

**OHA TRACKER**  
MARCH 2020

oregonhunters.org

**LAST SHOT!**

Last call for OHA's TNC Zumwalt Prairie Deer Hunt raffle! For tickets, visit [oregonhunters.org/store](http://oregonhunters.org/store) by March 19!



ZUMWALT PRAIRIE BUCKS/CHAD DOTSON

## Gun bill and initiatives pointed at Oregon hunters


By Al Elkins, OHA Lobbyist  
[Alvinelkins@yahoo.com](mailto:Alvinelkins@yahoo.com)

The 2020 legislative session started in early February, and bills affecting hunters are being heard and voted on at a very fast pace. Here are a few of the bills that OHA is actively following:

- **HB 4005 Gun Storage Bill** – This bill requires a gun owner or possessor of firearm to secure firearm with trigger or cable lock, in locked container or in gun room except in specified circumstances. Imposes strict liability if stolen gun is used to injure or kill someone. It would also decimate youth shooting sports. OHA has submitted testimony against the bill. A work session was held in the House Committee on Judiciary. Two amendments were adopted that only make the bill worse. One amendment says you will not be required to lock up your self-defense firearm if you are completely alone in your home and all your doors and windows are locked. The bill was moved to the House Committee on Rules, where we expect it to linger until just before the end of this legislative session. This bill is in the House Committee on Rules, where it was scheduled for a work session on Feb. 21.

- **HB 4075 Bans Coyote Contests** –   An amendment was added to the bill that allows for OHA to continue its current practice of holding coyote contests. The bill passed out of the House Committee on Natural Resources. A House floor vote saw the bill pass with 42 ayes, 16 nays and 2 excused votes. The bill was sent to the Senate, where it was assigned to Senate Committee on Rules. The bill is still awaiting a hearing.

- **HB 4052 Residency Bill** – This is the bill that OHA requested as part of our anti-poaching campaign. This changes some ambiguity in statute related to the definition of residency by amending residency requirements for wildlife license, tag and permit applications. In order to claim residency, a person must have resided in Oregon at least six months before applying for tags, licenses or permits. The bill was passed out of House Committee on Natural Resources by a 7-0 vote during the first week of the session, and the bill passed the floor of the House the second week by a vote of 59 ayes to 1 excused. The bill now goes to the Senate. The bill was assigned to the Senate Committee on General Government and Emergency Preparedness. A hearing was held on the bill, and it passed out of committee and was scheduled for a Senate floor vote on Feb. 24.

- **HB 4091 Sage Grouse Fund** –  This bill establishes a “Sage-Grouse Mitigation Program In-Lieu Fee Fund.” The money in the fund goes to ODFW to support, restore, protect, or increase habitat for sage grouse. The monies for this fund would come from developers paying an in-lieu fee for mitigation rather than doing on-the-ground mitigation activities. The bill, during the first week of the session, was passed out of House Committee on Natural Resources by a 7-0 vote and passed the floor of the House the second week by 59 ayes to 1 excused. The bill passed out of the Senate Natural Resources Committee and was scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor on Feb. 24.

- **SB 1543 Group Sports Pac** – This bill would create a Group Sports Pac for

hunting and fishing events for disabled veterans. The bill had one hearing, where a work group was established to “fine-tune” the bill. At issue is what groups qualify for these benefits and if the Group Sports Pac should apply to hunting. During the second week of the session, an agreement was reached on an amendment to the bill. OHA testified in support of the amendment, which removed hunting from the bill, before the Senate Committee on Veterans. The bill was then amended in committee and passed out of committee unanimously. The bill passed the Senate floor 29 ayes to 1 excused. The bill was assigned to the House Committee on Natural Resources and had a hearing. A work session was scheduled for Feb. 25.



### Update on Gun Initiatives

- **IP 40** – Requires locked gun storage, reporting stolen guns, strict liability for injuries. OHA appealed the draft ballot title in cooperation with the NRA, and our case is awaiting a decision by the Oregon Supreme Court.

- **IP 60** – Regulates semi-automatic guns and large-capacity magazines.

- **IP 61** – Sale/transfer of certain semi-automatic firearms requires gun dealer, safety course, waiting period, age 21.

