



CHECKING OUR BACKTRAIL

2018 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

OHA battled the politics of predators in 2018

By Jim Akenson, OHA Conservation Director

OHA contributed extensively to improving our hunting opportunities and supporting key elements of our mission to “Protect Oregon’s wildlife, habitat and hunting heritage” in 2018. We influenced decision makers on the management of predatory species, contributed to better hunting regulations, and improved wildlife habitat statewide. Here are just a few highlights from the past year.

Cougar Management: OHA continues to be a strong voice for cougar management through active engagement with media, Oregon’s State Legislature, and the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Our emphasis continues to be increased management options for cougars, including expanded target areas for big game population enhancement, and protection of property and human safety concerns. In response to Oregon’s recent fatal cougar attack and a rash of cougar sightings in Oregon towns and even a college campus, OHA is working with others to introduce legislation to bring relief from Oregon’s cougars, which are growing in number and boldness.

Wolf Plan: OHA is now participating in facilitated meetings that focus on the more sensitive details addressed in the revised Wolf Management Plan. There have been four facilitated meetings held to date with a key one slated for Jan. 8. OHA has supported the current draft plan, assuming it continues to include language and guidance for management of Oregon’s wolf population, once numbers and circumstances permit the controlled hunting and trapping of wolves.

Ochoco Elk: OHA has taken legal action against the Ochoco National Forest, opposing the Summit OHV Trail development on the grounds of increased disturbance and affecting elk distribution on public land and reducing hunter opportunity. The district magistrate from Pendleton has recommended favorably to our concern and now we are awaiting a final decision from a district judge to finalize a decision.



MINAM UNIT/ODFW

OHA remained firm on keeping hunting language in the revised Wolf Plan.

Chesnimnus/Zumwalt Elk: OHA has continued dialogue with ODFW, landowners, and the USFS to develop a combination of hunting effort and elk disturbance management to hold elk on public land – and available for hunting.

Cold Springs: The major accomplishment on this issue has been to encourage hunting on the Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge, which has served as a hiding place for elk doing damage to high-dollar crops in the Hermiston area. So far, a dozen hunters, being selected from a damage list, have been able to harvest cow elk.

Regulation Simplification: Two of the three phases in the process have been completed. In September, Phase II details went before the Fish and Wildlife Commission for approval. Most items were approved, including allowing mechanical broadheads for bowhunters along with lowering the legal bow draw weight to 40 pounds for all big game.

Marten Trapping: The petition to change rule making for trapping regulations, and to ultimately list the Humboldt Marten, was denied by the Fish & Wildlife Commission in Bandon on Sept. 14. OHA argued that there just was not the science presented to warrant such an action.

Electronic Licensing System: This new system went into effect Dec. 1. There could be issues and problems as this system gets established. OHA will be at the table to advise for improvement.



OHA worked for hunting opportunity in '18

By Ken McCall, OHA Resource Director

Keeping Oregon's wildlife habitat safe and open to public hunting access was a major objective for OHA at the state and local level in 2018. From the coast to the canyonlands, OHA was active in improving habitat and advocating for access.

OHA State Grants, Chapters Support Wildlife Projects

OHA's state board approved three grants for partnership projects in early 2018. Projects include more safe wildlife passage on Highway 97 south of Bend, early seral habitat improvements on the central coast and winter range forage improvement in the Rogue Valley.



OHA is funding safe wildlife crossings in migration corridors.

In 2019, a new wildlife underpass near Gilchrist will improve safety on Highway 97 and support safe passage of deer and elk between winter and summer range. The existing Lava Butte underpass recorded an 80-percent reduction in wildlife/vehicle crashes, saving human lives and wildlife. OHA's state board funded support of Protect Animal Migration (PAM), for wildlife passage educational outreach, and OHA chapters collectively pledged \$90,000 at the OHA Chapter Leadership Summit in August. The OHA Bend Chapter has been regularly repairing the fences that funnel wildlife through the existing safe passage near Sunriver.

The Dog Creek grant supports deer and elk winter range near Butte Falls. This grant expands existing winter big game forage projects onto BLM lands. The Dog Creek project mirrors the board-approved 2017 Bowen Willow grant on nearby USFS lands. Other partners interested in future expansion of forage improvements and forest fuel load reduction treatments are the City of Medford municipal watershed and Hancock Forest Management. OHA's Rogue Valley and Josephine County chapters are involved partners.

