



Many hands made light work at OHA's Southwest Cascades Meadow Protection Regional Project in the Rogue Unit on June 15 and 16.

## OHA protects SW Cascades meadow habitat

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator  
[TD@oregonhunters.org](mailto:TD@oregonhunters.org)

OHA recently installed 2 miles of new wildlife-friendly fence and removed 2 miles of old dilapidated fencing around Willow Prairie in the southwest Cascades. A total of 38 OHA volunteers put in close to 300 hours of work and made the trip from nine OHA chapters, including Rogue Valley, Umpqua, Josephine County, Yamhill County, Klamath, Bend, Tualatin Valley, Emerald Valley, Pioneer and Mid-Willamette.

The U.S. Forest Service district wildlife and range staff had been trying to find the means to implement this project for many years. OHA attained grant funding, provided all materials and equipment, and completed the project with excellent

support from USFS. The estimated value of this project based on quotes received by USFS was between \$80,000 and \$110,000 for labor and materials.

OHA is working to protect and enhance meadow systems in the southwest Cascades for the benefit of wildlife, their habitat, and hunters. Meadow systems are important for deer and elk, and across the Cascades, meadows are at risk of loss, degradation, and fragmentation due to conifer encroachment, heavy use by domestic livestock, illegal OHV use, wildfire suppression and other factors.

OHA has now completed two of the three large-scale wildlife-friendly fences under the umbrella of our Southwest Cascades Meadow Protection Regional Project.

In the summer of 2025, OHA will shift its efforts to Short Creek Prairie, where we will protect an additional 2 miles of meadow.

With collaboration of multiple chapters, State OHA, and an open invitation to all OHA members and partners at these projects, we have and will continue to implement landscape-scale projects that offer a significant benefit to wildlife.

OHA conservation staff procured a \$50,000 grant provided by the Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund to fence three large meadows in the southwest Cascades.

In addition to OCRF and USFS, OHA thanks partners ODFW, Coastal Farm & Ranch, Legacy Sports International, OnX and North American Taxidermy.

## ODFW proposes license and tag fee increases

***OHA requests bear, cougar and turkey tags remain the same***

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director  
[mtotey@oregonhunters.org](mailto:mtotey@oregonhunters.org)

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in June approved a new budget for ODFW that includes license and tag fee increases for hunters and anglers. These will be the first fee increases since 2020. As currently proposed, a hunting license will increase 12 percent in the first biennium, and 8 percent in each of the next two bienniums.

OHA's comments at the Commission meeting specifically called out three

areas that should not be increased. Bear tags, cougar tags and turkey tags are all specific items that OHA would like to maintain at their current cost. Many believe turkey tags are overpriced. OHA initiated the half-price youth turkey tag (and the Youth Sports Pac) years ago to encourage families to participate. OHA also wants to encourage hunters to purchase bear and cougar tags.

ODFW Wildlife Division leaders attended the May 4 OHA Board of Directors meeting and outlined options for fee increases. The board provided OHA's perspectives and preferences for the fee increases. Clearly inflation affects ev-

eryone, including ODFW, and the board agreed with the need to increase license and tag fees to cover increased costs over the next three bienniums.

Commission approval is the first step for the next ODFW budget. The Agency Request Budget (ARB) was built after multiple public meetings and included specific input from OHA staff and Board of Directors. The proposed budget includes fee increases, policy option packages (additional requests for general funds) and other elements. The ARB will be submitted to the Governor's office for consideration before going to the legislature in the 2025 general session.

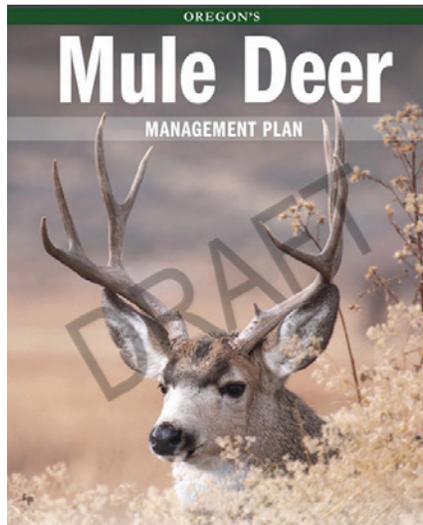
TO DONATE TO OHA'S WILDLIFE FUND, VISIT [HTTPS://OREGONHUNTERS.ORG/DONATE](https://oregonhunters.org/donate)

# OHA helps improve Mule Deer Management Plan

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator  
[TD@oregonhunters.org](mailto:TD@oregonhunters.org)

Oregon mule deer population trends are cause for major concern, with many herd ranges continuing to decline, despite already abysmally low population sizes. OHA has been working with ODFW for several years to develop a revision to the Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan. This plan was approved by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission in June.

