



THE OHA TRACKER

MARCH 2014



Oregonhunters.org

OHA Calls for Review of State Cougar Plan

In January OHA sent a letter to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife asking for a review of the Oregon Cougar Management Plan. In its letter OHA outlined the following concerns about the plan:

“OHA would like to request that the Cougar Management Plan be formally reviewed. It has been eight years since the last review and there are still some significant questions that need to be addressed, as outlined below.

- Does the science support a population of 3,000 cougars in Oregon, or is there science that supports some other number of cougars in Oregon?
- Should there be cougar de-emphasis areas where a cougar population will not be tolerated above a minimal level, like there are for other game animals?
- There are established management objectives (MO) for other big game animals; should there be MOs for cougars in each zone?
- With the increasing number of cougars in Oregon, shouldn't the quotas be adjusted based on the population?
- Are the current zones an adequate representation of the management challenges and predation control requirements within them?

We will report on the response to our letter from ODFW in our next issue of the OHA Tracker.

No New Grouse Mountain State Park In Grant County

“It was with regret the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission acted today to end the attempt to acquire the Grouse Mountain Ranch” read the first line of the news release sent by the Or-

egon State Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) regarding the acquisition of a new state park in Oregon. This in essence was an accurate summary of the Feb. 20 meeting that saw the OPRD Commission vote 5-0 to not acquire Grouse Mountain Ranch in Grant County to become Oregon's newest state park.

In their discussion prior to the vote, the Commissioners were concerned about the lack of support from the many partners in Grant County that were needed to make this acquisition feasible.

In closing their discussion on this issue, the Commission directed OPRD staff to shift their acquisition attention elsewhere.

Oregon Legislative Roundup

During this short 2014 Legislative Session, OHA was actively involved in many hunting-related issues. Here is a summary of the issues and the results:

- **HB 4075** – This bill, as written, would allow those with disabilities to use laser scopes and sights while hunting. An amendment to the bill was introduced that restricted the definition of who was able to use laser scopes and sights to just those with limited visibility. OHA testified before the committee about many concerns regarding the bill such as: the introduction of “high-tech” hunting devices, the issue of fair chase and the need to study the abundance of wildlife in Oregon and whether the numbers could support the use of “high-tech” add-ons. The bill had one hearing in which a number of people testified against it, including representatives from the Traditional Archers of Oregon and Oregon Bow Hunters. The bill died in committee, but is expected to be re-introduced again in the 2015 session.
- **SB 1554** – This bill lessens property tax exemptions to create more money for counties and schools. During the hearing on the bill, OHA talked to the committee

about the need to preserve the public's ability to receive exemptions for conservation easements if property owners choose to offer them. At the hearing, a representative from the governor's office spoke about the need to establish a work group to discuss the issues brought forth in the bill. The goal of the work group would be to bring all parties together to study the effects of the bill and determine if some agreement can be reached on the issue to bring to the 2015 legislature for further discussion. OHA has asked to be a member of this work group.

- **SB 1551** – This is the universal background check gun bill, which was scheduled to go to the floor for a vote after the initial legislative hearing, but the bill was sent to the Senate Rules Committee instead. As has been widely reported, there is talk about referring this bill to the public for a vote, and also perhaps an amendment to “tone-down” some of the bill. At this writing there has been no further action on the bill.

OHA Testifies on O&C Bill

In early February the Oregon Hunters Association submitted testimony on Senator Ron Wyden's O&C bill. In the testimony OHA pointed out:

“OHA applauds the provisions contained in the O&C Land Act of 2013 to create critically needed habitat, county revenues and jobs. However, OHA is concerned about the further restrictions allowed in this legislation being placed on public land, which should be actively managed to provide critically needed habitat.”

As reported by the Gannett Washington Bureau, “Wyden has said his goal is to find elusive middle ground between ‘ideological extremes who seem allergic to the idea of compromise.’” Wyden has vowed to pass the bill this year.

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

MARCH 1

OHA Tualatin Valley Youth Day,
541-484-5617;

OHA Chapter banquets:
Pioneer 503-710-1233
Bend 541-330-6218
Rogue Valley 541-773-9869

MARCH 6

Central Oregon Sports Show opens

MARCH 8

OHA Chapter banquet:
Ochoco 541-447-5029

MARCH 10

All late goose seasons end

MARCH 15

OHA Chapter banquets:
Emerald Valley 541-484-0767
Tualatin Valley 503-312-7643
Clatsop County 503-359-3535
Siuslaw 541-999-9222

MARCH 22

OHA chapter banquet:
Yamhill County 971-241-0990

MARCH 29

OHA chapter banquet:
Capitol 503-910-7410

APRIL 1

Spring bear season opens in W. Blue
Mountains and W. Oregon hunt areas

APRIL 5

OHA Mid-Columbia Youth Turkey Clinic,
541-296-6124;

OHA Chapter banquets:
Baker County 541-523-6626
Lake County 541-417-2329
Tioga 541-267-2577

Lincoln County 541-265-7466
Josephine County 541-761-1852

APRIL 12

OHA Tualatin Valley Chapter Camp 5
Cleanup, 503-648-1341;
OHA Chapter banquets:
Malheur County 541-216-0485
Klamath 541-891-5301

APRIL 12-13

Statewide youth spring turkey hunt

APRIL 15

Harvest reporting deadline, winter tags;
Deadline for OHA election ballots;
spring turkey season opens

OHA advocates for wildlife, habitat and hunting access on federal land

Renewable energy, O&C lands top OHA's to-do list in capital

OHA took its mission on the road in February, advocating for wildlife, habitat and public hunting access on Oregon's federal lands, which make up half of the state and represent the vast majority of public hunting access.

OHA Field Administrator Ty Stubblefield traveled to Washington, D.C., to testify at the nation's capital on the Public Lands and Renewable Energy Development Act of 2013 (PLRED). Also known as H.R. 596 and S. 279, the bill is important to Oregon hunters because it addresses renewable energy on public lands and its effects on wildlife, hunters and public access. The bill calls for a transition to a competitive, royalty-based leasing system that treats wind and solar energy much the same as oil and gas development, sharing royalties with counties and states. The bill directs a portion of the royalty revenue back for permitting projects, and also to the state and county where the project is developed. In a notable improvement over traditional energy leasing, PLRED dedicates significant royalties to the protection of fish and wildlife and conservation easements. States and counties would receive 25 percent each, while 35 percent would fund projects for wildlife, habitat and public access.

Stubblefield also met with staff for Sens. Wyden and Merkley, as well as staff for Reps. Walden, DeFazio, Bonamici and Schrader, to state OHA's support for managing and consolidating Oregon's 2.1 million acres of O&C lands to improve habitat and public hunting access.

Beyond our borders, OHA is helping form a group called the Western States Sportsmen's Alliance (WSSA). The group, currently represented by Arizona, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Wyoming, met in Las Vegas in Febru-



OHA Field Administrator Ty Stubblefield met with congressmen from Oregon to offer OHA's support for provisions of bills that pertain to O&C lands and renewable energy.

ary. Many western sportsmen agree that decisions made at the federal level often do not represent their interests. At the same time, national sportsmen's groups develop and propose policies that too often do not reflect the values and needs of western sportsmen and state-based sporting groups. The establishment of WSSA will provide a necessary platform for sportsmen to share information, and collaborate and advocate on issues that affect fish and wildlife management, hunting, fishing, trapping, access and habitat in the West. OHA is proud to help lay the groundwork for this western movement.

The National Wildlife Federation and the Teddy Roosevelt Conservation Partnership underwrote OHA's expenses for these trips – a meaningful tribute to OHA and our 10,000 members.