



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

Created in 1993 by the Oregon Legislative Assembly, the seven-member Access & Habitat (A&H) Board (Board) reviews project proposals that improve wildlife habitat and/or enhance public hunting access in Oregon. Project applications, submitted by landowners, corporations, organizations, and agencies, are initially reviewed by Board-appointed Regional Councils established in five geographic regions of the state. Regional Councils forward proposals to the Board with recommendations to approve or deny projects. The Board provides the next level of project review and then recommends proposals to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission (Commission) for final consideration and approval to expend A&H Program funds.

Funding for the A&H Program, ~ \$3.6 million per biennium, is from three primary sources:

- \$4 from each hunting and combination license sold (approximately \$1.5 million per biennium)
- Proceeds from the annual Big Game Auction and Raffle tags (approximately \$2.1 million per biennium)
- Biennial allocation of approximately \$91,000 from the Green Forage and Deer Enhancement and Restoration programs

The A&H Program dedicated account balance was \$4,179,806 at the end of May 2025. A&H Program funds deposited in the dedicated account can only be expended for program activities. As of July 1, contracted A&H projects provide hunters with access to almost 2.2 million acres of private land and have improved over 18,000 acres of habitat for wildlife during this biennium.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A&H provides an opportunity for public involvement at Regional Council and Board meetings, which are advertised by Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) news releases and on the Department webpage. Meeting materials are posted on the Department website. Members of the public may review documents and provide comments. Interested parties may attend in person or virtually to provide public comments during these meetings. The Board most recently met in Salem on July 15, 2025.

ISSUE 1

A&H PROJECT FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

ANALYSIS

A summary of the three projects recommended for funding by the A&H Board is presented in the staff project summary (Attachment 2).

OPTIONS

Option 1. Approve A&H Board recommendations.

Option 2. Approve a subset of project proposals

Option 3. Reject project proposals.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Option 1. Approve all three projects recommended by the A&H Board.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to approve the three projects, as described in Attachment 2, that were recommended for funding by the Access & Habitat Board.

Effective Date: September 12, 2025

ISSUE 2

APPOINTMENT OF A HUNTER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ACCESS & HABITAT BOARD

BACKGROUND

A list of current A&H Board members terms is presented in the A&H Board Terms (Attachment 3).

The Board has a Hunter Representative vacancy as Nic Callero's first term has ended. A&H Board members are allowed to serve two consecutive terms. Nic Callero is applying for a reappointment to the State A&H Board.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Applications for the Hunter Representative vacancies were accepted from June 4 through July 18, 2025. The Department recruited candidates for the vacancy by advertising on the agency website and issuing a news release to canvas Oregon for talented candidates. We received applications from two individuals interested in the position. While there was great interest in the hunter position, most individuals did not apply once informed the incumbent was eligible for re-appointment.

ANALYSIS

Hunter Representative applicants were asked to provide information about their experience and background related to the following criteria:

- Breadth of experience and knowledge of hunting
- Involvement in sport group/hunter/conservation organizations
- Leadership in sport group/hunter/conservation organizations
- Leadership and experience on or with councils/boards/commissions and legislature
- Experience working with and/or representing the public
- Ability/interest in working collaboratively with others
- Participation in the A&H Program
- Ability to foster positive relations between landowners, hunters, and the Department

The Department received two applications by the deadline (Attachment 3). The applicants are listed below in alphabetical order of the last name.

Name: **Nicholas Callero**
Location: Milwaukie
Occupation: Pew Charitable Trusts

Nicholas (Nic) Callero has been a Hunter Representative on the A&H Board for the last four years and is eligible for reappointment for a second four-year term. Nic works for the Pew Charitable Trusts, US Public Lands Program, working closely with wildlife agencies in Nevada, Montana, Idaho, and Utah. Nic has drafted policy and led comprehensive campaigns to get the legislation passed. Nic is a current board member of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers.

Name: **Lucas Zettle**
Occupation: CFO
Location: Portland

Lucas Zettle is a lifelong hunter, having pursued a variety of species over most of Oregon. He hunted several A&H properties in the North Coast TMA. His professional career highlighted the need for building relationships with trust as the cornerstone. Lucas is a member of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, a former member of civic and professional boards.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

The department recommends Nic Callero be reappointed by the Commission as a Hunter Representative on the A&H Board. Nic is a lifelong Oregonian with over 30 years of hunting and fishing experience, primarily in the mid and northern Oregon Coast Range. Nic's first term as a Hunter Representative provided him with greater insight into public-private partnerships and the importance of relationship-building to support both landowners and the hunting community. Nic's work for the Pew Charitable Trust as a policy expert on wildlife and aquatic connectivity across the Intermountain West complements his board service, involving collaboration with state agencies, landowners, and conservation groups to develop practical solutions for habitat and access issues. Nic also leads legislative efforts for Pew to support habitat conservation and wildlife policy across the West. He serves on the board of the Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to appoint Nic Callero to serve a four-year term as a Hunter Representatives on the Access and Habitat Board.

