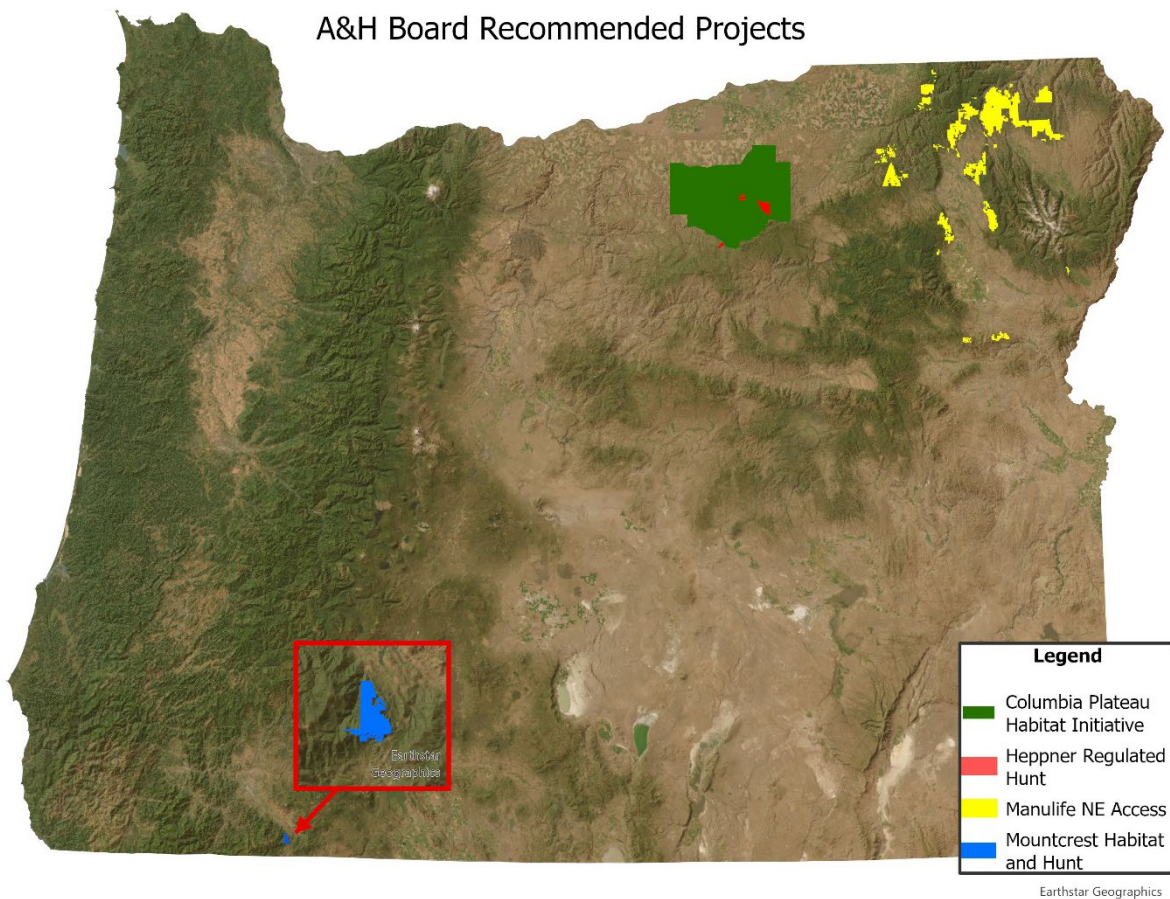


## Summary of Projects Recommended for Access & Habitat Funding

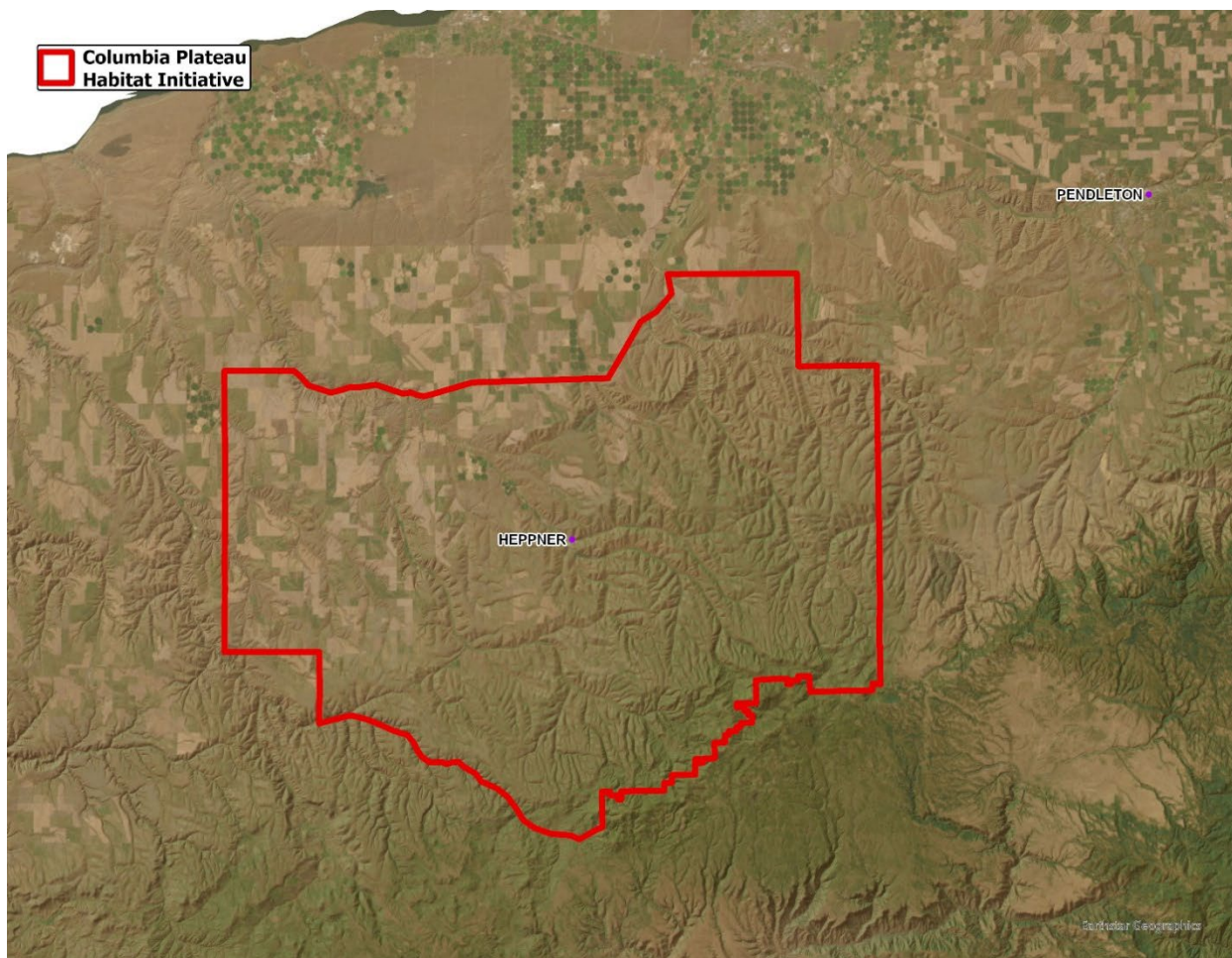
The Access and Habitat (A&H) Board (Board) met on October 21, 2025 in Baker City to review projects recommended for funding by A&H Regional Councils (Councils). A project must receive at least four supporting votes from the Board to be recommended for funding through the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission. A brief description of the funding requested, access and habitat benefits provided, as well as Council and Board votes follows. The A&H Board recommends funding the following four projects:



## 2025-08 Columbia Plateau Cooperative Habitat Initiative

- A&H Funds: \$90,000
- Applicant: Morrow Soil and Water Conservation District
- Location: Portions of Morrow and Gilliam counties
- Habitat Acres: ~5,000
- Project Duration: May 2026 - April 2029
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

This project focuses on improving grassland structure and forb diversity, protecting riparian vegetation, and enhancing Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) habitat quality. The ODFW/Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) cooperatively funded Habitat Technician position conducts mid-management work in CRP enrolled acreage. Habitat work is only provided for those landowners who allow public hunting access. This incentivizes landowners to enroll their land in a public hunting access program. The project ensures that acreage enrolled for habitat work will focus on benefits to wildlife.

