



JIM WARD

Wolf Plan vote gets postponed

By Jim Akenson, OHA Conservation Director
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After the December Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting where OHA was part of a panel presentation on the revised Wolf Plan, the plan is still undergoing edits and revisions, striving to garner stakeholder support and ultimately a thumbs-up vote from the commissioners.

We had thought that a vote was imminent for the Jan. 19 meeting in Salem, but that decision date has been set back, and we don't know how far yet.

The OHA approach is straight forward – to maintain as many management tools as possible looking ahead into what's called Phase III of wolf management, and to eventually manage wolves like bears and cougars. The current plan language includes "tools" that will include actions by certified hunters and trappers and eventually site-specific controlled hunts.

OHA has become allies with other sportsmen and livestock organizations who also see high stakes for Phase III wording on wolf management. At the last Commission meeting, there were two invited panels, with OHA presenting on the pro-management panel, alongside the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, the Oregon Farm Bureau, and Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. On the opposition-to-management panel were Cascadia Wildlands, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and Oregon Wild. That panel was especially opposed to plan language that provides for eventual use of controlled hunting



WENAH/ODFW

Stakeholders have had their say. Now the Commission needs to adopt the revised Wolf Plan.

in any form by any description or hunt definition.

Written testimony from OHA members is still encouraged. When doing so, it's important to recognize that the original plan of 2005 and updates in 2010 and 2013 all identified hunting or "controlled take" as a critical management tool for wolves once numbers warranted. The wolf advocates seem to have forgotten that fact. Therefore, we need to keep this vital tool on the table for wildlife managers. We also need to encourage this thing being put to vote as soon as possible. If you want to help, send emails to: odfw.commission@state.or.us

For some input content, here is the wording from the OHA summary slide shown at the recent Fish and Wildlife Commission meeting:

OHA wants to see the finalized 2018 plan be respectful of the species existence, yet protective of our opportunities to hunt big game, protect our property, rural life-style, and local economy. This will ultimately entail wolf population management using controlled hunting as a primary tool.

Ochoco lawsuit moves forward

OHA's lawsuit challenging the Ochoco National Forest's decision to approve 137 miles of ATV trails in the heart of elk habitat is moving ahead.

The U.S. District Court in Pendleton consolidated the several lawsuits that were filed and issued a litigation schedule in early December. The parties are currently attempting to resolve the contents of the administrative record, which will hopefully be done by late January. Briefing on the merits of the case will begin in late January and oral argument before Judge Patricia Sullivan in Pendleton is anticipated in late May 2018.

The judge also approved a motion to allow ODFW to file an amicus brief on behalf of plaintiffs, which is welcome news. Having ODFW on our side is a big plus, because the Forest Service completely ignored the wildlife science regarding elk disturbance and motorized travel in making their final decision.



Legislature eyes conservation, poaching bills

By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist
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The Oregon Legislature goes into session in February of 2018, and OHA will be sorting through about 2,000 bills that will be analyzed to determine what we will want to support, oppose or stay neutral on.

Here is what we know is coming up so far:



Conservation Bill:

This is a bill concept that would allocate \$11 million from the general fund to support conservation programs administered by ODFW. The bill is coming from the office of Rep. Helm (D-Beaverton). A draft of the bill is scheduled for a late December release. OHA will analyze the bill to determine what effect it will have on wildlife and habitat programs administered by ODFW.

Poaching Budget Note:

OHA had a budget note addressing poaching included in the recent ODFW budget document that was adopted by the 2017 legislature. The note calls for the creation of a statewide anti-poaching campaign and requires ODFW to report to the 2018 Legislature on how such a campaign will be implemented. The Oregon Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus has made dealing with poaching in Oregon its top priority for the 2018 Legislative Session.

Poaching Law Bill:

The Oregon Legislative Caucus will support a bill by Rep. Helm (D-Beaverton) 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.

As always, OHA will list all the bills we are following in OREGON HUNTER, the OHA Tracker and our OHA website.

State board positions open; file by Feb. 1

This year OHA State Board positions for President, Secretary, Northwest Director, Midwest Director and Northeast Director are up for election.

The State Board also invites applications for a new Youth Ambassador position – a youthful individual 18 to 25 who is passionate about OHA's mission and would enjoy serving a two-year term on the board.

A board member serves without pay, except for administrative support as required, travel and accommodation costs in the performance of the board member's duties.

For details about OHA State Board service, see Page 44 of the January/February issue of OREGON HUNTER.

Salmonberry Trail update: Hunting or No Hunting?



By Ken McCall, OHA Resource Director
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The December 2017 answer is yes on public lands, landowner choice on adjacent private lands. OHA has heard many recurring "no hunting on Salmonberry trail" reports. No hunting claims again followed a November 2017 call for volunteers to serve on an advisory council for planning the eastern "Valley" trail segment from Banks to Timber. OHA contacts with three major agency planning leaders confirmed hunting is not a planned prohibition. The reality is the trail regulations have yet to be written and you can help guide that process.

Planning the proposed 86-mile trail connecting Banks and Tillamook is a multimillion-dollar and multi-year effort in four segments; the "Valley" segment from Banks to Timber is the current focus. The advisory group for the Valley segment is limited to local participants in the Timber to Hillsboro area.

Please contact OHA Resource Director Ken McCall if you wish to be involved. For Salmonberry Trail information, visit: <http://salmonberrytrail.org/>

OHA partners with ODFW in Learn to Hunt workshops

A new partnership between ODFW and OHA chapters is providing beginner-level adults who are between the ages of 22 and 44 with the knowledge and skills required to hunt big game. The partnership includes training volunteers from OHA chapters to facilitate four Learn to Hunt workshops: Rifle Skills & Knowledge, Archery Skills & Knowledge, Hunting Techniques & Scouting, and Field Dressing & Butchering.

After going to www.Myodfw.com, clicking on Workshops & Events, selecting the desired workshop, and paying the \$52 fee, participants can attend a workshop. The next Rifle Skills & Knowledge Workshop is scheduled for Feb. 3 at Canby Rod & Gun Club located at 25011 S. Molalla Forest Rd., Canby, OR 97013. The list of items provided by ODFW includes training for instructors, venue (classroom and range), class notebook, weapons (firearms or bows), projectiles (cartridges or arrows), lunch, Range Safety Officers, and instructors.

OHA has an opportunity to assist by promoting the program and volunteering as instructors. Participants will also receive a one-year membership to OHA (their choice of chapters). They will join us in our mission to protect Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage. Specifically, this presents an unprecedented opportunity to partner with ODFW to promote, protect, and pass on our hunting heritage. Together we can start them on their path to becoming safe, ethical, and conservation-minded hunters.

After their journey begins, we are the perfect group to provide them with support and new information at monthly meetings, opportunities to participate in habitat and wildlife projects throughout the year, and mentors who will help them in the field during hunting seasons. Our engagement with them is vital to ensure an enduring commitment to our mission and long-term retention of new hunters.

—BILL PARK, OHA PIONEER CHAPTER PRESIDENT AND JENNY AMMON, ODFW OUTDOOR SKILLS PROGRAM

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www.oregonhunters.org