



## OHA engages in search for ODFW's next director

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
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ODFW is on the cusp of a new era with the retirement of current Director Curt Melcher.

Effective April 1, Director Melcher is retiring, and the current ODFW Commission is tasked with the selection of the new agency leader.

The Commission and Governor Kotek are at the helm of the selection process with the Governor's office facilitating the recruitment and selection process and the Commission making the final selection from the winnowed list of applicants.

Selection of a new director is scheduled

for the May 10 Commission meeting.

OHA has been engaged with Commission members, as well as decision-makers in the Governor's office, to express our concerns and advocate for a director who can effectively lead the agency through a hotbed of social topics while remaining focused on science-based wildlife management.

An extensive background in wildlife management, as well as a strong understanding and belief in the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, are crucial attributes OHA has put forth to decision-makers. Additionally, a knowledge of the principles of wildlife research

and how to apply those in an unbiased manner is another key characteristic a successful director should possess.

Another important attribute is fiscal responsibility for the agency and to the rate-paying stakeholders made up of hunters, anglers and trappers. Understanding and appreciating that these stakeholders contribute 47 percent of the agency's budget is key to managing and conserving wildlife.

OHA will continue to work with the Commission members, as well as the Governor's office, to express the views and needs of the sportsmen and women in Oregon.

## OHA scores big win to fund fight against CWD spread

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
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After a two-year process, OHA has successfully secured funding for increased Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) monitoring, detection, and testing in Oregon.

In the spring of 2022, OHA was concerned that CWD funding was not included in the proposed ODFW budget. As such, OHA authored and championed a bill for the 2023 legislative session that would appropriate funding from the State's General Fund to both ODFW and the Oregon Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (OVDL) at Oregon State University. That bill, HB 2532, died at the end of the session.

Because of OHA's relationships in the

Capitol, the CWD funding package was brought back in the 2024 session, reincarnated as part of HB 4148, the wildlife omnibus bill. HB 4148 contained CWD funding, appropriations for the Invasive

**Currently, all of the samples are shipped to Colorado State University, taking in excess of 7 weeks for results.**

Species Council, funding for a new program to reduce human-wildlife conflict, and important policy language specific to wildlife crossings. While the bill itself died in Ways & Means, the funding portions for the CWD work and the Invasive Species Council made it into the end-of-session budget bill.

ODFW will receive \$795,000 to increase capacity in the Wildlife Laboratory and seasonal positions to assist with much-needed sample collection. Additionally, the successful program that pays taxidermists and meat processors for

samples will receive a portion of those funds. Increased sample collection is vital to monitoring and potentially detecting CWD, should it be found in Oregon's ungulate populations.

The OVDL was appropriated \$1.9 million to increase laboratory capacity for zoonotic disease research and to establish in-state testing for CWD. Currently, all samples are shipped to Colorado State University, taking in excess of seven weeks for results, by which time meat is already processed, and heads and spines are deposited who knows where. In-state testing will provide fast, reliable results to Oregon's hunters and position the state in a more proactive stance to process the needed increase in sample testing.

Securing this funding is a big win, not just for OHA and Oregon's sportsmen and women, but most importantly, for Oregon's wildlife.

**TO DONATE TO OHA'S HUNTER VICTORY FUND, VISIT [HTTPS://OREGONHUNTERS.ORG/DONATE](https://oregonhunters.org/donate)**



## OHA to fence SW meadows April 13

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator  
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OHA is working to protect and enhance meadow systems in the Rogue Unit for the benefit of wildlife, their habitat, and hunters. On April 13, we will finish the Whiskey Springs project we started last year by installing approximately 1/2 mile of wildlife-friendly smooth and barbed wire fence. We will convene at the Butte Falls USFS Ranger Station at 9 a.m. (730 Laurel Ave., Butte Falls).

The campground at Whiskey Springs will be closed, but OHA volunteers who are part of this project will be allowed to dry camp if they so choose. Per usual, we will have a great prize drawing at the event. We will give away a Howa M1100 .17 HMR as well as other great prizes. Please bring lunch, appropriate work attire, and spread the word to others ready to work for wildlife.

