

OHA TRACKER

MARCH 2024

HART MT. SAGE-GROUSE AND PRONGHORN/RANDY SHIPLEY

Wildlife Omnibus bill moves forward in Short Session

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director
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HB 4148, the Wildlife Omnibus bill that includes funding for Chronic Wasting Disease detection and testing, has moved out of committee with a unanimous vote and a “do pass” recommendation. The bill is now in the Ways & Means Committee, which will decide whether to fund the bill.

OHA brought forward a bill in the 2023 legislative session, HB 2532, with the same financial request related to CWD. That bill also passed out of the policy committee but was stymied in Ways & Means, where it later died. HB 4148 gives new life to our priority of expanding detection efforts and establishing in-state testing facilities specific to CWD.



In-state CWD testing will get hunters faster results.

A northeast Oregon elk hunter checks his bull in at a CWD check station last fall in Prineville. OHA supports HB 4148 for in-state testing for CWD.

ODFW director announces retirement

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
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ODFW Director Curt Melcher announced he will wrap up his career with the agency at the end of March. Melcher first started with ODFW in 1985. He has served as the agency’s director since February 2015.

The recruitment and search for Melcher’s replacement is underway. By law, this is the responsibility of the Fish and Wildlife Commission. Much of the process to this point has taken place at commission meetings. The commission is

also being assisted with a private recruitment firm. This firm is actively reaching out to stakeholders, including OHA, to learn about the types of experience and attributes that we would like to see for the recruitment of the next director.

At the February Commission meeting in Hillsboro, the Commission announced the selection of an interim director, Davia Palmeri, who will fill the gap between the first of April and when the next director will be in place. The Commission is looking toward the May meeting to complete the recruitment and selection process.

Expo connects conservationists

A young boy practices his aim at a virtual duck hunt as a taxidermist adjusts a proud deer head on display. An owl perches on the arm of its trainer, spreading its wings for a gathering audience. A couple discusses the differences in animal tracks as a toddler casts out for plastic fish.

Families, professionals, and even some hiking goats gathered at the Deschutes County Fairgrounds for the inaugural Oregon Partners in Conservation Expo on Feb. 3. Both a networking opportunity for conservationists and a fun day for the community, the expo hosted numerous groups, including OHA, dedicated to Oregon’s environment and outdoor recreation.

“It was a lot of months to put this together,” said J.R. Lorimor, OHA Bend Chapter member and event organizer.

The first of its kind, the expo sought to create a centralized network for conservation groups. It was not a typical expo, as it was based entirely around information.

“There’s nothing for sale here; this is just about conservation,” said Lorimor. “We want to bring together groups that could benefit from networking, and hopefully build partnerships.”

Exhibitors included a wide range of organizations, from OHA’s Learn To Hunt program supported by the Leupold & Stevens Foundation, and US Forest Service, to the Oregon Falconers Association, who brought birds of prey to show rapt attendees.

“We’ve already got a waitlist for 2025,” said Lorimor. “We’re growing, and people are making connections.” —CARLY HUGHES

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OHA pursues NE Oregon wildlife crossing structures

By Mike Totey, Conservation Director
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OHA has been working around the state to address critical areas that have a high density of wildlife/vehicle collisions. To date, work has been completed on the Highway 97 undercrossing near Gilchrist, and projects are being planned on the southern portion of Interstate 5, Highway 20 between Suttle Lake and Bend, and Highway 20 east of Juntura.

In northeast Oregon, two highways need work to safely get deer and elk across.

The first is Highway 82 in Wallowa County, where stretches experience high numbers of both white-tailed and mule deer struck by vehicles. The second is Interstate 84 between Pendleton and La Grande. While not as many elk and deer are killed on I-84, wildlife tracking has clearly shown this interstate to be a major barrier to migrational movement. Addressing this barrier will be a key factor to connect habitat, protect seasonal movement corridors, and promote healthy elk and deer populations.

Latest Gun Calendar winners announced

OHA Gun Calendar Raffle winners are posted every Wednesday on OHA's social media, but Facebook and Instagram have been taking down the posts because they contain guns. See weekly winners on OHA's website or download our app, which you can also use to enter contests and get timely notifications.

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

- Feb. 7: Sig Cross
Ron Shoffeitt, Gold Beach
- Feb. 14: Howa 1500 Yote Package .223
Paul Silverio, Salem
- Feb. 21: Ruger American 6.5 PRC
Douglas Town, Hillsboro



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!



OHA SPRING BANQUETS

- Mar. 9 Bend 541-480-9848
- Mar. 16 Josephine Co. 541-761-1852
- Mar. 16 Capitol 503-930-8586
- Mar. 16 Rogue Valley 541-773-8736
- Mar. 16 Yamhill County 503-490-2489
- Mar. 23 Blue Mountain* 541-231-4384
- Mar. 23 Tualatin Valley **SOLD OUT!**
- Mar. 30 Mid-Columbia 541-490-2980
- 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 Elk Tag auction
- ** A&H Statewide Deer Tag auction

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