MINAM RIVER WILDLIFE AREA ACQUISITION FAQ

- Who will manage the property? Upon purchase, the Wildlife Area will be owned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and incorporated into the existing ODFW Grande Ronde Watershed Wildlife Area Program. Wildlife Area staff and program resources will be responsible for the management, operation, and maintenance of the property.

- What is the role of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (RMEF) in this project and how will they be involved after the property is purchased? RMEF is an active participant in the project, negotiating and holding purchase and sale agreements with the seller and the State of Oregon. RMEF is also actively involved in fundraising and has secured more than $5 million dollars for the acquisition of the Minam River property. Post purchase, RMEF will partner with ODFW in habitat enhancements and active management of the property through our Project Advisory Committee (PAC) funding and volunteers.

- How will the property be managed? Following the acquisition, ODFW will develop a Wildlife Area Management Plan that details how the property will be managed. There will be opportunity for review and public input on the draft plan, which will eventually go to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission for final adoption.

- How will public access be managed? Management of public access will be determined through the adoption of the Wildlife Area Management Plan. The Department envisions the property being managed primarily for non-motorized, backcountry recreation opportunities. These opportunities will include hunting, hiking, birdwatching, horseback riding, fishing, kayaking and other non-motorized activities. A walking bridge over the Minam River is being considered to facilitate improved public access to the historic Minam River Trail, which travels for six miles through the property.

- How will the forest on the property be managed? The Minam River property has extensive forested habitats. Previous owners have managed the forests for timber production. Active forest habitat management will continue as a tool to enhance wildlife habitat. While the focus will be on wildlife habitat improvement, logs will be sold commercially through contracts similar to ongoing forest management on surrounding wildlife areas. Forest resources will be managed via an existing collaborative relationship with the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF). This relationship includes a forester based out of Wallowa, Oregon. She is dedicated to ODFW forest management nine months per year. Income generated from forest management activities will be returned to the local Wildlife Area Program budget. These funds are used to pay for the cooperative forester position, habitat projects, and
infrastructure on the wildlife areas. Since 2015, ODFW has treated 1,851 acres of forest in Wallowa and Union County resulting in 13 MBF of logs sold commercially.

- **Will there be livestock grazing on the property?** The property is currently grazed by cattle through an existing agreement with a local livestock producer. ODFW anticipates continuing this grazing agreement and developing a Grazing Management Plan for the property. Grazing will continue to be used as a tool to condition and enhance forage for wintering deer and elk.

- **What upland habitat management activities will be implemented?** In addition to active forest management, noxious weed management is currently occurring on the property and other surrounding public and private lands. ODFW plans to actively manage noxious weeds, utilizing Department programs and other potential outside partnerships (i.e., Tri County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA), Union & Wallowa County Weed Departments, and/or Wallowa Resources).

- **Who provides fire protection for the property and how will that be funded?** Fire protection will be provided by the Oregon Department of Forestry. Similar to private landowners, ODFW will pay Fire Assessment Fees. However, ODFW will pay the full fire assessment rate ($46,671/year) instead of the partial rate the current landowner pays ($16,312/year).

- **Will there be a loss of county tax revenue?** No there will be no tax revenue loss to the counties. As with all ODFW Wildlife Areas, the Department will be responsible for paying fees “in-lieu” of property taxes to maintain county tax revenues. Each year, the County Tax Assessor sends the Department an bill for what taxes would have been for the property if it was in private ownership.

- **What is the source of funding for the acquisition?**

  Primary sources of Phase I funding:
  - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation funds from private donors; and,
  - Pittman-Robertson Act funds that ODFW receives from an excise tax on guns and ammunition.

  Primary sources of Phase II funding:
  - Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation funds from private donors; and,
  - Grant application for Forest Legacy Program. This is a nationally competitive USDA program administered in Oregon, by Oregon Department of Forestry. The program is funded by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which invests
a small percentage of federal offshore drilling fees toward the conservation of important land, water and recreation areas.

- **How will long-term operation and maintenance of the property be funded?**
  
  Operation and maintenance of ODFW Wildlife Areas is primarily funded by Pittman-Robertson Act funds. This federal funding comes from an excise tax on guns and ammunition. After start-up expenses, annual operation and maintenance is anticipated to be around $220,000 per year, with an estimated $54,000 of that cost in fire assessment and payments in lieu of taxes.