



Wolf Plan up for vote; your input needed



By Jim Akenson, OHA Conservation Director

We are in a period of final input opportunity with Oregon's revised Wolf Management Plan adoption, which will be the topic of the next two Fish and Wildlife Commission meetings in Salem, on Dec. 8 (informational) and then on Jan. 19 (testimony and final approval vote), and we need OHA members to speak now on behalf of sound science in Oregon's predator management.

It's time for sportsmen to speak up with final input on Oregon's Wolf Management Plan. OHA has officially stated support for the revised wolf plan because it indicates that there will be management of wolf numbers at a level that still permits hunter harvest, for deer and elk, at acceptable levels. The current plan does acknowledge that wolves will be removed by hunting at some point in the future when numbers warrant. We know from Idaho's experience that real "numbers management" is essential with wolves if there is going to be any harvestable surplus of big game left for sportsmen.

OHA's State Board will have a strong presence at these next two meetings. We will be providing input as an invited panelist and as individual members, but your input is critical, too. Our membership is a potent force when we activate our members and make a unified statement.

The acknowledgement of hunting as a tool in the revised plan is encouraging, but this part of Phase III management needs to be advanced into an applied management program which normalizes this species as another one of Oregon's big game animals that is hunted. Idaho did it, and we can too, but we need a voice that speaks our concerns for our future as hunters. Please do your part by speaking up now.

Attention OHA members! Your help is needed!

We need you to support the NEW Oregon Wolf Plan language, in particular as it respects wolf recovery, but also supports management through controlled take (limited hunting) in Phase III, which the Eastern Oregon Zone is currently in.

Send emails and/or attend and/or testify at the upcoming Commission meeting on Jan. 19, 8 a.m. at ODFW Headquarters, 4034 Fairview Industrial Dr. SE in Salem.

OHA needs a respectful show of support for the new Wolf Conservation and Management Plan. Allowing hunting as a tool for controlled take, once populations warrant, is a critical option to have in this plan. The Jan. 19 meeting will include opportunity for public comment.

To send written comments:

- email: odfw.commission@state.or.us
- In the subject line of the email use the words: Please Support the Draft Wolf Plan (2017/18)
- State that you are a member of OHA.
- Make your email original and stress just 2 or 3 points. (Use Examples listed below, or similar).
- Do not use a form email. Please make it your own.

To attend and/or testify:

- To testify, you must register at the meeting.
- Please be concise and specific. Time is limited to 2 to 3 minutes.
- Be respectful of others; please represent us well.
- State that you're an OHA member and wear OHA clothing if possible.
- Testimony must be factual and lean toward the professional and scientific need to properly manage the wolf population. We must protect other wildlife and livestock.

Points to consider:

- Wolves have successfully re-established in Oregon, and ODFW has been proactive in planning for them through an effective management plan process – supported by OHA.
- OHA is not proposing hunting at this time, but to have this tool available once population numbers warrant numbers reduction.
- When and where needed, hunters can aid ODFW in controlled take, lowering financial impact on ODFW's strained budget, most of which now comes from hunters and anglers. Any controlled take would be done with close concern for the species abundance and effect on other economic interests, such as livestock raising and big game hunting.
- ODFW's proposed plan allows for continued growth and health of the wolf population, yet considers other very important concerns for Oregonians, such as hunting for deer, elk, and other big game, and the agricultural activities of Oregon.



Interior Dept. actions a mixed bag for hunters

By Ken McCall, OHA Resource Director

Some recent actions by the Department of Interior could expand opportunities for hunters, while others could put wildlife conservation at risk.

Baskett Slough to host youth hunt



Effective Nov. 8, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a final rule to open or expand opportunities for hunting and fishing on 10 national wildlife refuge (NWR) locations across the country. The hunting part of this expansion includes a new one-day youth waterfowl hunt at Oregon's Baskett Slough NWR near Salem. OHA members submitted written comments to counter the pointed anti-hunter rhetoric that stated hunting should not be allowed on NWR lands, period.

