

BIG GAME REVIEW

Summaries of Wildlife District Outreach and Input

July 16, 2020 to August 3 2020



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

DATE: 08/03/2020

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Brian Ratliff, District Wildlife Biologist, Baker Wildlife District

SUBJ: Public Outreach and Input for Proposed 2021 Big Game Regulations

The Baker Wildlife District staff talked to hunters through general hunter contacts in the field and public hunter phone calls, that peak during the controlled hunt deadline period (approx. 250 phone calls/month). We provided information on the proposed 2021 regulation changes and directed people to our website for further information or to provide comments.

All of the conversations that were had were in regards to controlled archery hunts. All hunters expressed concerns about archery hunter crowding or increased use of the "area" they hunt. There was also several hunters that felt that a "choose your weapon" regulation would potentially address archery density in areas without changing to controlled hunts.

Hunters expressed no concern with going to controlled archery deer hunts and were in support of moving forward with that specific proposal. In regards to controlled archery elk hunting, two specific issues came forward.

1. The loss of hunting more than one unit. This generated long conversations regarding grouping units and/or districts to allow for larger areas.
2. The loss of accumulated preference points. What I found interesting about the second point is no one expressed concern about not gaining future points while still archery hunting. The concern was only in the initial cost of using points to draw a hunt that could be drawn with little or no points.



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

DATE: 08/03/2020

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Kurt Licence, District Wildlife Biologist, North Willamette Wildlife District

SUBJ: Public Outreach and Input for Proposed 2021 Big Game Regulations

The North Willamette Watershed District (NWWD) conducted substantial outreach this year to local hunt groups, individual hunters, land managers, and local hunting and archery equipment retailers. Outreach was primarily conducted through an email including local big game hunt proposals as well as survey updates for deer and elk in NWWD Wildlife Management Units. After the email was sent, NWWD staff contacted local hunt group reps, and hunting equipment retailers by phone and provided proposal information for retailers to make available to customers. Unfortunately, even with all of our effort we received very little input from the community (5 responses total).

From the input we did receive there were some comments relative to proposals for the 2021 Big Game season. Specifically, some supported moving the west cascade general deer and elk seasons back to early November and felt that would positively impact the quality of the hunt. A local Traditional Archers of Oregon representative opposed the eastern Oregon archery controlled hunt proposals and a local Oregon Hunters Association representative supported the move to controlled archery hunts in the east (with questions about impacts to western Oregon hunter numbers as a result). Also, about even support and opposition to allowing crossbows to the any legal weapon hunts. More details on comments and outreach can be found in supporting attachments.

Comments regarding local big game regulation changes were limited, but I heard support for hunt changes to the Trask unit (youth tag increase, General Season Antlerless Elk Damage Hunt, etc), new traditional archery hunt in the Santiam, and NW bear tag increase. Other suggestions that were made include: making hunters choose between rifle and archery to help with hunter crowding and animal disturbance issues, providing more specialty archery hunts, cutting WMUs in half to help manage overcrowding concerns, and concerns about access issues related to delayed gate openings and areas with a high percentage of private lands.



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

DATE: 08/3/2020

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Matt Keenan, District Wildlife Biologist, Union Wildlife District

SUBJ: Public Outreach and Input for Proposed 2021 Big Game Regulations

On July 6, 2020, I contacted leadership from local sports groups (RMEF, OHA, OBH) to inform them that our local public meeting scheduled for July 14 had been cancelled due to Covid-19. Attached to this email was a letter summarizing the conceptual changes to archery seasons, proposed tag numbers for Union District hunts, and a solicitation for comments directly to this district office and/or the website comment form. Links were provided to online resources. I encouraged widespread distribution of this letter.

The Union Wildlife District received email and telephone correspondence regarding proposed 2021 Big Regulations. Approximately half of the callers indicated they also completed the online comment form.

Regarding the archery proposals, most hunters understood the concept and the underlying reasons. However, some hunters voiced strong desire to maintain general archery seasons. Cited concerns included the need to use all accumulated preference points in order to hunt with a bow in Eastern Oregon, concern they wouldn't draw a tag at all, and concern about overall reduction in hunting opportunity. Some hunters suggested reducing hunter efficiency (instead of opportunity) by limiting technology, avoiding rut hunts, keeping general seasons for traditional archers only, or enacting 3+ point antler restrictions. Some hunters agreed with limiting hunter numbers, but suggested alternatives to the ODFW concept such as grouping WMUs or controlling archery for non-residents only. One hunter supported the concept as written. We received two requests to not limit LOP archery elk tags in Starkey WMU.

Other comments included extending spring bear season later (instead of earlier), and liberalizing cougar hunting (support for hound hunting, purchase tag after harvest). One hunter suggested protecting our mule deer herds by cancelling the season for 1 year, then enacting 3+ point antler restrictions for rifle and archery hunts.