OHA regarded the development of the new Mule Deer Management Plan as a top organizational priority, and OHA was unquestionably the leading conservation organization throughout the effort to shape the new plan for the benefit of mule deer, their habitat and hunters. State OHA submitted 10 separate formal comment letters vetted by the OHA deer sub-committee of experts on the draft mule deer plan, and OHA staff met with ODFW on numerous occasions to express concerns with the initial plan and offer support where appropriate.



OHA challenged ODFW to make the plan actionable and asserted that the goals in the plan must be measurable with a rigorous and specific to-do list for each individual herd range. OHA efforts had a tremendous impact on the end product, and in direct response to our comments, ODFW integrated: specificity and stron-

ger language to action items, clarification of the necessary steps to implement predator control efforts, resolution (and an extreme concern category) to herd range management concern levels, an expanded intermountain west section (i.e., sage-steppe), thorough ODFW recommendations for land managers, and a level of ODFW accountability by providing specific 2-3 year goals for each individual herd range.

Now that we have a solid mule deer management plan, OHA will turn its focus to plan implementation and identify areas where we can help ODFW and land managers improve conditions on the landscape for mule deer.

For more information on the plan, see [https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/management\\_plans/mule\\_deer/index.asp](https://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/management_plans/mule_deer/index.asp).

We recommend that you scroll to the bottom of the plan where it lists herd range reports. Here you will find population trends and herd range priority action items associated with each herd range.

## OHA defends public-land beaver harvest; new regs adopted

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director  
[Amy@oregonhunters.org](mailto:Amy@oregonhunters.org)

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission adopted new regulations specific to beavers at its June 14 meeting in Chiloquin. Previously, beavers had a dual classification as both a furbearer and a predatory animal, which divided the management responsibilities between ODFW and Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA).

With the passage of HB 3464 in the 2023 legislative session, the predatory animal listing was removed, bringing full management authority under ODFW's jurisdiction. The bill also instituted new permitting and reporting requirements for the take of beaver on private land as a result of damage issues.

In the same meeting, the 2024-26 furbearer regulations were approved. During the public testimony on this topic, a request was submitted to ban beaver trapping on all federally managed lands in the state. This request mirrors two previous attempts at a similar ban, each of which the Commission denied.

This most recent request was also denied after nearly 30 people testified on the topic.

OHA provided testimony in opposition to the ban based on the science and data presented by ODFW staff, which clearly showed harvest on federal lands was not a major mortality factor for beaver populations.



## Butte Creek Falls recreation area to reopen after 2020 wildfires

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director  
[mtotey@oregonhunters.org](mailto:mtotey@oregonhunters.org)

The Oregon Department of Forestry recently announced that the recreation area at Butte Creek Falls on the Santiam State Forest, which includes a trailhead and trail system, a small campground and a 100-yard shooting range, will reopen nearly four years after the fires that occurred during the 2020 Labor Day weekend. Work to recover from these fires continues.

The shooting range includes a new gravel backdrop, concrete barriers at approximately 100 yards, parking and new informational signs. The area was formerly used as a gravel pit.

While huge expanses of public forests were closed to the public after the fires because of safety concerns, closed roads and infrastructure damage, ODF has worked aggressively to reopen roads, salvage damaged timber and recover recreation sites.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for large areas on our national forest lands managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Much of these lands have been painfully slow to reopen, due in part to litigation by environmental groups, despite OHA's efforts to expedite these operations.

For updates, more information, maps to the area, as well as information on all Oregon State Forests recreation sites, visit the ODF Recreation website:

<https://www.oregon.gov/ODF/Recreation/Pages/Default.aspx>