Effective Date: September 12, 2025

ISSUE 3

APPOINTMENT OF A LANDOWNER REPRESENTATIVE TO THE ACCESS & HABITAT BOARD

BACKGROUND

A list of current A&H Board members' terms is presented in the A&H Board Terms (Attachment 3).

The Board will have a Landowner Representative vacancy when John Breese's second term ends on August 4, 2025. A&H Board members are only allowed to serve two consecutive terms.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Applications for the Landowner Representative vacancies were accepted from June 4 through July 18, 2025. The Department recruited candidates for the vacancies by advertising on the agency website, social media posts, issuing two news releases and directly contacting previous applicants. Department staff contacted both the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) and the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) as well as landowner organizations such as the Oregon Forest and Industries Council (OFIC) to canvass Oregon for talented candidates. We received applications from five individuals interested in the position.

ANALYSIS

Landowner Representatives must be chosen from a list of names provided by the State Forester or Director of Agriculture. Applicants for the two vacancies submitted applications through ODA and ODF. Applicants were asked to provide information about their experience and background relating to the following criteria:

- Breadth of experience in the agricultural or forestry industries
- Involvement in sport group/hunter/conservation organizations
- Involvement in agricultural or forest industry organizations
- Leadership and experience on or with councils/boards/commissions and legislature
- Experience working with and/or representing the public
- Ability/interest in working collaboratively with others
- Participation in the A&H Program

- Ability to foster positive relations between landowners, hunters, and the Department

The Department received five applications by the deadline (Attachment 4). The applicants are listed below in alphabetical order by last name.

Name: John Dehler III

Occupation: Agribusiness

Location: Prineville

John is a third-generation rancher, farmer, and forester who has been hunting all his life. The family ranch incorporates wildlife habitat in its management plan. He has been a Hunter Education instructor for more than twenty years. John is the past president of the Ochoco Chapter of OHA. He is a current member of the Crook County Wolf Depredation Compensation Committee, Crook County SWCD Board, and OHA Board of Directors Ochoco Chapter.

Name: Chase Kinion

Occupation: Forester

Location: Junction City

Chase Kinion is a lifelong hunter and OSU graduate with 10 plus years working in the forest industry. He is the vice president of the Eastern Lane Forest Protection Association with close ties to Oregon Department of Forestry. Chase routinely works with other landowners, both as part of the forest protection association and for forest management. He routinely hunts A&H lands in western Oregon.

Name: Lance Queen

Occupation: Informatics Specialist

Location: Madras

Lance Queen spent years enjoying fishing, hiking, hunting and other outdoor activities all over Oregon. He has worked as a logger and on a ranch which provides him with an understanding of landowner concerns.

Name: Riley Stephenson

Occupation: Forester

Location: Dallas

Riley Stephenson is a past Landowner Representative and Chair of the A&H Northwest Regional Council. Riley has been hunting Oregon for over 25 years, including several A&H TMAs. He is a member of Ducks Unlimited, OHA, Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, and Traditional Archers of Oregon. He held leadership positions in professional and Concerned Landowners of Lincoln County, an A&H cooperator on an access project.

Name: Shane Stevenson
Occupation: Ranch Manager
Location: Mitchell

Shane Stevenson is a former high school teacher who taught forestry, fish, wildlife and range management courses. A lifelong hunter, SCI American Wilderness Leadership School alumni, International Hunters Education Association certified instructor, and past board member for the Farm Bureau. He has managed ranches in Idaho and Oregon.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION

The department recommends John Dehler III be appointed by the Commission as a Landowner Representative on the A&H Board. John is a third-generation cattleman, farmer, and forester in the Prineville area with over 40 years of hunting experience, his families' ranch has long prioritized wildlife habitat as part of their land stewardship. John has mentored youth hunters for more than 20 years as an ODFW hunter education instructor. He held leadership roles including the past president of the Ochoco Chapter of the OHA. He served on several Crook County boards related to natural resources and wildlife. Currently, John is on the Crook County SWCD board, the Crooked River Watershed Council, and the OHA Ochoco Board of Directors. He works closely with the local ODFW field office. John's philosophy emphasizes the importance of collaboration, mutual respect, and maintaining local connections.

DRAFT MOTION:

I move to appoint John Dehler III to serve a four-year term as Landowner Representative on the Access and Habitat Board.

Effective Date: September 12, 2025