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

DATE: 07/31/2020

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Stuart Love, District Wildlife Biologist, Charleston Field Office

SUBJ: Outreach effort and results for 2020 Big Game Regulations

The Charleston Field Office efforts for public outreach related to the 2020 Big Game Regulations included three methods. Those were: two discussions on the Hooked On Oregon AM Radio show, two weeks apart, submission of an article to the Tioga Chapter Oregon Hunters Association newsletter and personal communication with members of the public when it was appropriate given the conversation.

We only had one person provide input as a result of the radio show discussions. That person said he is in favor of the three proposals I discussed on the show, which were controlled bow hunting in Eastern Oregon for elk and deer, the proposal to move the West Cascades elk season to November so deer season can run unimpeded and the proposal to allow crossbows during the Any Legal Weapon seasons.

It does not appear we generated any input from the article in the OHA newsletter although some people may have commented online. As for personal communications, the owner of the local archery shop is the only one who provided any real input. He is not in favor of all deer and elk hunts in Eastern Oregon becoming controlled but he understands the concern regarding hunter crowding, inequities in bull harvest and mule deer population declines. He had no other comments to make. There were three other conversations with local hunters who support the proposal to make bow hunting in Eastern Oregon for deer and elk controlled.



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

DATE: 07/31/2020

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Anne Mary Myers, Acting District Wildlife Biologist, Corvallis Wildlife District

SUBJ: Public Outreach and Input for Proposed 2021 Big Game Regulations

The Corvallis Wildlife District contacted the Capitol and Mid-Willamette Chapters of the Oregon Hunters Association with information on 2021 proposed hunting seasons. The Mid-Willamette Chapter is going through some leadership changes, so I am unsure if the information reached their membership.

We did not receive any direct feedback on the proposed changes. It appears that hunters are utilizing the online comment form to provide input. I suspect that overall we will get a lot more feedback and participation with this new model of collecting public input.



MEMORANDUM

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Wildlife Division
Intra Departmental

Date: July 31, 2020
To: Nick Myatt
From: Steve Cherry –District Biologist
Subject: Comments on proposed 2021 season structure and tag recommendations

The Heppner District posted the new release regarding the 2021 tag recommendations and new season structures in the local newspaper as well as at the local POS, post office, hardware store and feed store. Additionally the news release was emailed to several of the local people who normally attend our public meetings. We also brought up the subject of controlled archery season with about 12 different locals who we knew would be interested in the proposed changes. Other than the conversations with the people we brought up the subject with the office only received three unsolicited comments on the proposed changes. Of those three comments two were opposed to the proposal to change from general season to controlled archery and one was in favor of the proposed change. The twelve or so locals that we brought up the subject with all liked the idea of going controlled hunts. The comments opposed to the change mostly revolved around not being able to get a tag every year. The other concern was that controlled hunts would make some of the units that have lower hunter densities more crowded with second choice applicants who were unable to draw the more popular units. The comments from most people in favor of going to controlled hunts stated reducing hunter densities as their reason for liking the proposal.

Several comments were received regarding lowering buck deer tag numbers in all of the units. No comments were received on any of the other proposed changes.

**MEMORANDUM
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
DESCHUTES WATERSHED DISTRICT
PRINEVILLE FIELD OFFICE**

Date: **JULY 31, 2020**
To: **NICK MYATT**
From: **GREG JACKLE**
Subject: **2021 BIG GAME PROPOSAL LOCAL INPUT**

The purpose of this memo is to provide Wildlife Division with local input received concerning the proposed changes to big game hunting for 2021.

Due to the outbreak of Covid 19, district staff was unable to hold a public meeting in Redmond OR like we have done in the past or present and attend meetings of the local Oregon Hunter Association chapters (Prineville, Redmond, Bend). However, the information produced and distributed online was shared with each chapter.

The Prineville district office has received no input to date related to these proposed changes. It should be noted that the proposed changes only impact one wildlife management unit (WMU) (Grizzly) within the district as the other two are already controlled hunts for archery deer and elk (Maury and Ochoco).

It is possible that local hunters that hunt other general archery hunting WMU's in Eastern OR may have provided input to those district offices, or directly to the commission via the link from the online presentation.



Memorandum

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

DATE: 07/31/2020

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Tod Lum, District Wildlife Biologist, Douglas Wildlife District

SUBJ: Public Outreach and Input for Proposed 2021 Big Game Regulations

The Douglas Wildlife District contacted the President of the local Umpqua Oregon Hunters Association on July 1, 2020, to remind them that there was no public hunting regulation meeting this year. I provided web links to the ODFW website that included the 2021 proposed big game regulations, 2020 public forum survey, 2019 & 2020 opinion surveys for deer and elk, and how to provide comments. This information was provided to inform the membership through the chapter's monthly newsletter. However, I don't believe we generated any input from the OHA newsletter although some people may have emailed or provided comments on the ODFW website.

