



Hunting for big bucks for wildlife

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director
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The outlook on the 2026 Legislative Session, commonly known as the Short Session due to its 5-week timeline, is being shaped by fiscal shortfalls. Oregon's politics in 2025 have set the table for a challenging landscape for any bill concept that will require state funding. From the 2025 session ending without a transportation package, to the stop-and-start special session wrangling of an acknowledged short-term fix for roads and immediate needs, the lack of availability of state funding has been underscored. Add in the September Revenue Forecast predicting an \$373 million shortfall, and the picture becomes more clear.

Dollars & Sense

Even in well-funded bienniums, the Oregon Legislature does not prioritize the funding of natural resource agencies. The General Fund, otherwise known as our tax dollars, is used to fund state agency budgets every two years. Of the \$37 billion dollars of General Fund allocated for the 2025-27 biennium, a mere 1.5% goes to all 16 natural resource agencies, with only 0.2% ending up at ODFW.

What does this mean for OHA and the sportsmen and women around the state? Likely, it means we will need to continue finding other funding avenues for our priorities of protecting Oregon's wildlife, habitat, and hunting heritage.

Welcome to the Hotel Oregon

One plan to address this need was brought forward in 2025: the transient lodging tax bill. The original concept,

HB 2977, would have increased the state transient lodging tax (TLT) by an additional 1%, raising it from 1.5% to 2.5%. Even with this increase, Oregon's statewide TLT would remain among the lowest in the nation. The revenue created from this increase would go to ODFW for conservation efforts such as the State Wildlife Action Plan.

As the bill was worked in the session, it was amended to change the increase from an additional 1% to 1.25% for a rate of 2.75% and add additional programs to the list of funding recipients. The final version included funds for the Wolf Depredation Compensation Program, invasive species response, additional anti-poaching capacity, wildlife connectivity programs, Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund, and a wildlife stewardship program. These changes garnered strong bipartisan support, moving the bill out of the House and to the Senate for final approval. Unfortunately, through late-session political maneuvering, the bill was not allowed on the Senate floor for a vote before the end of session.

Picking up the Tab for Wildlife

OHA has worked on this concept since its inception in 2021 and will support it again in 2026. We see the value in creating new revenue streams for ODFW that are additive to the costs currently shouldered only by hunters, anglers and trappers. Creating a funding stream that will be paid predominantly by out-of-state travelers is the first step in broadening the scope of fiscal responsibility for Oregon's wildlife management.

Women of OHA get coordinator

By Amy Patrick, OHA Policy Director
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The Women of OHA program, started in January 2024, has grown to the point of needing a part-time coordinator to help maintain the momentum of the program. Jennifer Braley, from Summer Lake, has stepped up to assist with the outreach work for the Women of OHA program, including coordinating volunteers for outreach events, planning the annual Weekend Away trip, and creating promotional opportunities to continue the rapid growth of the program.



Jennifer Braley

Jennifer has extensive background in outreach, project and grants management, and administrative-level support having worked previously for the U.S. Forest Service and USDA Agricultural Research Service.

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Changes coming to Oregon mule deer hunting in 2026

By Tyler Dungannon, Conservation Coordinator
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Eastern Oregon mule deer hunt areas for the 2026 season were approved at the September Oregon Fish & Wildlife Commission meeting. Nothing has changed for the 2025 season, but it's official: mule deer hunt areas will look very different for the vast majority of hunters in 2026.

These changes are a result of ODFW beginning to monitor and manage deer harvest within Oregon's 22 individual mule deer herd ranges. Modeling mule deer population performance and harvesting deer within respective herd ranges is biologically sound and should improve management of mule deer.

Starting in 2026, there will be just 43 total mule deer hunt areas, and generally speaking, these hunt areas will be much larger than we're accustomed to. These larger hunt areas may provide additional opportunities to hunt multiple landscapes with the same tag and offer hunters the opportunity to move from emergency closures (e.g., wildfire) and still hunt.

However, hunters should know there are a slew of potential pitfalls associated with these new, larger hunt areas. Overcrowding in highly coveted spots, increased difficulty in drawing certain tags, and hunters' typical hunt areas being split by new hunt area boundaries top the list of concerns hunters are likely to experience in 2026.

As we harvest deer within herd ranges, the current hunt area boundaries within the herd ranges have little biological significance. The hunt area boundaries are essentially drawn to manage hunters, and that is why hunters' input after the 2026 mule deer season will be imperative to address obvious issues.

Mule deer herd range (and hunt area) names were recently changed to avoid confusion with existing wildlife management unit names still being used to manage elk, pronghorn, etc., so don't be alarmed by these new herd range names.

Old Range Name	New Range Name
Murderers Creek	Aldrich
Ochoco	Crooked River
Warner	DeGarmo
Deschutes	Deschutes
Crescent	Devils Garden
Sumpter	Elkhorn
Northside	Fox
Columbia Basin	Helix
Biggs	Jackknife
Beulah-Malheur	Juntura
Keno	Keno
Klamath Basin	Klamath Basin
Mid Columbia	Mid Columbia
North Blues	North Blues
Northeast	Northeast
Fossil-Grizzly	Painted Hills
SC Low-Density	Poverty Basin
Juniper-Silvies	Sage Hen
South Wallowas	South Wallowas
Southeast	Southeast
Steens Mtn	Steens
Trout Creek	Trout Creek



New '25 Gun Calendar winners announced

The latest winners in OHA's 2025 Gun Calendar Raffle have been announced, and the 2026 OHA Gun Raffle Calendar is on sale now! Call 541-772-7313 or visit <https://oregonhunters.org/shop/#raffles>

See weekly winners on OHA's website or download our app, which you can also use to enter OHA contests and get timely notifications.

- ★ **Howa 1500 carbon fiber 6.5PRC**
Jim Ross-Lyons, Redmond Chapter
- ★ **Stoeger M3000 Max 7 Camo 12**
Christina Cox, Ochoco Chapter
- ★ **Browning A-Bolt 3 Hunter Grade II .30-06**
Danny Miller, Emerald Valley Chapter
- ★ **Howa M1500 .22-250 T/C Kryptek Typhon**
Galen Johnson
- ★ **Remington 700 ADL .300 Win. Mag.**
Mike Gordon, Hoodview Chapter

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