The third grant will improve early seral forage on Hancock Forest Management lands along the central coast. Clearing and seeding existing meadows, as well as seeking areas for small satellite meadows along powerline corridors and closed temporary roads in young conifer plantations are planned.

Commission Approved W. Oregon Access Projects

Two key western Oregon timberland areas had access approved by the ODFW Commission in 2018. The January approval of Hancock Forest Management's three-year central Oregon coast access project marked a different approach to timberland access by allowing limited vehicle access during low fire precaution levels and walk-in access when fire restrictions became high. Western Oregon's fire precautions did not reach the level IV extreme which would have closed all public access. Access includes Hancock managed lands located mostly within the Stott Mountain-Aelsea and Trask Travel Management Areas. Bowhunters and early sea-

son rifle hunters enjoyed late summer access options not available prior to the adoption of Hancock's proposal. This access area is within a two-hour drive of over 40 percent of Oregon's population.

In March, the Fish and Wildlife Commission approved the Coos Mountain Travel Management Area Access project. The Coos Mountain project lies south of the Elliott State Forest and north of the Coquille River, increasing public access to productive coastal elk hunting in the Tioga Unit. Together over 255,000 acres of private lands have increased access, and thousands of additional public land blocks under BLM management were reconnected on logging access roads across the checkerboard ownership common in western Oregon.

OHA Helped Maintain Traditional Access

OHA's efforts that helped reshape Portland Metro's blanket no-hunting policy to allow hunting as a wildlife management tool were a step forward to maintain hunting access.

The trend of buying significant land parcels once open to hunting and adding the parcels to "reserves," often prohibiting hunting, continues with Oregon's population growth. A current effort to purchase and then add 5,000 acres of former timber company lands to no-hunting policies in the Arch Cape area is one example. OHA chapters on the north coast are working to maintain hunting on these and other lands in the area.

Meanwhile, our efforts to preserve hunter access and keep the Elliott State Forest in public hands continue. OHA is actively involved as Oregon's State Land Board seeks ways to decouple the Elliott lands from the Oregon Common School Fund requirements, create a viable habitat conservation plan and find a management option for the forest.

OHA Joined with ODFW in Learn to Hunt Workshops

OHA started partnering with ODFW this year to offer beginner-level adults ages 22 to 44 the knowledge and skills to hunt big game. The partnership includes training OHA volunteers to assist with four Learn to Hunt workshops: Rifle Skills & Knowledge, Archery Skills & Knowledge, Hunting Techniques & Scouting, and Field Dressing & Butchering.

Participants can find workshops at Myodfw.com.

Baskett Slough 2018 Youth Hunt Became a Reality

OHA chapters local to Baskett Slough NWR west of Salem volunteered to paint and dress hunting blinds for the September 2018 youth hunt at Baskett Slough. This youth hunt was a first at Baskett Slough and involved OHA efforts in 2017 and 2018 to become a reality. The successful hunt was limited in size to keep the experience positive and safe by dispersing the youth hunters across the refuge. Creating these hunt opportunities is critical to engaging young hunters and their families in the hunting traditions.



OHA helped make the first youth hunt at Baskett Slough a success.



Oregon's gun owners dodged a bullet in '18

By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist

It was a wild year of politics for Oregon hunters, with the misfiring of two gun control initiatives, an anti-poaching campaign resulting from an OHA budget note, and an invitation to dine at the roadkill grill in 2019. Poaching will be a hot topic again in the 2019 Oregon Legislature, and the gun control activists are expected to reload their initiatives in bill form for the Legislature, which now has a Democratic supermajority in both houses.



A thumbhole never hurt anyone.

OHA Helps Defeat Gun Initiatives

This year OHA helped keep two anti-gun initiative petitions off the ballot with legal challenges. Initiative Petition 43, which would restrict ownership of semiautomatic firearms, and Initiative Petition 44, which would implement tight restrictions on gun storage and make honest gun owners responsible for deeds done by criminals with stolen firearms, were submitted to the Office of the Secretary of State for approval, but neither qualified for Oregon's November ballot.

After weeks of legal challenges filed by OHA, NRA, OFF and OOC, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that the ballot title for IP 43 needed modification and sent it back to the Attorney General's Office, eliminating any chance for gathering over 88,000 signatures before the deadline.