I made in-person visits to the local sporting goods store (Coastal, Sportsmans Warehouse and Waldron's Outdoor Sports). The few comments I received were focused on the Eastern Oregon bow season becoming controlled. There were a couple of people who were in favor of it as they were rifle hunters and felt the change was long overdue. Some bow hunters expressed unhappiness but, could see this coming and were not surprised, especially with the crowding issues. Those same bow hunters were wondering what would happen to their local hunting spots should more bow hunters not get an Eastern Oregon bow tag. They feared more crowded areas in Western Oregon.

A few comments were directed at the Cascade Bull shift to November and they were mainly positive. One person said we would be "hammering" what few bull elk we have left in the Cascade Units and that the later hunting season would be a bad thing for the elk.

There may have been a few phone calls received seeking clarification on proposals but, surprisingly no heated discussions were fielded by me or my staff.



MEMORANDUM

Department of Fish and Wildlife
Intra Departmental

Date: July 31, 2020
To: Nick Myatt, Chris Knutsen
From: Paul Atwood
Subject: Collecting Local Input on Big Game Proposals Being Considered

Nick and Chris,

As requested, below is a summary of comments from hunters and landowners that the District has been in contact with recently. Please let me know if you have any questions.

- The North Coast Watershed District typically gets very low input from area hunters and hunter groups at the traditional public meeting in Seaside. This year Tillamook, Clatsop and Columbia County chapters of the Oregon Hunters Association, the Saddle Mtn Archers and approximately 20 additional at large hunters were contacted via email to solicit input on the proposed 2021 Big Game Regulations.
- We have received feedback that hunters are not supportive of the controlled archery hunting proposal in eastern Oregon. North Coast hunters we spoke with are concerned that an already increasing density of archery hunters in North Coast WMUs that are adjacent to the metro area will be further utilized once the archery hunting is controlled on the east side. They were supportive of the need to make a change because of biological impacts, but were concerned that once controlled hunts replace general hunting opportunity, it is here to stay.
- Several hunters had heard about a Saddle Mtn 3+Point regulation change and contacted the District to discuss their concerns. Once they heard that proposal is off the table, their concerns were put to ease. We did take the opportunity to educate these hunters on the research that has been conducted on and the biological impacts of such a regulation which seemed to turn into positive conversations.
- As in previous years, local archery hunters have the desire to add antlerless elk back into the archery bag limit. The Saddle Mtn Archers group has been the most vocal with these desires and has suggested sub-unit areas where an expanded bag limit could be legal. Some of the membership remembers when archery hunters were used as a form of damage control and have suggested high profile damage areas where an expanded bag limit could be possible.



MEMORANDUM

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Intra Departmental

Date: July 30, 2020

To: Nick Myatt, Chris Knutsen

From: Jason Kirchner

Subject: Collecting Local Input on Big Game Proposals Being Considered

Hi Nick and Chris,

As requested, here is a summary of comment trends from hunters and landowners that have spoken to the district these past months. Please let me know if you have any questions.

- We have been getting consistent feedback that hunters and landowners are not supportive of the Department move to controlled archery hunting in eastern Oregon for the entire side. This will lead to archery hunters moving to the west thereby increasing, possibly overwhelming hunting pressure and decreased game populations along the west side and coast WMU's. West side landowners are concerned about more impacts to wildlife populations levels, roads, damage to gates/infrastructure, camping, trash dumping, and fire dangers with increased hunting pressure. This would lead to more private land closures thereby reducing hunting opportunities and further hunting regulation changes that would limit hunting opportunities. Fire danger closures appear to be more prevalent on west side units which focus hunters in open areas on public lands. With the department proposing controlled archery on east side this will lead to high densities of hunters on public lands on the west side during fire season.
- Solution ideas from public: The department should have zone hunting (multiple units) on the east side and to have some general archery areas on the east side like we have on the west side. Adopt zones with quotas like other states where you are having population issues (too many animals, too few animals). The public still has questions on why we don't have pick your weapon, pick your side of the state. We also have received the typical comments on predator control, too many cougars and having the department use the tools we have to reduce predator populations.

- We also continually get comments on increasing cow tags and bringing back disabled elk permits for the Alsea and Stott. Also comments on working with ranchers and problem elk damage areas more.
- Cascade elk comments focused on a lack of adequate elk population numbers/data to have a general season in these units. They are asking why we would move the dates to a better time with likely to increase harvest if population densities are already low or unknown. Some commenters talk about a total closure for a number of years or going controlled to help bolster elk numbers. Overall the general consensus is elk numbers are poor in cascade units more help needed to bolster elk numbers.

MEMORANDUM
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
INTRA-DEPARTMENT

DATE: 30 July 2020

TO: Nick Myatt, Project Lead – Big Game Hunting Review

FROM: Christopher Yee, Springfield District Wildlife Biologist

SUBJECT: Public comments for the 2021 Big Game Hunting Proposals

The purpose of this memorandum is to highlight comments submitted by the public regarding the 2021 Big Game Hunting Proposals. Comments will be divided into two sections, statewide and local.

