



LAKE ABERY/TYLER DUNNANON

## Commission approves access project on Hancock coast lands

By Ken McCall  
OHA Resource Director

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at its Jan. 19 Salem meeting approved a three-year access project on 190,000 acres of private western Oregon timberland managed by Hancock Forest Management. The primary source of funds comes from the \$4 surcharge on hunting license purchases, with supplemental funding from the 2014 federal Farm Bill's Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program.

The access project includes Hancock-managed lands located mostly within the Stott Mountain-Alsea and Trask Travel Management Areas (TMAs). Two primary benefits noted by ODFW Access & Habitat (A&H) program coordinator Isaac Sanders are hunter access during fire season and access to land-locked federal forestland normally closed by private land gates. Fire season access is allowed until Industrial Forest Protection Level (IFPL) reaches class IV. According to Sanders, "IFPL rankings above class III are not common in the Oregon Coast Range." When fire precautions reach IFPL class IV, all industrial operation is prohibited; in effect, the forests are closed to nearly all uses.

Bowhunters and early-season rifle hunters now have access options not available prior to the adoption of Hancock's proposal, a proposal that was well researched and vetted by the South



GRANT CARLETON

*The project preserves access to 190,000 Hancock-managed acres in western Oregon.*

Willamette A&H regional council and A&H state board. An important benefit of the proposal is early-season hunters having access to quality early seral forage in timber harvest areas on private lands. Similar forage openings are mostly unavailable on adjacent public lands. Both the BLM and Forest Service managed lands intermingled with Hancock.

OHA recognizes the real costs to landowners of public access. We also recognize maintaining access for hunting is a key to the A&H program's success and our future hunting experiences. Besides fire danger, other landowner concerns with public access to private lands include additional road maintenance costs, property damage, trash dumping, poaching and vandalism.

OHA, Hancock, A&H and Commis-

sion members have all encouraged seeking ways to partner with hunters for access and wildlife habitat improvements. Hancock staff members are open to these contacts and are already planning projects with local OHA chapters to improve big game forage. We are also exploring ways to partner with Hancock and other private timberland owners to reduce the costs of public access and increase access opportunities.

Oregon's population has doubled over the last 50 years. Every day more Oregonians seek access for outdoor recreation uses other than hunting and fishing; some mostly unheard of in 1965 are now common. The constant is hunters bear the bulk of both the access and wildlife management that goes into these projects while many other outdoor users reap the benefits. The free and easy access most of us knew growing up will never return. We must continue our efforts to find alternative public agency funding to help support and protect our hunting heritage.

## Familiar faces join state A&H board

In other actions, the Commission appointed two new A&H state board members from a group of qualified applicants. The new Hunter Representative is Nathan Bailey of White City. Bailey is a hunting and fishing guide active in several outdoor organizations, including OHA. Newly appointed Landowner Representative is Amy Patrick of Sublimity. Patrick is a farm and woodland owner and former Director of Forest Protection for Oregon Forest and Industries Council. She spoke about the realities of public access impacts to private timberlands at OHA's 2017 Chapter Leadership Summit.

## OHA to present TIP update to Commission

By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist

OHA State Vice President John Gander was invited to present an update on the 2017 Turn In Poachers (TIP) program at the February Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting in Portland. The presentation includes details on the purpose of the program, how the program works, and the revenue that the program received and awarded in 2017. OHA last year increased the reward amounts and paid a record \$24,200 to informants in 2017

## OHA, stakeholders attend Wildlife Services meeting

Representatives from OHA, Oregon Cattlemen's Association, Farm Bureau, and the Association of Oregon Counties and Oregon Sheep Growers Association met in Salem in mid-January to hear a presentation by Dave Williams, State Director of the USDA-APHIS Wildlife Services program, on the program budget and what to expect for services in 2018. Williams discussed the different categories of services his program offers and the projected expenses related to each. Future meetings will be held with stakeholders to determine what anticipated service levels are needed and what alternative funding sources might be available.

## Sportsmen's Caucus sets sights on poaching in '18

The Oregon Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus met in mid-January to plan for the upcoming 2018 Legislative Session, and Priority One for this session is to support legislation that addresses curtailing poaching in Oregon. As part of this plan, caucus members will support legislation aimed at strengthening court procedures. The caucus has asked for a presentation on the anti-poaching campaign budget note prepared by ODFW. A legislative reception in February is planned, as well as a fishing derby event for the spring.

## Fast Tracks

### Legislative Session 2018: What's Ahead for Hunters

The gavel falls in early February for the start of the 2018 "Short Session." Here is what is on our radar to date:

#### Conservation Bill:

This is a bill concept that would allocate \$13 million from the general fund to support conservation programs administered by ODFW.

#### Restitution Bill:

This bill will give the courts a bridge between the crime of the unlawful taking of wildlife and the penalty/restitution provisions currently in state statute, to better enable sentencing in poaching cases.

As always, OHA will post and update all the bills we are following in the Tracker and on our newly remodeled OHA website: [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)

## Report on anti-poaching campaign due from ODFW

OHA had a budget note on poaching included in the recent ODFW budget document that was adopted by the 2017 legislature that calls for the creation of a statewide anti-poaching awareness campaign. A report by ODFW to the legislature is expected during this winter's short session.



**Check out and follow OHA's Instagram:**

<https://www.instagram.com/oregonhuntersassociation>

We post photos from projects and events throughout the year that further our mission. Please check it out!

## Early winter mild for big game herds

By Jim Akenson, Conservation Director

With moderate temperatures and open winter range slopes, the mid-winter deer, elk, and antelope status is looking positive at this point in the winter, although some regions are reporting lower-than-desired fawn ratios resulting from last year's cold, snowy, and prolonged winter.

Doug Cottam, ODFW state wildlife program administrator, indicated that certain parts of the state are showing results of this hangover effect where deep, crusted snow caused an almost complete loss of the 2016 deer and antelope fawn and kid crops.

Units in southern Baker and northern Malheur Districts and a few other spotty locations are still in a recovery mode after the brutal winter of 2016-17. Wallowa County units are showing good doe-to-fawn ratios at mid-winter.

In general, this winter will allow much higher survival rates for the 2017 fawns.

As for elk, ODFW staff indicated that this mild winter has produced fewer damage complaints, and generally elk are using traditional winter ranges with minimal weather-caused stress factors.

We still have late winter conditions to experience and predation variables to consider, but right now the prospects are bright looking to the future.

## See OHA at a February sports show near you

FEBRUARY 2-4

Eugene Boat & Sportsmen's Show

FEBRUARY 7-11

Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show

FEBRUARY 16-18

Douglas County Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show

FEBRUARY 23-25

Jackson County Sportsmen's & Outdoor Recreation Show

See this week's Hunting Headlines at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)