After many months of trying to get their ballot title approved, the IP 44 sponsors decided not to proceed with gathering the required 88,000-plus valid signatures to put the petition on the November ballot. The sponsors of the initiative blamed groups supporting gun rights for holding up signature gathering with legal challenges. Instead they announced that they will introduce a bill in the 2019 Legislative Session, as IP 43 proponents are likely to do, as well. If unsuccessful in the Legislature, supporters of the initiatives have stated they will make another run at a ballot initiative in 2020.

OHA's 2018 Investments in Our Mission

Projects benefiting Oregon's wildlife & sportsmen:	\$204,067
Publications, information & education:	\$195,353
Defending hunting rights/Advocating for wildlife:	\$167,171
Fighting poaching in Oregon:	\$31,100
Volunteer hours donated by OHA members:	32,791

New Legislative Ideas Move Ahead

The OHA highlight for the 2018 legislative session was the ODFW budget note presentation before the Ways and Means Subcommittee on the creation of a statewide anti-poaching awareness campaign. The report outlined the tools needed for a public awareness campaign about poaching in Oregon and the tools necessary to combat the poaching epidemic in Oregon.

As part of this campaign, the report brought forward legislative concepts that needed to be developed in 2018 and introduced in the 2019 Legislative Session. These concepts address three problem areas:

✓ Increase Some Wildlife Crimes to Felonies

Poaching of Oregon's wildlife and natural resources is a serious issue but does not have serious enough consequences in the form of penalties for some crimes.

✓ Increase the Violation Category for Some Wildlife Violations

The penalties associated with violations of certain wildlife offenses that do not involve the taking of wildlife – such as spotlighting while in possession of a firearm – are too lenient.

✓ Better define resident angler/hunter

The current definition of residency has wording that is subjective and open for interpretation.

These three problem areas are being addressed in bills that will be introduced in the 2019 Legislative Session.

Roadkill Rules, Preference Points for Busting Poachers Were Commission Highlights in 2018

In 2018 the Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted rules relating to the salvage of deer and elk killed by vehicles:

- The person taking possession of the carcass at the site of the collision must acquire a Roadkill Salvage Permit within 24 hours of taking the carcass into possession. A Roadkill Salvage Permit requires the person taking possession of a carcass to complete an on-line application.
- Within five (5) business days of taking possession of the carcass, the entire head of the deer or elk, including the antlers of antlered animals, must be delivered and surrendered to an ODFW district office or alternative location determined by the ODFW.

The rule goes into effect in January.

Also in 2018, the Commission adopted rules that allow people who provide information to the Turn In Poachers (TIP) program leading to an arrest or citation the ability to choose to receive (in lieu of cash) five preference points in cases of unlawful take, possession or waste involving moose, mountain goat, bighorn sheep and wolves, and four preference points for cases involving bear, cougar, antelope, deer and elk.

This rule went into effect in October.



Roadkill bill takes effect in January.



OHA Invites You to Our 2019 Banquets for Oregon's Wildlife & Sportsmen.



- **Banquets**
- **Auctions**
- **Raffles**

OHA Platinum Sponsors:



**Money we raise
here stays here.**

**Great Guns, Gear,
Trips, Art and
much more!**

2019 OHA BANQUETS

Feb. 23	Columbia Co.	949-533-7271
Feb. 23	Hoodview	503-255-1946
Feb. 23	Redmond ➤	541-233-3740
Feb. 23	Emerald Valley	541-729-5220
Mar. 2	Pioneer	503-710-1233
Mar. 2	Rogue Valley	503-250-3000
Mar. 16	Clatsop County	503-359-3535
Mar. 16	Union/Wallowa	541-786-5841
Mar. 16	Yamhill ➤	503-550-4740
Mar. 16	Bend	541-480-9848
Mar. 30	Ochoco	541-447-5730
Mar. 30	Capitol	503-330-6218
Apr. 6	Tualatin Valley	503-453-7520
Apr. 6	Baker	541-403-0402
Apr. 6	Columbia Basin	541-379-1074
Apr. 6	Lake County	541-640-3368
Apr. 6	Tioga	541-297-6178
Apr. 6	Mid-Willamette	541-971-3531
Apr. 13	Josephine Co.	541-660-5861
Apr. 27	Klamath	541-882-9593
May 4	Tillamook	503-842-2475
May 18	OHA State Convention, ➤ Chinook Winds Casino,	541-772-7313
Sep. 7	Umpqua	541-430-7324



**Nosler M48 Liberty featured
at each OHA banquet courtesy
of Coastal Farm & Ranch!**

➤ **A&H Statewide Elk Tag auction**