Statewide

Comments were submitted on the proposal to convert archery deer and elk to controlled hunts in eastern Oregon. No hunters supported this proposal. The principal concern was not being able to archery hunt in eastern Oregon every year. Secondary concerns included not being able to hunt in the unit(s) of choice, not being able to hunt in western Oregon (predominately from hunters living on the west side) after hunting in eastern Oregon, and impacts to groups of hunters that hunt as a party most years but not every year (i.e., entering the preference point system).

Local

Some western Oregon archery hunters were concerned that archery hunters not drawing a controlled eastern Oregon tag would cause overcrowding issues in western Oregon. These hunters did not support the proposal to convert archery deer and elk to controlled hunts in eastern Oregon.

Hunter comments were either supportive or neutral on moving the West Cascade Elk (General Any Legal Weapon Season) to after the Cascade Buck (General Any Legal Weapon Season). The supportive hunters believed this shift in season timing had the potential to improve hunter success rates. Neutral hunters thought because the elk populations are so low, it won't matter when the season is held and that hunter success rates will remain the same.

Comments were received regarding the 121M Indigo Unit controlled hunt. This hunt split the Indigo WMU into north and south units in 2019 and earlier, but now encompasses the entire unit. Hunters had concerns about the number of preference points that would be required to draw the new hunt and being able to maintain deer populations in the southern portion of the unit.



MEMORANDUM

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Rogue Watershed

Date: July 30, 2020

To: Nick Myatt

From: Steve Niemela, Rogue District Wildlife Biologist

Subject: Summary of Rogue District Public Input

Due to Covid19 we were unable to host our normal series of public meetings. Instead we created a YouTube video and held what we called a listening session on July 14th. This listening session was intended to be a time for hunters or other members of the public to call our office in the evening and talk directly to an ODFW biologist or an OSP officer. During that meeting we heard from only one hunter, who supported the expansion of bear hunting in the Wild and Scenic section of the Rogue River, and was against moving the general elk hunt back to November, due to concerns with predator numbers. The rest of our calls were almost exclusively long-time rafters of the Rogue River or anti-hunting activists who opposed our proposed change to bear hunting on the Rogue. Unfortunately, I did mix up the date for the Listening Session in an OHA newsletter, but we also reached out through a front-page article in the Mail Tribune, direct emails to sport group leaders, and a YouTube video.

We have not had enough comments from hunters to allow us to make any generalizations or summaries. On the other hand, our email and phone inboxes have not been jammed with calls from hunters complaining.

Please let me know if you need any other information or specifics. I emailed in our Call Log last week, as well as forwarding some of our correspondence with BHA.



MEMORANDUM

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Date: 30 July, 2020

To: Nick Myatt

From: Shane Talley

Subject: Proposed Regulation and Hunt Changes

Nick, The Wallowa District distributed a summary to the Chieftain, and a contact with the local RMEF, OHA, MDF, and ORFNAWS chapters. I have heard no response from any of the contacts. The Chieftain did not print the article and did not get back to me about inquiries until 7/29/2020.

I have fielded a few phone calls asking if the rumors about the archery season are true. I could not get any more information than that. We have not received any phone calls or emails commenting on the proposed changes.

Shane Talley
Wallowa District Assistant Wildlife Biologist



MEMORANDUM

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

John Day Watershed

Date: July 30, 2020

To: Nick Myatt

From: Greg Rimbach, Umatilla Wildlife District

Subject: Summary of Umatilla District trends in response to the 2020 Big Game Proposals

In late June of 2020, the Umatilla District began reaching out to the its local hunting constituents and individuals that we had identified as potentially being interested in reviewing and commenting on the 2020 big game hunt proposals. We reached out to 28 identified contacts, which included the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and committee chairs of the local chapters of OHA and RMEF suggesting that they forward the Umatilla Districts provided information to their local chapter membership. Over an approximate 30-day period, we received seven responses directly to the district office. Some of our contacts said that they were going to send their comments directly to the ODFW Commission.

With such few responses, it was difficult to ascertain how folks in Umatilla County felt about the 2020 Big Game Proposals. However, with that said, there was a slight overall opposition for eastern Oregon to be transitioned from general archery to controlled archery.

Below you will find the reasons given in support and opposition of the controlled archery proposal as well as suggestions for alternatives to controlled archery hunting:

- If controlled archery is approved, it will decrease crowding in the field and may be helpful in recovering deer and elk populations.
- The proposal will give unfair preference to residents of western Oregon by allowing them to apply for a controlled eastern archery tag, and if not successful, then buy a general western archery tag. It is very unlikely that eastern Oregon hunters who are unsuccessful in the draw will go to western Oregon for general archery hunting.
- If the proposal is approved, I will unfortunately then have fewer archers for fee hunting due to LOP acreage limitations. I will go from 5 guaranteed general archers to 2 guaranteed LOP archers.
- We need some sort of “choose your weapon” option in the hunt application process. If you apply for a limited entry archery tag and don't draw, then you have the option to buy the general season archery tag; or if you apply for a limited entry any legal weapon tag, then you have the option to buy the general season any legal weapon tag. No

switching from rifle to archery or visa versa just because a successful draw result was unavailable that year. This would undoubtedly diminish the overall number of archers in these units, as well as, branch bulls harvested. The overall objective would be achieved without having to go to all controlled archery in eastern Oregon.

