

**OHA TRACKER**  
**SEPTEMBER 2016**  
*Protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage*

oregonhunters.org

## Commission revisits disabled hunter regs

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission this September is evaluating a review committee's recommended changes to the hunters with disabilities rules, and OHA is weighing in.

### Background

- Currently permits are given to people who provide written certification of a permanent disability from a medical professional and to veterans of the Armed Forces with at least a 65 percent service-connected disability rating.
- Permit holders get an expanded bag limit during certain hunting seasons (an antlerless deer or elk during buck and bull seasons in some wildlife management units).
- Hunters with a disabilities permit may also shoot from a parked vehicle and get assistance from an able-bodied companion when hunting.
- Disabled veterans also receive a free hunting, fishing and shellfish license.

### Recommended Changes

The following recommended changes were developed by a review committee that met three times in March and April 2016. OHA had a member on that committee. The review committee's recommendations are to:

- Align the criteria for deciding which units have an expanded bag limit for disabled hunters with the criteria currently used for archery hunters.
- Provide some controlled antlerless hunts for hunters with disabilities in those units where some opportunity for antlerless animals is available, but not enough to offer to all disabled hunters. (The earliest these controlled hunts would be available is 2018.)



JIM YUSKAVITCH

*Antlerless bag limits are a key point of contention in disabled hunting regulations.*

- Test the possibility of allowing wheelchair bound disabled hunters to use a single passenger, electric-powered vehicle in Travel Management Areas with motorized travel restrictions.
- Make changes to regulations and license documents to: 1) more clearly indicate that permits are only available to sportsmen with a permanent disability; 2) Incorporate permit information on hunting license documents and indicate when the five-year permit expires; and 3) Better highlight bag limit changes for disabled hunters in the Oregon Big Game Regulations.

### OHA Comments on Changes:

OHA fully supports and recognizes the value of the Disabled Hunting and Fishing Permit program, but the validation of participant enrollment is always of concern. There are demonstrated instances of abuse where there are participants who do not meet the eligibility qualifications, as defined, for a DHFP. OHA supports modifying the DHFP application and providing clear instructions to the evaluating physicians. The Review Committee recommends "potentially add the word 'permanent' where appropriate."

OHA believes the word "potentially" should be replaced with "shall."

OHA supports the expanded bag limits within controlled hunt units where there is a surplus in the population and the management objectives would handle the additional bag limits.

OHA would like to see ODFW pursue a program that puts emphasis on pairing disabled hunters and veterans with landowners who are experiencing damage and who are being provided damage tags. This would provide quality hunts for these folks and help landowners with their damage issues.

## Commission to review plans for cougar, wolf

The Oct. 7 Commission meeting in La Grande will have the following items on the agenda, and OHA will testify:

- Review of the update on the Cougar Management Plan Review – Public is invited to testify.
- Update on the Wolf Conservation and Management Plan – Public is invited to testify.

# OHA to weigh in on wolf plan, cougar plan, disabled hunters, public lands

By Jim Akenson, OHA Conservation Director

Several key wildlife management issues with far-reaching ramifications are taking center stage this fall. The main arena will be the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting room, but public forums hosted by management agencies will also highlight this unusually busy year. It's critical for OHA to be heard from both chapter and state levels. Testimony must be clear, fact, science, or personal experience based, and delivered professionally. OHA Lobbyist Al Elkins and I are more than happy to advise our members in preparing, practicing for, and delivering testimony. The usual venue for public input is when the meeting agenda indicates "informational or public input welcome." Almost always the oral input is limited to just 3 minutes. If you write testimony, keep it limited to 400 words or less. This means that the most important elements, or examples, need to be

delivered first and concisely. Also, with written testimony, it is always best to get it turned into the Commission two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting so that it's included in the agenda packet and individual commissioners have a chance to read it prior to the meeting.

For the wolf and cougar plans, we will have testimony opportunity coming on Oct. 7 in La Grande. Both of these plans will address, in one form or another, the hunting of these two species looking into the future – over a 5-year period. Obviously, the hunting of wolves is on down the road, as much of the state has not yet entered into "Phase III" identified in the original plan, where population threshold must be considered prior to management actions being applied. With cougars, it is different. Hunting is monitored by zones, it spans the state, and in some cases targeted removals are common to enhance suppressed game herds or relieve agri-

cultural damage issues.

As for public lands and input, I have had multiple calls recently from members concerned about the loss of access onto the checkerboard BLM lands of southwest Oregon that are becoming more and more road-access restricted by gates. These issues are best addressed through local BLM offices, or in some cases adjoining timber company offices when the gates are privately established but prohibit access to public ground for hunting. Keep in mind, we can also help coordinate these contacts, or find the procedure for public comment.

All of the issues we face this fall are critical for our hunting future. It's paramount that we communicate our concerns clearly, professionally, and consistently with the positions of your respective chapters and the OHA State Board. Please feel free to contact me before submitting testimony – I'm glad to help!

## WIN A GUIDED ELK HUNT ON THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S FAMOUS ZUMWALT PRAIRIE PRESERVE!



**1 Hunter and up to 2 non-hunting guests & 1 guide for 3 days in 2017!**

Lodging included in updated historic ranch house with solar powered electricity, full indoor plumbing (supplied by local spring) and full kitchens.

**Tickets: \$50. 300 offered. Value: \$4,900. Drawing: March 9, 2017.**

**To buy tickets: Call the OHA State Office at 541-772-7313, or mail check and contact info to OHA, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501.**

3-day guided bull elk rifle hunt for 1 hunter on the 33,000 acre Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in Oregon during the fall 2017 season (dates TBD; likely November). Hunter may bring up to 2 guests who do not hunt. Hunting is all on foot and hunters should be in good physical condition. Recent hunter success rate has been close to 100%. Mature bulls are common and range from 320-350+” with 385” potential. The Preserve is part of the largest remaining intact Pacific Northwest bunchgrass prairie in North America. Food, beverages, gear, and gratuity not included. Transportation to Preserve not included (once there, the guide will provide transportation). The elk tag is guaranteed, but the hunter is responsible for license/tag cost. Must make arrangements by April 1, 2017. Raffle hosted by OHA, hunt donated by TNC, courtesy of TRCP. **Drawing:** March 9, 2017, 7 p.m. Eagle's Club, 2000 Table Rock Rd., Medford, OR. Need not be present to win.

## OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

SEPTEMBER 1

Seasons open for forest grouse  
& Western Oregon quail

SEPTEMBER 17

OHA Lake County Chapter guzzler project  
541-219-0614

SEPTEMBER 17-18

OHA Pioneer Chapter sight-In Days,  
Canby Rod & Gun Club

SEPTEMBER 24-25

Statewide youth waterfowl weekend;  
OHA Pioneer Chapter sight-In Days,  
Canby Rod & Gun Club

SEPTEMBER 25

General bow season ends

SEPTEMBER 30

Deadline to buy tags for rifle deer,  
bear and cougar

OCTOBER 1

Deer rifle season opens

OCTOBER 8

Seasons open for pheasant, eastern  
Oregon quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge  
and controlled fall turkey