

Q: Why is it important for me to fill out the ODFW volunteer hour log?

A: Filing out the Monthly Volunteer Time Log is important because the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) receives federal grant funds from the Pittman-Robertson Act (see below for more information). These funds are distributed to each state by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Each state must match the funds they receive in volunteer hours. If ODFW do not match the funds, then the agency is at risk at not receiving the funds.

It is very important that you fill out the form correctly, because the USFWS have certain requirements regarding the paperwork, or they will not accept the volunteer hours that we capture.

- Please be sure you fill in all of the information needed on the form, including your name, event type, month and year.
- Please be sure you mark on the form if you were being paid by your employer or if you worked as an unpaid volunteer while you were teaching either NASP® or S3DA.
- If you were being paid, please fill out your hourly salary. This is the value of your hours that we capture and turn into USFWS. If you were not being paid, then we have a rate we use that USFWS has given us for non-paid volunteers.
- Please sign the form and date. You may not sign for someone else, it must be your signature or we cannot capture your hours.

If any of these items are missing, then ODFW cannot capture your hours and cannot include them in the dollar match we report to USFWS at the end of each grant period.

By submitting your volunteer hours, you are helping secure the future of ODFW programs like NASP® and S3DA.

About the Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson)

By Jeff Barnard, AP environmental reporter in SW Oregon for 30+ years (now retired)

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You remember how in the movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life,” Zuzu says, “Every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings”?

Well, every time a gun, box of ammo, bow or arrow sells, wildlife gets a little *ka-ching*, which goes toward ODFW projects such as improving mule deer habitat, developing accurate population estimates of mule deer and black-tailed deer, and expanding or improving state-owned wildlife areas that provide important big game and waterfowl habitat.

That *ka-ching* comes from a 1937 federal law drafted by former Oregon Fish and Game Commission Director Carl Shoemaker, and it raises serious money.

The problem it confronted was that by the 1930s, decades of unfettered market hunting and human population expansion had seriously driven down wildlife populations. Remember the passenger pigeon? The bison? Gun makers figured that if they were going to have any hunters left to sell guns to, they had better assure there was game for them to hunt. So they backed the idea of raising money for wildlife restoration.

The law is known as the Pittman-Robertson Act for the two main sponsors in Congress. It took over revenues from an 11 percent federal excise tax on sporting firearms, and devoted the money to wildlife

nationwide. After evidence of mismanagement of funds, legislation in 2000 stipulated what the money could be used for. The act was also updated over the years to extend the tax to handguns and archery gear. In 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service distributed \$695,141,699 nationally, according to their website. Based on land area and hunting licenses sold, Oregon's share was \$15,457,600 in 2016.

Oregon's money went for buying land for wildlife habitat, like the expansion of the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area; maintaining existing wildlife areas; improving habitat for mule deer by clearing juniper and planting native grasses for forage; improving waterfowl habitat at Summer Lake; big game aerial surveys, and research that helps state biologists manage wildlife better, like the mule deer and black-tailed deer population estimates. The funds also support the hunter education program and enhancing shooting and archery ranges throughout the state.

The amount was perking along at about \$5 million a year for years, but in 2007 it took what is affectionately known as the PR Bump, ramping up steadily to levels that now approach \$20 million. Since the 9-11 attacks in 2001, gun and ammunition sales have been steadily rising, with particular spikes whenever there is a mass shooting or gun-control advocates propose new restrictions on assault rifles. Nationally, gun sales hit 2 million a month in January, 2013, after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting and President Obama's re-election, according to a [New York Times analysis](#) of federal background checks required with gun purchases.

Now the PR funds amount to 30 percent of the annual wildlife budget for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"It's been pretty vital," said Sarah Reif, who was the department's wildlife restoration coordinator. "One of our biggest challenges with Pittman-Robertson funding is the fact that it requires a 25 percent match."

In the past, hunting license revenues covered the match, but in recent years, license sales have declined and then leveled off, despite the rise in gun sales. That has pushed the department to get creative, relying on in-kind efforts such as volunteer work and university research work to make up the difference.

One interesting change in gun sales—rifles and shotguns were selling at twice the number of handguns in the early 2000s, but in 2014, handguns surpassed rifles and shotguns as the majority of firearms sold. Handguns sales were put under Pittman-Robertson in 1970. So despite the fact that handguns are not generally used for hunting, their sales are helping to fund wildlife.

Reif said the department devotes the PR bump to projects with enduring value as opposed to creating new staff positions in the agency, because they have no idea when it will go away, and they don't want to have to lay off a bunch of people. So a lot of it goes to research, land purchases, and habitat improvement. Some also goes to hunter education. Mule deer habitat improvements, such as removing invading juniper trees, removing non-native plants, and planting native shrubs for forage, have gotten \$2.9 million since 2007.

ODFW chipped in \$1.3 million of PR funds toward the purchase of the Lower Deschutes River Ranch, adding 10,000 acres to the Lower Deschutes Wildlife Area for big game winter range and riparian habitat. Reif said the focus of PR funds is on game species. But the money also goes to non-game wildlife. An effort to figure out how well kit fox are doing in southeastern Oregon has gotten \$210,000 in grants for GPS collaring, camera surveys, and DNA analysis of scat samples. Other PR grants have also recently helped fund research of Sierra Nevada red fox and double-crested cormorants, and water bird monitoring. So every hunter can take pride in knowing that 10 percent of the money they spent on firearms benefits wildlife.