- Even though I would be disappointed if general archery went too controlled, this may be the only way to effectively reduce crowding during the archery season.
- Are there other options to explore other than controlled archery in order to achieve the equality besides going controlled i.e.: choose your weapon, over-the-counter with a WMU quota, zones?
- Concerned that if archery goes too controlled, I will not go archery hunting again for a long time due to having 12, 200 series preference points. I am still years away from getting one of the “big 3” tags, so do I burn my 12 points on a Ukiah controlled archery hunt the first year? I certainly won’t be able to get my second choice in controlled archery scenario.

We did receive a few comments on issues other than controlled archery. They were:

- Neutral on the crossbow issue so long as it never becomes a legal weapon during the archery season.
- Landowners need to be able to receive one bull tags at a higher rate than what is currently offered in the Walla Walla Unit.

Since we received several emails with comments, as well as taking notes on comments we received over the phone and in person, I thought I would provide those original documents to you as well bellow. All of the comments above are captured from the notes below as well as a few “in-person” comments. If you have any question, please feel free to reach out to me.

Primary contacts, original notes, and comments

Carl Scheeler (CTUIR)	email
Hannah Mabbott	email
Bob Levy	email
Norm Kessler	email
Bobby Corey	email
Lisa and Chet Sater	email and phone
Brett Thomas	email
Conan Fisher	email and phone
Kent Beebe	email and phone
Tim Campbell (RMEF)	email and phone
Adam Green	email and text
Tom Darby	email
Scott Peckham	email and phone call
Lizzy Berkley	email
Bill Duke	email and personal conversation
Tom Juezler	phone conversation

Brad Lathrop	email
Paul Ellis	email
Calvin Davis	phone conversation
Terry Reynolds	email
Terry Beckett (OHA)	email and phone
Monte Davidson	email
Jason Peterson	email
Ryan Sharp	email
Alec Sheard	phone conversation
Scott Nevil	email
Mike Bozworth	Personal conversation

COMMENTS

Charlie Doherty: Had a concern that if archery went to controlled for eastern Oregon, that he would not be able to have as many archery hunters on his property due to limits on tags. Also, he currently fee hunts his land and that typically there are 5 archers general season hunters and 2 LOP rifle hunters fee hunting. If controlled archery is adopted, then he would only be able to fee hunt 2 LOP hunters and hope that his 5 archery customers would all draw the tag.

Conan Fisher: As an avid archery hunter for the majority of my adult life here in Oregon, I have some serious reservations about the current proposals limiting the ability to hunt elk with a bow in Oregon. I know over the recent years there's been more and more frustration with being able to draw an any bull tag with any sort of consistency in Oregon. This has caused many residents of Oregon to "play the game" of applying for an any legal weapon elk tag, not drawing it and then deciding to go archery hunting. They would prefer to hunt with a rifle, but can't draw a tag and so revert to archery hunting. This has in turn caused many more "archery" hunters in the field and for that reason more elk harvested during archery season.

Now, there seems to be an issue in really only two WMU's in Eastern Oregon (Ukiah and Starkey) where more branch bulls are being harvested yearly during the general archery season versus the any legal weapon season. This is due to the increase in archery hunters no doubt. However, if the number of individuals who applied for an any legal weapon tag were not allowed to buy a general season archery tag, this number would drastically decrease. In my opinion, there would be at least a 40% drop in total archers in these units if individuals applying for an any legal weapon tag were not allowed to switch over and buy an archery tag. This is the simple concept of "choose your weapon" at the application process. If you apply for a limited entry archery tag and don't draw, then you have the option to buy the general season archery tag; or if you apply for a limited entry any legal weapon tag, then you have the option to buy the general season any legal weapon tag. No switching from rifle to archery or visa versa just because a successful draw result was unavailable that year. This would undoubtedly diminish the overall number of archers in these units, as well as, branch bulls harvested. The overall objective would be achieved.

For an archer like myself, if the proposed changes take effect, the ability to accumulate any preference points and still archery hunt in Eastern Oregon will be lost. Without preference points, the chances of ever drawing an elk tag in Walla Walla, Mt. Emily or Wenaha are less than 1%. Maybe that's part of the reason for the change??? Also, what other options will someone like myself have to archery hunt Eastern Oregon if I apply for an archery tag and don't draw? If my only option is to hunt during the general any legal weapon season, then I will be forced to not hunt elk in the state of Oregon. There will most likely be many, many other archers like myself. This will cause a significant decrease in elk tag sales and revenue for ODFW.

