin project a two-year $5,350 grant and the Thomas Creek project a two-year $2,400 grant.
## Calendar of Events

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<td>The Mule Deer Foundation (916) 987-8581</td>
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<td>January 23</td>
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<td>Portland</td>
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<td>January 25</td>
<td>Governor’s Elk Auction Hunt</td>
<td>Valley Forge, Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>February 21</td>
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<td>February 24</td>
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<td>Eastern Oregon Combination Auction Hunt</td>
<td>Eugene</td>
<td>Oregon Hunters Association (541) 772-7313</td>
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### What’s New?

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- **Name** ____________________________
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### A&H Board’s 1997 Deer And Elk Raffle Hunt Tickets Now On Sale

Oregon hunters have an opportunity to bag an additional bull elk or buck deer while hunting several management units during a three month-long hunting season by participating in the Access and Habitat Board’s 1997 Deer and Elk Raffle Hunts.

Tickets went on sale on December 1 and include a western Oregon combination hunt (one deer and one elk), western Oregon deer hunt, northeast Oregon deer hunt, southeast Oregon deer hunt, central Oregon deer hunt, northeast Oregon elk hunt, southeast Oregon elk hunt, central Oregon elk hunt and western Oregon elk hunt.

Deer hunt ticket prices are $3.00 for one ticket, $10.00 for six tickets and $20.00 for 13 tickets. Elk raffle tickets are $5.00 for one, $20.00 for six and $40.00 for 13. Raffle tickets are available at all Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife point-of-sale license vendors and by mail order from the Department’s headquarters in Portland.

Any weapon legal for the species being hunted may be used to fill a raffle tag, which allows winners a three month hunting season in areas that go beyond normal hunt boundaries. Winners may also harvest a deer or elk with general or controlled season tags.

Point-of-sale ticket purchase deadline is May 18, 1997. All purchased tickets must be filled out and returned to ODFW’s Portland headquarters postmarked no later than May 24, 1997. The drawing will be held during the Oregon Hunters Association Convention on May 31, 1997 at the Eugene Hilton, 66 E. 6th Avenue, Eugene.

All proceeds from the sale of raffle tickets will be used to fund projects that increase hunter access to private lands and enhance and restore wildlife habitat.

For more information contact Beth Waterbury, A&H Coordinator, (503) 872-5260 x 5349. For information on the Oregon Hunters Association Convention call Duane Dungannon at (541) 772-7313.
The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission on December 13 approved a grant which had been recommended by the Access and Habitat Board. The commission also approved requests for modifications on three previously approved projects as required by Access and Habitat Program administrative rules.

1 **Reimbursement for Purchase of No-Till Grain Drill**

The Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation was granted $943.89 to reimburse them for monies spent to help the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Columbia Region purchase a no-till grain drill. The drill is currently being used to plant forage crops for deer, elk, waterfowl, upland birds and other species of wildlife on pastures damaged by flooding in 1996.

2 **Crooked Creek Habitat Project Modification**

Robert Gregg, of Vernonia, was granted a one-year extension on his four-year Access and Habitat Project to enhance elk forage on his property, located in ODFW’s Columbia Region.

3 **Weiss and Wilcox Habitat Project Modification**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Rogue District and landowners Eric Weiss and Beth Wilcox received approval to modify several aspects of their Access and Habitat project, which was originally approved in September 1995.

4 **Trout Creek Watershed Improvement Project Modification**

Darrell Friend was granted approval to shift $4,400 in funding originally slated for juniper thinning to the purchase of seed for forage enhancement on his Access and Habitat project in Jefferson County. Two thousand acres of Friend’s property burned in the Ashwood-Donnybrook fire last year.

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**Access and Habitat Board Seeks Grant Proposals For 1997**

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Access and Habitat Board has $400,000 in grant money currently available and is interested in hearing from organizations and individuals with ideas for projects that would enhance wildlife habitat and increase hunter access on private lands in Oregon.

The board is seeking proposals from private landowners, resource management agencies, sporting groups and other individuals and organizations for projects that enhance wildlife forage, develop water sources, protect sensitive habitats, provide seed and fertilizer to offset forage consumed by wildlife, create hunting lease programs that provide public access, promote hunter education and coordinate law enforcement activities on private lands.

Proposals that provide both habitat enhancement and hunter access, utilize volunteers, generate matching funds from other sources, minimize wildlife-related economic losses to landowners and recognize and encourage the contributions of private landowners to wildlife resources are particularly sought.

Project proposals are first reviewed by a regional advisory council located within the area of the proposed project, then by the Access and Habitat Board. The board is composed of seven members representing hunters, landowners and the general public. The board then forwards projects it recommends for funding for review by the Fish and Wildlife Commission, which has final authority in the approval process.

For more information on applying for an Access and Habitat Program grant, contact Beth Waterbury, Access and Habitat Program Coordinator, at (503) 872-5260, extension 5349.

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**1997 State Legislature to Consider Access & Habitat Program Reauthorization**

When the Oregon Legislature reconvenes this year, one important order of business will be to determine the future of the Access and Habitat Program. Authorized by the legislature in 1993, the mechanism for program funding is set to sunset on December 31, 1997, unless reauthorized. House Bill 2188, which has been introduced to the 1997 Oregon Legislature, would extend the program for another five years.

From January 1994 through June 1996, the program has funded 116 projects in the amount of nearly $2 million. This includes 67,700 acres of habitat enhanced through project funding while providing public hunting access to 393,000 acres of private ranch and farm lands and to 1.6 million acres of corporate timberlands. Over 300 sports organizations, school groups, agriculture clubs and other volunteers have participated in A&H projects.

In addition to direct wildlife habitat and public access benefits, the program has been very effective in fostering cooperative working relationships and leveraging available funds between landowners, hunters, ODFW, Oregon State Police, volunteer groups and other government agencies. For information on the progress of HB 2188, contact A&H Program Coordinator Beth Waterbury at (503) 872-5260, ext. 5349.

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**Fish and Wildlife Commission Acts On Recent A&H Proposals**

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**Project Update**

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Get Involved

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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, P.O. Box 59, Portland, OR 97207

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Beth Waterbury, A&H Program Coordinator
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