Meadow systems are important for deer and elk, and across the western Cascades, meadows are at risk of loss, degradation and fragmentation due to conifer encroachment, heavy use by domestic livestock, illegal OHV use, and wildfire suppression, among other factors. Ultimately, OHA and partners will protect three areas in the Cascade Mountains (Willow Prairie, Short Creek, and Whiskey Springs/Fourbit) with 6.5 total miles of wildlife-friendly fencing to restore the resiliency of these mesic systems and provide habitat for wildlife.

OHA conservation staff procured a \$50,000 grant for this project from Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund.

For more information, contact Tyler Dungannon ([td@oregonhunters.org](mailto:td@oregonhunters.org)).

### SIGN UP:

Register to volunteer with the QR code, and OHA will provide more details.

<https://oregonhunters.org/regional-projects/swcascadesmeadowproject>



## OHA seeks changes to Mule Deer Plan

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator  
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The Oregon mule deer management plan revision continues to be a top priority for OHA, and it's paramount that we help shape the plan for the benefit of mule deer and hunters. OHA has dug into the draft plan, and OHA's deer committee of experts and staff have provided comments to ODFW on important chapters of the plan.

We are currently awaiting feedback on those extensive comments, and we hope to see a revised draft from ODFW with many if not all of our comments incorporated into the next draft of the plan prior to commission approval.

For example, it's important that the abysmal state of mule deer populations is reflected in the plan so OHA, ODFW, and other groups can point to this plan to get ODFW the help they need from agency partners, and other entities capable of assisting or hindering deer populations. Initially, the plan was to be approved by the Commission in April, but OHA was successful in moving that date back to June to allow ample time for the agency to review and incorporate comments from OHA and other stakeholders. OHA hopes to be supportive of the plan when it goes before the Commission in June so we can turn our attention to plan implementation.



## Latest Gun Calendar winners announced

OHA Gun Calendar Raffle winners are posted every Wednesday on OHA's social media, website and app.

Get your 2025 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar now by calling the OHA state office at 541-772-7313 or visiting OHA's website at: [www.oregonhunters.org/store](http://www.oregonhunters.org/store)

- **Kimber .280 Ackley:**  
*Fred Heins of Blue River*
- **Citadel 1911 Flag .45 ACP:**  
*Dennis Vosika of Medford*
- **Howa 1500 6.5 CR:**  
*Sandy Morse of Unity*
- **Pointer Acrius 12 Ga. O/U:**  
*Tim Taylor of Stayton*



## Zumwalt hunt winners drawn

The winners of OHA's raffle for dream deer and elk Hunts on The Nature Conservancy's Zumwalt Prairie, drawn on March 14 at the OHA office, are:

**Deer Hunt: Jake Spiering, Bend**

**Elk Hunt: Harry Hansen, Klamath Falls**



OHA thanks all who bought tickets to support Blue Mountains habitat work and OHA's mission, as well as TNC for their commitment to conservation.

## YOU'RE INVITED TO AN OHA BANQUET NEAR YOU SOON!

Enjoy a fun evening among friends and check out auctions and raffles featuring trips, great gear and more at an OHA chapter banquet near you soon.

Watch for 2024 fund-raiser updates at: <https://oregonhunters.org/events-2>

OHA banquets in 2024 will feature a Coastal Farm & Ranch Raffle for a Browning Xbolt Speed LR OviX 7mm PRC!



Coastal

## LAST CALL FOR OHA'S SPRING '24 BANQUETS

Mar. 30	Mid-Columbia	SOLD OUT!
Apr. 6	Baker	541-403-0402
Apr. 6	Tioga	541-294-7912
Apr. 6	Umpqua	541-580-5660
Apr. 6	Lake County	541-417-2983
Apr. 13	Mid-Willamette	541-971-3351
Apr. 13	Clatsop County	503-440-9934
Apr. 27	Klamath	541-884-5773
Apr. 27	Curry	530-351-5847
May 4	Tillamook	503-842-7153
May 4	OHA State Convention,**	
	Seven Feathers Casino,	541-772-7313
	** A&H Statewide Deer Tag auction;	
	to bid by phone, call	971-270-7035