This really boils down to a couple WMU's (Ukiah and Starkey, Heppner if you account for spikes) seeing a few more bulls (37 and 66) harvested during archery season versus any legal weapon season. That is assuming hunters report accurately where they hunted and harvested an animal. Keep in mind there are people out there who might not be truthful when reporting. For the state to completely redesign the general archery season is absurd. We're talking about approximately 103 elk out of a herd of around 60,000 in Eastern Oregon!

The new proposal also gives preference to residents in Western Oregon by allowing them to apply for an archery tag in Eastern Oregon, not draw, then purchase the general season Western Oregon archery tag while an individual in Eastern Oregon has no such opportunity on the east side of the state. Yes, a person in Eastern Oregon could purchase the general season Western Oregon archery tag, but many of us here would rather not hunt that side of the state. Call it what you want, but this appears to substantially benefit hunters who live in Western Oregon.

As a lifelong resident of Oregon, former employee of ODFW, avid outdoorsman and archery hunter, I ask you to reconsider the proposed regulations. There are other options available to achieve the objective, like "choose your weapon". This would limit archers in these WMU's and overall harvest rates would decrease. That is the main issue, right? Blanketing all of Eastern Oregon due to a couple of WMU's having more elk harvested during archery season over the any legal weapon season is unwise. Imagine the same argument being used by archery hunters against rifle hunters. Sounds a bit crazy doesn't it? Why then would the rules be rewritten for such a reason? From my perspective there's two valid options, either enforce a "choose your weapon" rule or leave it as it is. Again, it's only two WMU's out of 47 WMU's in Eastern Oregon and 103 elk out of a herd of approximately 60,000!

Thank you,

Conan Fisher, DC

ODFW Summary for Conan Fisher

There are more archery hunters because most people want to rifle hunt one bull elk, but the rifle hunters can't get a tag, so the rifle hunters end up buying a general season archery tag. There are a lot of rifle elk hunters masquerading as archery hunters. Rifle hunters that are inexperienced archery hunters just end up educating elk and make it more difficult for true archers.

By implementing a simple "choose your weapon", those that applied for a "any legal weapon" tag would not be able to then purchase a general season archery tag, thus reducing archers in the general season draw.

In effect, the archery proposal gives preference to Western Oregon resident by allowing them to apply in Eastern Oregon archery controlled, then if unsuccessful purchase a Western Oregon general archery tag. Certainly, an Eastern Oregon archer could go to Western Oregon but it is not desirable and most would not do it.

Calvin Davis:

Calvin stated that he is neutral on the proposal for eastern Oregon controlled archery deer and elk hunting. He can respect view points from both sides of the aisle. He questions whether there may be other options to explore in order to achieve the equality besides going controlled ie: choose your weapon, OTC with a WMU quota, zones. He also stated that he is neutral on the crossbow proposal so long as it never becomes a legal weapon during archery seasons.

Tom Juezler:

Tom stated that he is neutral on the proposal for eastern Oregon controlled archery deer and elk hunting. He is highly opposed to allowing crossbows as a legal weapon during the any weapon hunts.

Alec Sheard:

He never did comment directly on his position for the eastern Oregon controlled archery deer and elk hunt proposal. He was very adamant about the department taking more opportunity away from sportsmen when he believes there are other management tools that need to be utilized. He does not like that the hunter is always the first one to get cut

when it comes to managing population levels. He stated that he will be drafting an e-mail to send to me with additional comments.

Paul Ellis:

Paul stated that he will be writing a letter directly to the commission.

Rex Holcolmb:

Going to controlled archery is a good idea because I will eventually reduce the crowding issues, particularly in the Ukiah BGMU where he hunts. By approving the controlled archery proposal, we may see an increase in deer and elk populations. Also, this will basically mean choose your weapon, which is also good.

Kent Beebe:

To: Greg Rimbach
From: Kent Beebe
Date: 7/22/20

Rd: Proposed changes to Big Game 2021

Greg, thanks for providing me with the proposed changes for 2021. As a landowner, I have serious concerns. Years ago, landowners were recognized for their contributions in maintaining wildlife populations. As part of that recognition, landowners were awarded LOP tags to hunt on their own property.

Apparently, Oregon is shifting away from recognizing landowners for that support. Landowner tags, in Eastern Oregon, are being severely restricted...in some cases entirely removed. Overall tags in a Unit may go down by 10% but Landowner tags may go down by 90%. For example, in my Unit (155 Walla Walla), the public buck tags went down from 255 to 200...but, landowner tags were almost eliminated (at least seriously reduced with no guarantee of a tag).