Our members responded with positive pro-hunting comments countering those uninformed viewpoints. OHA comments were specific to Baskett Slough NWR, outlining ethical, positive and responsible ways we introduce youth to our hunting heritage while teaching responsible wildlife management. Members also noted the NWR system is built on hunter/angler contributions to wildlife management. This decision opens the door for OHA to help with the upcoming youth hunts.

Sage Grouse planning rules revisited

A request for comments due Nov. 27, 2017, seeks a rewrite of at least 8 western states BLM Resource Management plans with new rules on managing habitat and population numbers for sage grouse. Many outdoor conservation and environmental organizations believe this action would jeopardize the 2015 decision not to list the sage grouse under ESA restrictive guidelines.

OHA strongly supported the 2015 decision built on an extensive multi-year collaboration among sportsmen's organizations, environmentalists, state wildlife managers and landowners. Hunting opportunities will likely suffer if the species is ultimately listed.

Cascade Siskiyou Monument back in play

The early 2017 National Monument decisions of our last administration resulted in expanding Cascade Siskiyou National Monument (CSNM) and drop-

ping the vast Owyhee Canyonlands National Monument proposal. The current administration then proposed a size reduction for the CSNM. OHA and other groups wait for details on the CSNM size reduction. OHA will be involved, though it is difficult to have a strategy with no facts. Though a proposed Douglas Fir National Monument did not gain much attention, it included a half million-acre block of the westside Cascade Mountains near Salem. The two dropped proposals likely will return.

Teaters Road access stays open in C. Oregon



Oregon hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts will continue to enjoy access to 43,000 acres of central Oregon's public land, thanks to a group effort including the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation (rmeff.org), Oregon Hunters Association (oregonhunters.org), Bureau of Land Management, Crook County, and the Waibel Ranches, LLC, RMEF and OHA announced recently in a joint statement.

"We are pleased that all parties could come together to provide continued access to a part of Oregon revered by elk hunters and others," said Blake Henning, RMEF chief conservation officer. "Opening or improving access to our public lands lies at the core of our conservation mission. We hear time and time again from our members how important it is that we carry out this public access work."

At issue was what was thought to be a public road through private land south of Prineville in the Crooked River drainage that provided access to the southern end of Ochoco National Forest. RMEF, OHA and BLM provided title work and research that showed continuous public use of the road since the late 1800s.

Waibel Ranches, LLC facilitated the construction of the new road at their own expense and at their own initiative. They did so in order to provide access to the same public lands as a means to reduce the liability, trespass, poaching and littering associated with public travel along the old Teaters Road.

OHA was actively involved in the negotiation process at both the state and

chapter levels.

"OHA partnered with RMEF, public land managers, county government and local landowners to remedy probable permanent loss of historic public hunting access near Prineville," said OHA Resource Director Ken McCall. "This long-term effort led to construction and maintenance agreements for alternative access to BLM and USFS lands north of Post. Retained access similar to the Teaters Road route is an example of groups working together for solutions to issues critical to Oregon's hunting heritage. In this case, the access in questions goes back well over 100 years."

Sportsmen's Caucus takes aim at poaching



Dealing with poaching in Oregon is the goal for Oregon Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus for the 2018 Legislative Session. After meeting in early November to discuss the goals for the 2018 Legislative Session, the group will evaluate the proposal that ODFW will be giving before the subcommittee on Natural Resources in February. This report is based on a budget note requested by OHA during the 2017 legislative session requiring ODFW to develop an anti-poaching campaign.

The Caucus will also support a bill by Rep. Ken Helm (D-Salem) that will give the courts a bridge between the crime of the unlawful taking of wildlife and the penalty/restitution provisions currently in state statute. The bill in part will read: "(12) (a) Notwithstanding ORS 153.018 and 161.635 and in addition to any other penalty authorized by law, if a person is convicted of a violation of a provision of the wildlife laws, or a rule adopted pursuant to the wildlife laws, that involves the unlawful taking of wildlife, the court may impose a fine of up to the amount of damages specified in ORS 496.705 for the wildlife that was unlawfully taken. "(b) Moneys collected under this subsection shall be deposited in the State Wildlife Fund."

In addition to the action on the legislative front, the Caucus will be holding two events in 2018: a February reception for all legislators and a fishing derby in the spring. —AL ELKINS, OHA LOBBYIST