



USFS considers limiting wilderness access

By Ken McCall, OHA Resource Director
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The Deschutes and Willamette National Forests started a public planning effort last June with the objective of reducing visitor impacts and preserving wilderness character on five central Cascades wilderness areas. OHA's Emerald Valley Chapter invited a Forest Service representative to a chapter meeting March 14. Numerous concerns and questions were shared following an introduction and request of audience by chapter president Tony Hilsendager to listen to the presentation, be respectful of their guest speaker and ask questions specific to the proposal.

Wilderness area access limits are being considered for Mt. Jefferson, Mt. Washington, Three Sisters, Waldo Lake and Diamond Peak. This effort is well underway with the Forest Service analyzing five alternatives, gathering public input on the alternatives and planning to issue a decision in 2018. The situation is apparent overuse on specific trailheads and campsites in the subject wilderness areas specific to the summer seasons.

The trend of loving the wilderness to death is not new, but the idea of restricting traditional hunter access as a response to concentrated trail and trailhead use is. Our members pointed out we are basically a solitary, dispersed use group who want to be separated from the trail crowds to pursue our passion for the hunt. Many ideas, including using our recreational



A new access area on the south coast will open more hunting options to hunters.

hunting permits as an alternative to trail head permits, were discussed. This is a complicated subject that has no easy answers. Our members also pointed out it is not a summer use versus fall hunting season use; our activities range from early scouting to numerous hunt opportunities in the wilderness areas from spring through late fall.

Our input on this issue as responsible hunters is important; there is a clear trend toward our traditional hunting heritage being overrun by new recreation methods and increasing human use of public lands. Please visit the Central Cascades Wilderness Strategies 2017 project at the link below or contact either the Willamette or Deschutes national forests for more information or to make your comments known. www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=50578

Coos Mountain Access Area opens coast lands

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission at its March 16 meeting in Salem unanimously approved the proposed Coos Mountain Access Area project.

The project was brought to the Commission with a unanimous vote of the Access and Habitat state board.

The Coos Mountain project lies south of the Elliott State Forest and north of the Coquille River, increasing the open access in the Tioga Unit by 65,240 acres. The primary landowners are Barnes and Associates and the BLM. Roseburg Forest Products and Weyerhaeuser Company are participating by including some smaller parcels.

Part of the area is the common checkerboard pattern of private and public BLM managed lands. A block of Barnes and Associates lands connecting public BLM lands near Coos Bay is also included. This is great news for the dedicated elk and deer hunters on the south Oregon coast. The Tioga Unit has the highest elk management objective in the state, providing 3,000 regular-season 2018 elk rifle tags in addition to late-season bow and muzzleloaders hunts.

In other hunting-related business, the Commission unanimously approved an Access and Habitat small habitat project grants program and appointed Craig Ely to a second A&H state board chair term.

This is great news for hunters on the south Oregon coast.

2017 TIOGA BULL/RYAN DANIELS

APPLIGATE, MARCH 2018/DUANE DUNGANION

OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

MARCH 31

White River Youth Turkey Clinic
503-358-7821

APRIL 1

Western Oregon spring bear opens

APRIL 7

OHA chapter banquets:
Baker County 541-403-0402
Columbia Basin 541-379-1074
Capitol 503-581-3343
Lake County (pronghorn
tag auction) 541-219-2629

APRIL 7-8

Statewide youth spring turkey hunt

APRIL 14

OHA chapter banquets:
Umpqua 541-580-4995
Josephine County 541-761-3200
Tioga 541-267-2577

APRIL 15

Spring bear season opens in
most areas of E. Oregon;
Spring turkey season opens;
Harvest reporting deadline, winter tags

APRIL 21

OHA Mid-Willamette Chapter banquet,
541-740-5992

APRIL 28

OHA Klamath Chapter banquet,
541-643-9788
OHA Pioneer Chapter Spring Youth Day,
503-829-2912
OHA Redmond Chapter Bridge Creek
planting, 541-233-3740

MAY 5

Tillamook Chapter banquet, 503-842-2475
Tioga Chapter Youth Day, 541-267-2577

MAY 12

OHA State Convention, Seven Feathers
Casino Resort, 541-772-7313

Find more OHA events at:
<http://oregonhunters.org/events>

Poaching penalty bill passes, others fail

By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist
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Oregon's 2018 Legislative Session ended in early March, and here is the final report on the bills that OHA was actively following. Some bills gained no traction, while others ran out of time in this short even-numbered-year session and could reappear in 2019.

HB 4015 Conservation Fund

Final Update: The bill died in Ways and Means.

Summary: The bill establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund. The bill appropriates fund moneys to State Department of Fish and Wildlife for carrying out activities serving to protect, maintain or enhance fish and wildlife resources in Oregon. The bill also establishes Oregon Conservation and Recreation Advisory Committee to review department policies regarding use of fund moneys and make recommendations regarding use of fund moneys for implementing and administering department activities.

HB 4030 Poaching Fines & Restitutions

Final Update: The bill passed both chambers and is awaiting signature of the Governor.

Summary: The bill provides that for a misdemeanor under wildlife laws that involves taking or killing of wildlife, in addition to any term of incarceration imposed, court may impose applicable fine for misdemeanor or impose compensatory fine payable to State Fish and Wildlife Commission.

HB 4106 Wolf Reporting

Final Update: This bill died in Ways and Means.

Summary: The bill requires State Department of Fish and Wildlife to biennially report to the Legislature regarding estimated change in wolf population. The bill requires:

- The Legislature to identify amount of state funding necessary to provide counties with assistance sufficient for carrying out essential features of county programs regarding wolf depredation and financial assistance.

- Legislature to review estimate of change

in wolf population prior to making appropriation to fund used for wolf depredation and financial assistance grant program.

- Legislature to establish, to the extent practicable, fund appropriation amounts greater than identified necessary funding amount and reflecting estimated change in wolf population.

SB 1517 Tags for Disabled Vets

Final Update: This bill passed both chambers and is awaiting the signature of the Governor.

Summary: This bill allows ODFW to issue up to 20 big game hunting tags per year to specified non-profit entities for use by eligible combat and disabled veterans.

OHA asked to help make new Baskett Slough youth hunt successful



Managers of the Willamette Valley NWR Complex have approached OHA for help in making this fall's new youth waterfowl hunt at Baskett Slough safe and successful. Refuge managers thanked OHA for our many comments in support of the new youth hunt proposal and invited our chapters and members to participate in preparation for the hunt, which will take place Sept. 22 and 23.

The hunt details will appear in the 2018-19 Oregon Game Bird Regulations and on the Baskett Slough NWR website: https://www.fws.gov/refuge/baskett_slough

OHA chapters near Baskett Slough NWR west of Salem are being contacted for support and help with preparation needs, such as building blinds and recruiting youth hunters and adults to accompany them.

Anyone statewide is welcome to help, as well. As the hunt nears, additional help will be needed for logistical support. The hunt is limited in size to keep the experience both positive and safe by dispersing the youth hunters across the refuge.

During the comment period for the proposed new hunt last year, many anti-hunting comments were countered by numerous supportive comments from OHA members who responded to a call to action in OHA publications and social media. OHA thanks our members who made it happen. —KEN MCCALL