So, let's make sure I have this correct...based upon my 1500 acres, I used to qualify for 3 LOP tags for deer and elk, (remember, only to be hunted on my own property). A number of years ago ODFW declared 155 a trophy Unit for elk. You took away my 3 elk tags. I now randomly draw for the 5 tags allotted all landowners. SHOCK...after 7 years, I finally drew a bull tag for 2020. Out of 79-100 Units, (depending on your count of sub units), only 3 Units are so severely restricted. Now, ODFW is restricting my deer hunts. You removed the Orchards Hunt for 2020 and it shows "deleted" for 2021, (I assume it is gone forever). You also deleted antlerless hunts 655B 1&2...you severely restricted the annual fall buck hunt. Bottom line, ODFW has basically eliminated my LOP rights while not eliminating public hunting.

Why would I or other landowners want to cooperate with ODFW in any way from this point forward?

My property has resident deer and elk. If I harvest 1 buck and 1 bull/yr, I am not harming the wildlife population one iota. This slashing of LOP tags is not about animal populations...at all. It's all political. 100% political. There is no "science" that supports the removal of LOP tags while leaving public tags almost intact. (Is this Socialist Oregon revolting against the overlord landowners?)

It may be the time for landowners to revolt. Why would I support ODFW anymore? Why would I allow access to my property? Why would I allow projects on my property? ODFW has succumbed to the pressure from non-landowner hunters...I know this because I sat on the mule deer committee. If you are going to remove LOP privileges, it's time for the landowners to protest.

Recommendations:

Option 1: Reinstate Landowners tags, as they were originally granted for the benefit we provide wildlife. Follow science not political pressure. If you feel the need to reduce tags, do it with the same percentage for public and landowner.

Option 2: Restrict LOP tags to properties that hold resident populations (properties where you increased LOP tags from the standard 2...1250 acres or more)

Option 3: Reduce the LOP tags by 1 tag each year (of every other year) only to be used by the landowner or family member.

ODFW has to get out of the political game and follow science...

John Day Wildlife District Public Comments on 2021 Proposed Hunting Seasons

7/30/21

Summary

Comments received by ODFW John Day district staff about the proposed changes to the archery season were about 50/50 for people in favor and against the staff proposal. Comments that were in favor of the proposal were also split. Some people were completely for the proposal as is and others while in favor of going controlled were not in favor of the unit by unit aspect of the proposal. These people would rather have multiple units lumped together as a “zone”. The people that opposed the proposal were mostly concerned about not being able to hunt every year and did not view ODFW’s rationale for the proposal as being valid. Other comments that were received were that deer season should be closed for a few years, deer harvest should be limited to 3 point or better, and that Oregon has too many predators and that is the reason for the declining population. On 7/16 our local radio station ran an interview outlining the proposed changes and posted it on their facebook page. This generated a lot of calls from outside of the area. In total only 9 comments received during the comments period were from local residents even though district staff tried to solicit comments from local residents.

Comments received by JDFO ODFW district wildlife staff during the 2020 big game comment period

Andy Day 6/18/20

Is in support of the ODFW staff proposal for controlled archery other than he would like to see a zone concept (multiple paired units) instead of single units.

On a follow up conversation with Andy on 7/3/20 he indicate that he was still in favor of a controlled system but preferred two zones. One in eastern Oregon and one in western Oregon as a first option; than a multi-unit zone (two or three paired units), and the least favorable option as controlled by units.

Shane Giffin 6/16/20

Is generally in support of the ODFW staff proposal for controlled archery hunting.

Ed Clark 6/25/20

Would like a zone concept for archery rather than a single unit. He would also like the Upper John Day Valley 246D elk hunter reinstated.

Eric Buernord 7/6/20

Is in favor of “pick your weapon concept” but not really in favor for the single unit concept, would like to see all of Eastern as one unit instead. Is concerned that prices (application fee, license, and tags) are stopping low income families from hunting.

Jeff Bond 7/6/2020

Is not in favor of going controlled archery. Believes it is a good thing to have a general season for the experience. Rifle and archery hunters should both have general seasons and that if archery goes controlled every hunter loses out. Instead thinks a point or bag limit restriction would be better at allowing ODFW to control harvest. To help recruit new hunters the point or bag restriction should not apply to youth or first time hunters. Does not believe overcrowding is an issue and that ODFW should not control people but rather focus on the health of animal herds instead. One way to improve herd health would be to manage predator populations better. Suggested earning preference points for harvesting a bear or cougar and not having to salvage the meat from bear, just like it is for cougars. If archery does go control a zone concept would be better than the unit by unit proposal. Highly stressed

that this proposal should be postponed until the COVID crisis is over to allow for better dissemination of the proposal information by ODFW and public input on the proposal.

July 10, 2020

Anonymous

While conducting goat surveys in the field we were contacted by two citizens who had comments about the proposed archery changes. They were concerned about the lack of deer and did not like general season deer hunting for archery. They also felt there were too many hunters in the woods.

