

ATTENTION OHA Members

Email Alert!

Who: OHA needs your help in stopping a land exchange.

What: Land Exchange of 1000 acres in Steens Mt area for approximately 10,000 to 11,000 acres of BLM ground in and around the Silvies Valley west to within a couple of miles of Yellow Jacket Reservoir.

When: Currently On-Going

Why OHA Is Against: The portion of the Silvies River plus certain tributaries and access roads that would be affected by this proposed land exchange constitutes an important part of the Silvies Wildlife Management Unit. The Silvies Unit is well known for its premium big game hunting, offering about 1,000 deer tags and 2,100 elk rifle tags per year. The Steens Wildlife Management Unit also is well known for its fine hunting, but opportunity in Steens is limited to about 250 deer rifle tags and 600 elk rifle tags per year.

What Can you Do?

Send a letter or email to our Congressional Delegation (see address below). The message should include these points:

1. Discourage the transaction by using some of the background information listed below.
(Describe for example the impact this will have on big game hunting.)
2. If the transaction is to occur, ask that truly valid appraisals of the land be developed and furnished to the public, and
3. Oregon citizens be made aware of the process and that they be given opportunity to assess concrete proposals and voice their opinions at public hearings on the subject.
4. The wildlife and recreational resources available to the public in the 10,000 acres is far greater than those offered by the area with limited access in the Steens.
5. Currently the combined deer and elk tag sales for the Silvies Wildlife Management Unit are close to 3500. This would mean a harsh economic impact on the region if these hunters are not allowed to hunt this Unit.

Background Information

In July of this year a Dr Scott Campbell gave notice that he is petitioning our Oregon Congressmen to exchange 1000 acres of his recently purchased Steens Mt property, for approximately 10 to 11,000 acres of BLM ground in and around the Silvies Valley west to within a couple miles of Yellow Jacket Reservoir. This is country between Burns and John Day, Oregon. The lands to be acquired belong to BLM and are sagebrush/forest transition land, mostly within the Silvies River drainage.

The 1000 acres of Steens property holds two small streams (portions of Fish and Lake Creeks), supports sagebrush, some juniper and aspen, some deer, and would be accessible to walk in public for about 6 months each year after the BLM took it over.

The 10 to 11000 acres he hopes to acquire consist of about 50% sagebrush and 50% ponderosa pine forest. That area is excellent deer and elk habitat, supports valuable timber, is accessible year round, and would be closed to public access if acquired. There are absolutely no warranties, that he would not subsequently subdivide or develop the properties. I wish I could be more specific, but Dr Campbell will not furnish maps, discuss his plans for potential development of those lands, and stated that he will not solicit nor encourage any further public input.

Background: Oregon Hunters Letter in Opposition

The Oregon Hunters Association is opposed to this land exchange and in June of this year sent a letter to Oregon's Congressional delegation opposing this exchange. In part the letter reads:

“We have become aware of a proposed land exchange between the BLM Burns District and Mr. Scott Campbell. Based on the information OHA has received, we are opposed to this exchange.

While acquisition of 1,000 acres in the Fish Creek drainage of Steens is a worthy addition to the public lands of Steens Mt. and would be of benefit to the general public, we cannot support the loss of nearly 11,000 acres of public land in the Silvies River watershed to achieve this goal. If the Fish Creek property is high priority for BLM to acquire, we would rather have BLM purchase the property.

The portion of the Silvies River plus certain tributaries and access roads that would be affected by this proposed land exchange constitutes an important part of the Silvies Wildlife Management Unit. The Silvies Unit is well known for its premium big game hunting, offering about 1,000 deer tags and 2,100 elk rifle tags per year. The Steens Wildlife Management Unit also is well known for its fine hunting, but opportunity in Steens is limited to about 250 deer rifle tags and 600 elk rifle tags per year.

OHA is opposed to this proposed land exchange.”

Here are the mail address and email addresses for Oregon Congressional Delegation and County Judges and County Commissioners:

Senator Gordon Smith
www.senate.gov/~gsmith
email:
<http://www.senate.gov/~gsmith/webform.htm>

Washington D.C. Office
404 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-3753
Fax: (202) 228-3997

Senator Ron Wyden

www.senate.gov/~wyden

email: <http://wyden.senate.gov/>

Washington, DC

516 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-5244

Representative David Wu - 1st

www.house.gov/wu

Washington DC Office

510 Cannon House Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20515

Phone: (202) 225-0855

Fax: (202) 225-9497

Representative Greg Walden – 2nd

www.house.gov/walden

Greg.walden@mail.house.gov

Washington DC Office:

1404 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-6730

Fax: (202) 225-5774

Representative Earl Blumenauer – 3rd Washington DC Office

www.house.gov/blumenauer/

US House of Representatives

1406 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

Phone: (202) 225-4811

Representative Peter DeFazio – 4th

www.house.gov/defazio

Reach me by Email or Toll Free: 1-800-944-9603

Peter.defazio@mail.house.gov

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2134 Rayburn H.O.B.

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