- **IP 62** – Prohibits firearm magazines capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition; provides for exceptions. Allows persons who have magazines over 10 rounds to keep them.

OHA is working closely with other pro-hunting organizations in opposing these measures and HB 4005 in the short legislative session.



# OHA working to redistribute Oregon's elk herds

By Jim Akenson, OHA Sr. Conservation Director  
[Jim@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Jim@oregonhunters.org)

One of the greatest challenges facing elk populations and elk hunting is the issue of elk seasonal distribution. Recently ODFW posted a big game forum for a month, ending March 3, to offer hunters a chance to weigh in on season structures and comment on issues regarding elk hunting in different regions of our state. These comments were somewhat directed by lead-in questions pertaining to region, weapon type, species hunted, and bag limits. Many comments addressed lack of game availability, the negative effect of predation, and hunter crowding.

In reading through these, it seemed apparent that many hunters responding are limited in elk knowledge to only the “in-season” situation with elk distribution and did not address or show awareness of elk distribution the other times of the year and how that might influence hunting opportunity in many units.

For a variety of reasons, a significant proportion of elk have moved to private pastures and rangelands, to small coastal towns and their suburbs, and away from our public land. The result of this movement is conflict and situations that are hard to resolve. ODFW has responded, in part, by offering expanded elk damage hunts, such as the general cow hunt opportunities for the upcoming hunting season on both sides of the state. It has yet to be seen if this is a good or bad approach in resolving elk distribution issues. OHA has contended through various forms of input that each elk distribution situation is different and requires unique responses with a bag of options that utilize licensed hunters as one of the primary tools.

When herds of 4,000 elk are camping on private property in winter and spring within eastern Oregon's Columbia Basin and Ukiah units, how can we expect them to all return to – and stay on – public land during the periods of time we want

to hunt them? In many cases, as soon as hunting pressure intensifies on public land, the elk beeline to the security of familiar private ground. Or, on the coast in Warrenton and Gearhart, where elk dine on yards and golf courses, what will it take to move them back into the surrounding forests?

The answers are varied, but the approach must be acceptable to hunters. In addition to the recent big game forum, we will have other comment opportunities this summer as the 2021 regulations are proposed by ODFW staff and then presented for approval by the Commission.

OHA will share the schedule for district regulation meetings and pertinent commission meetings. OHA staff will also provide points of concern for testimony and advise on an approach for input. You may be the most knowledgeable source about your favorite elk hunting unit, so stay involved, informed and engaged.

## Shows of goodwill: OHA takes mission's message on road

By Amy Patrick, OHA Outreach Coordinator  
[Amy@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Amy@oregonhunters.org)

OHA staff and volunteers are taking OHA's show on the road this winter, meeting and greeting sportsmen at sports shows every weekend in February and early March.

OHA's participation in sportsmen's shows and outreach venues continues to be a great way to share our message with the pro-hunting community. As our messaging evolves, so does our ability to communicate OHA's mission to a broader section of the public. Our mission, “Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage,” takes on many forms and it is imperative that we communicate our efforts with a cohesive and authentic manner that engages people not familiar with what it means to be a member of OHA.

Our most compelling message is our extensive conservation work, as it captures our mission statement perfectly and challenges certain biases people may hold toward hunters. We should take



*Hunting and public lands advocate Randy Newberg visited the OHA State & Yamhill County Chapter booth at the Pacific Northwest Sportsman's Show, where he visited with OHA Outreach Coordinator Amy Patrick.*

every opportunity to champion our work as an Oregon-centric organization that mobilizes our membership to provide

donations of time and money for wildlife crossings, water guzzlers, wildlife-friendly fencing, and numerous other projects. These talking points meld well with chapter-level project information to effectively communicate the breadth of our commitment to conservation.

The most compelling part of our conservation work is that it is not limited to meeting rooms and legislative or legal venues; we put boots on the ground and hands in the dirt to accomplish the tasks of conserving wildlife.

There are many other great messages to champion as we present OHA to both the hunting community and the general public: protecting hunter rights, striving to increase access opportunities, and working with ODFW on wildlife management plans are great examples of our work throughout the state. Communicating our message in an effective and approachable way increases our opportunities to build our membership base and, subsequently, the overall strength of our organization.