



# OHA TRACKER

FEBRUARY 2017



BAKER COUNTY GEESE

See this week's Hunting Headlines at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)

## Legislature opens; several hunting bills introduced

The 2017 Legislature was gavelled in on Jan. 9, the same day that 1,537 bills were delivered to the public for their reading enjoyment. The OHA 11-page master list of bills is being thoroughly reviewed by the OHA Legislative Committee. More bills will surface as the 2017 Legislature gets into full swing. During the Legislative session, we will highlight bills as they are introduced, and we will update you on their status. Here are just a few from the first stack:

### HB 2107 – Cougar Hunting with Dogs

This is the cougar bill that OHA asked the House Interim Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources to introduce this session. HB 2107 would allow a county to exempt itself from the banning of the use of dogs to hunt or pursue cougars if voters approved a county measure proposed by initiative petition or referred to the people by the governing body of the county. The bill will now go to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

### SB 458 – Cougar/Dog Controlled Hunt Program

This bill is sponsored by Senator Thomsen (R-Hood River). The bill requires the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to adopt a controlled hunt program for hunting cougars with dogs. The bill is in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Track bills in the 2017 Oregon Legislative session at [www.oregonhunters.org](http://www.oregonhunters.org)

### HB 2487 – Deer or Elk Tag Guarantee for Pioneers Age 75 or Older

This bill is sponsored by Rep. Bentz (R-Ontario). The bill would require the Commission to guarantee issuance of one deer or elk controlled hunt permit to any applicant who is 75 years of age or older and has a resident annual pioneer license. The bill will now go to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

### HB 2566 – Adult Hunter Mentor Program

This is a bill that OHA asked Rep. Witt to sponsor. The bill gives ODFW the authority to adopt an adult hunter mentoring program. OHA is currently working with Rep. Witt and ODFW to create the program parameters. We will keep you posted on the content of this program and the progress of this bill. The bill now goes to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

### SB 372 – Wildlife Salvage Bill

This bill is sponsored by Senator Hansell (R-Athena) and Representative Barreto (R-Pendleton)

The bill directs the Commission to adopt rules for issuance of wildlife salvage permits to salvage deer or elk accidentally killed as result of vehicle collision. This bill also requires ODFW to report on implementation of wildlife salvage permit rules during 2023 regular session. The bill is in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— AL ELKINS, OHA LOBBYIST

## OUTDOOR OUTLOOK

JANUARY 31

Harvest reporting deadline, most tags; Most bird seasons end

FEBRUARY 1

Deadline to file for OHA state elections

FEBRUARY 3

Eugene Boat & Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 4

OHA Capitol Chapter wood duck nest box project 503-566-7779

FEBRUARY 8

Pacific NW Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 10

Deadline to apply for spring bear tags

FEBRUARY 11

OHA Columbia Basin Chapter banquet, with Statewide elk tag auction, 541-379-1074

FEBRUARY 17

Douglas County Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 18

OHA chapter banquets:  
Hoodview 503-255-1946  
Ochoco 541-447-5730

FEBRUARY 24

Jackson County Sportsmen's Show opens

FEBRUARY 25

OHA chapter banquets:  
Columbia County 503-201-7495  
Emerald Valley 541-729-0877  
Redmond 541-233-3740  
Malheur County 541-216-0485

# OHA is riding herd for better elk management

Oregon is a good elk state. Statistics vary, but Oregon is usually ranked in the top four for elk numbers and is actually a solid third for number of elk hunters, which tallied Colorado 217,769, Montana 107,663, and Oregon 106,982 elk tags sold in 2014.

Bottom line: elk are important, and they have a lot more value in the world of wildlife conservation than most people realize. Elk are actually a very good barometer of ecosystem health, as they need habitat ingredients that give them enough security to evade both their two- and four-legged predators, and to have the forage to prosper in the warmer months and simply make it through the colder ones.

OHA is actively engaged in elk issues at every turn, and the health and security of elk is a frequently repeated theme in our conservation efforts. We've lobbied to maintain access to hunt elk, and

conversely lobbied to protect elk from disturbances, which move them out of the reach of hunters, sometimes away from optimal habitat, and commonly onto private land, where they may not be welcome. It all boils down to a balance, and each situation is a little bit different depending on landscape characteristics and human influences – such as roads, trails, and the amount – and type – of activity on them.

We have a great example of riding the elk cause in the Ochoco Mountains, where a new OHV trail has been proposed and supported by the Forest Service. In some ways it seems good to

**Elk are actually a very good barometer of ecosystem health.**



confine this kind of recreational use to a single route, but the problem is the 130-mile proposed trail system bisects some optimal habitat for elk-calving and elk security on a landscape that has a rich heritage of quality elk hunting – during both bow and rifle seasons.

OHA has opposed this trail at both the state and chapter levels, and officially delivered objection testimony to the Ochoco Forest Supervisor. Our frustration with the review process has centered on a lack of applying the “best available science” regarding elk vulnerability and disturbance. The Forest Service’s own elk research branch, at the Starkey Experimental Forest, has probably studied this question of OHV disturbance on elk more than any place on the planet, yet the trail system proponents have not adequately consulted these experts and applied their well documented findings.

There is a major balancing aspect to staying on top while riding on the elk’s back. On one leg, we need security to hold elk in desired places – such as on public lands and open for hunting. On the other leg, we want to have enough access to get into elk haunts and be able to move precious meat out for our consumption. It’s truly a question of resource balance, and that is the backbone of OHA’s mission in conservation. —JIM AKENSON, OHA CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

## WIN A GUIDED BUCK HUNT ON THE NATURE CONSERVANCY'S FAMOUS ZUMWALT PRAIRIE PRESERVE!

**1 HUNTER AND UP TO 2 NON-HUNTING GUESTS & 1 GUIDE FOR 3 DAYS IN 2017!**



**LAST CALL! DRAWING MARCH 9!**

**Tickets: \$50, or 3 for \$100. 300 offered. Value: \$4,900. Drawing: March 9, 2017.**

**To buy tickets: Call the OHA State Office at 541-772-7313, or mail check and contact info to OHA, P.O. Box 1706, Medford, OR 97501.**

3-day guided deer rifle hunt for 1 hunter on the 33,000-acre Zumwalt Prairie Preserve in Oregon's Wallowa County in the fall 2017 season (dates TBD; likely October). Hunter may bring up to 2 guests who do not hunt. Hunting is all on foot and hunters should be in good physical condition. Recent hunter success rate has been close to 100%. Trophy bucks are common. The Preserve is part of the largest remaining intact Pacific Northwest bunchgrass prairie in North America. Food, beverages, gear, & gratuity not included. Transportation to Preserve not included (once there, guide will provide transportation). Deer tag is guaranteed, but hunter is responsible for license/tag cost. Must make arrangements by April 1, 2017. Raffle hosted by OHA. **Drawing:** March 9, 2017, 7 p.m. Eagle's Club, 2000 Table Rock Rd., Medford, OR. Need not be present to win.



**Check out and follow OHA's new Instagram:**  
<https://www.instagram.com/oregonhuntersassociation>

**We will post photos from projects and events throughout the year that further our mission. Please check it out!**