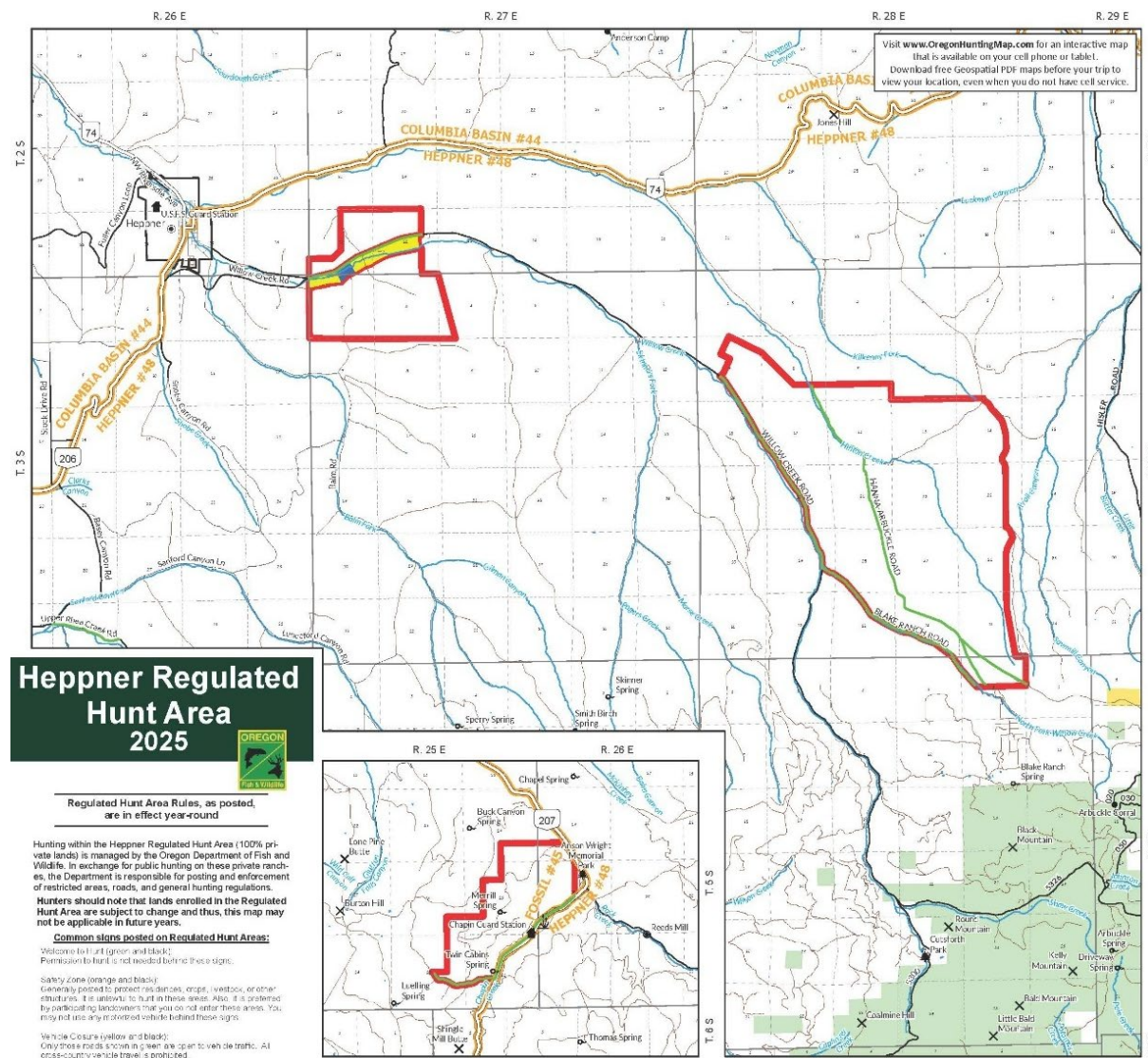




## 2025-09 Heppner Regulated Hunt Area (RHA)

- A&H Funds: \$161,148
- Applicant: ODFW on behalf of Wilkinson Ranches and Triangle Ranches
- Location: Heppner and Fossil WMUs
- Access Acres: 13,429
- Project Duration: February 2026 – January 2031
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

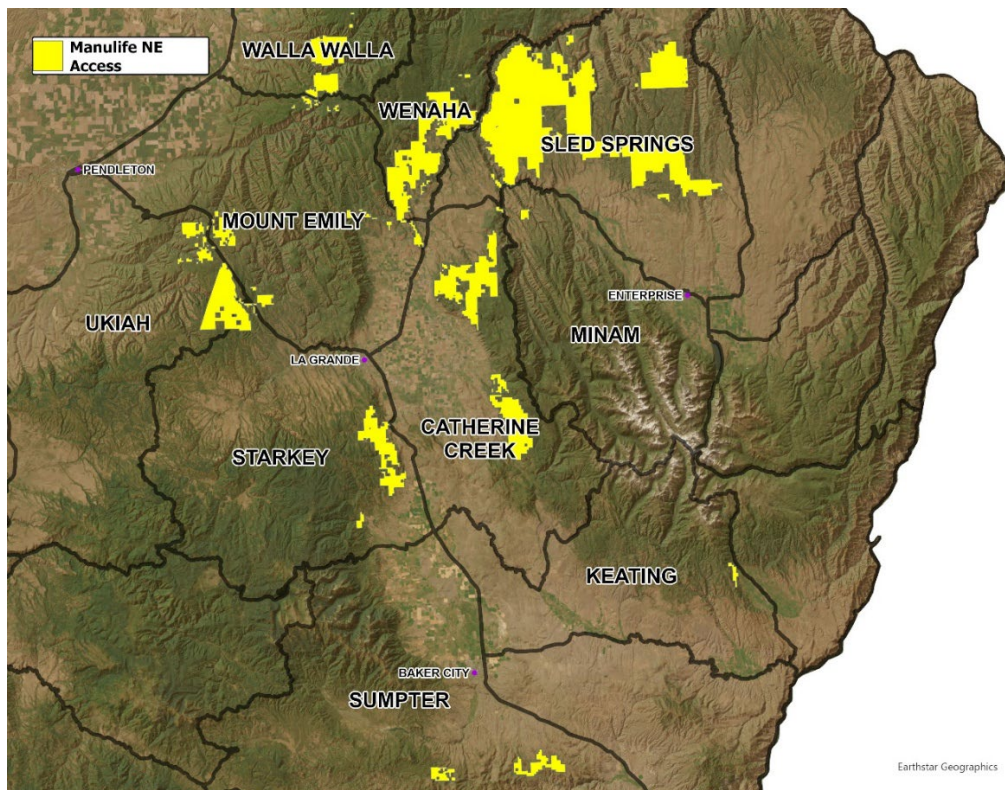
This is a continuation of a long running project, the Heppner Regulated Hunt Area, that has existed in various forms for 58 years. The Heppner RHA will provide year-round, Welcome to Hunt access on 13,429 acres of private land (2 landowners). The project will fund the access payment of \$2.40 per acre for five years through the 2031 hunting season. The RHA is an extremely popular, highly publicized, and very well used hunting area.



## 2025-11 MANULIFE ACCESS AREA NE

- A&H Funds: \$1,125,000
- Applicant: Manulife Forest Management
- Location: Catherine Creek, Mt. Emily, Sled Springs, Starkey, Sumpter, Ukiah, Walla Walla and Wenaha WMUs
- Access Acres: 250,000
- Project Duration: February 2026 – January 2031
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

These lands have provided public access for over 50 years through multiple changes in ownership. This project was previously funded via the federal Voluntary Private Access – Habitat Incentive Program grant. Current uncertainty over federal funds necessitates the project to be funded with A&H funds only. Manulife provides public access to over 274,000 acres, though compensation through this project is limited to 250,000 acres. This structure allows Manulife to exchange or rotate lands within their holdings without requiring contract amendments, provided the total accessible acreage remains at or above 250,000. This project will pay Manulife \$1.50 per acre for year-round “Welcome to Hunt” access to 250,000 acres for three years through December 31, 2028. Manulife’s land base across NE Oregon is heavily utilized by the public for hunting and fishing access, as well as general recreational use opportunities, rivaling use on adjacent national forest lands. The largest portions of Manulife ownership occur in highly desirable units where hunters may wait decades for a chance to hunt. The Sled Springs unit is 79% private ownership and each year roughly 1,000 Sled Springs hunters utilize lands owned by Manulife, reducing crowding on the limited public land in the unit.





## 2025-10 Mountcrest Hunt and Habitat

- A&H Funds: \$22,413
- Applicant: Jud Parsons Mountcrest Forest LLC
- Location: Applegate WMU
- Access Acres: 2,698
- Project Duration: April 2026 – December 2028
- Board Vote: Yes: 7; No: 0

The project will allow access to both adult and youth hunters, a total of 14 hunters annually, utilizing the department's Hunt By Reservation system. The project will also create early seral vegetation through ecological thinning of overstocked conifers and decadent brush through hand thinning, reducing conifer encroachment around aspen and montane meadows, pile burning, and re-seeding of burn piles with native grass and forbs. Early seral stage timber stands created will benefit browse for black tail deer, upland birds and small mammals, as well as native pollinators.