Dan Williamson 7/16/2020

Extremely against staff proposal. Does not believe that overcrowding is an issue. Also does not believe that the hunter surveys conducted by the Department were valid because they surveyed both archery and riffle hunters. The survey should have just been directed at archers because riffle hunters just want archers controlled. Does not believe that going to limited entry archery is based on biological reasons rather just a ploy to get people to burn preference points. Thinks a better way to reduce preference points would be to allow folks to decide how many preference points they want to apply with that year. He started archery hunting because he could not draw a riffle tag. Dan does not want archery to be restricted but if it must he thinks instead of having to go through a draw a better solution would be to just have limited over the counter tags that would be on a first come first serve biases.

Mark Trapman 7/16/20

Mark is in favor of the controlled season for archery. He feels that elk are run all over by archers and that there are not enough deer to support general season. He is a rifle hunter and feels that he as lost opportunity because of increased harvest by archers. He also thinks archers have too much time to hunt. Equipment has become more effective and easier to get. He thinks they should draw like everyone else.

Curtis Terdro 7/16/20

Curtis is not in support of the staff proposal. His concerns is that the bull to cow ratio will actually go down because archer success will not change and there will be more harvest of bulls from increased rifle tags. He does not believe that this proposal will also help the overcrowding issue as people will still crowd into the easy spots in a unit. Frustrated that local hunters might not be able to hunt their back yards anymore.

Wyane Bogan 7/16/2020

Not in favor of the staff proposal because he archery hunts when he does not draw a riffle tag. Does not feel he has to go to the westside to hunt in general seasons over there.

Steve Murdock 7/16/20

Not in support of staff proposal because archery success is low enough even with the general season. Does not like the unit by unit proposal but would be in favor of a zone proposal.

Dusty Williams 7/16/20

In favor of staff proposal. Sees a lot of hunters who just go archery hunting because they did not draw a riffle tag. Believes this leads to increase wounding loss.

Dave 7/16/20

Is in favor of the staff proposal as is.

Teddy Orr 7/16/20

Is in favor of the staff proposal to go controlled. Has seen an increase in the number of people over the past 10 years and is having a difficulty finding place to hunt without people.

Jacob Hays 7/16/20

Not in favor of the proposal. Thinks its unfair that the western side of Oregon would still be over the counter. Mad that there are units in NE Oregon that have riffle cow tags but not archery cow tags. Feels that the Department has been restricting archery hunting too much. Does believe that overcrowding is a problem.

Cameron Wilson 7/16/20

Not in favor of staff proposal. Believes it will limit folks who are filling their freezer for their family.

Bill Frost 7/16/20

Is not in favor of staff proposal but would like to see choose your weapon or general season tags by unit. Does think there are too many hunters and is concerned about wounding loss. Also would like to see the either sex archery tags for Heppner be available for only elderly people, not definition of what elderly is. He is also concerned about the number of non-resident hunter coming from Washington.

Dan Moncreef (sp?)7/16/20

Is in support of controlled seasons. Does not like portability and thinks that would go away. Is concerned about declining mule deer numbers. Concerned about poor quality of archers.

Scott 7/16/20

Very opposed to controlled season. Does not like Walla Walla and Mt Emily being controlled and has to drive further to access hunting areas. He does not like that people from western Oregon get to come over to eastern Oregon to hunt. Does not like the cost of tags. Would like to remain as a general season. And there are too many wolves.

Jay Lubbes 7/16/20

Is not in favor because he would have to burn his preference points that he has been saving to hunt Mount Emily. He thinks that rifle hunters have a more hunting opportunity than archers, cited tag numbers in several units. Mostly is issue was with preference points and wanting and keeping general season opportunity.

Rex Holcome 7/16/20

Is in favor of the staff proposal as is.

Tim Holly 7/17/20

Is in favor of archery going controlled due to overcrowding.

Shaun Humphry 7/23/20

Not in favor of the proposal. Feels that the mule deer would do better if we managed the predators instead of restricting people.

Steve Mullin 7/29/20

In favor of staff proposal. Thinks archery season should be shorter in duration and not during the rut for elk.

Ken Holiday

Is in favor of the staff proposal.

Dale Valade

In favor of the staff proposal.



M E M O R A N D U M
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Ontario Field Office

DATE: 28 July 2020
TO: Nick Myatt
FROM: Philip Milburn and Rod Klus
SUBJ: Public Input 2021 Hunting Season Proposals Malheur Watershed

The purpose of this memo is to summarize Malheur and Harney District public outreach efforts and feedback received on proposed changes to the 2021-22 big game hunting seasons.

Due to restrictions on public gatherings, the traditional open house and public meeting format was replaced with directed e-mails and phone calls to local hunters and sporting groups. All contacts included information on accessing the big game review webpage and electronic comment options. We also requested people share the information with other interested parties to help spread the word.

We received very little direct feedback on the proposals. The most common comment heard was they had already, or would use the comment link to submit comments.

Comments/Concerns

- Local hunters expressed general support for controlled archery for both deer and elk in conversations with them.
- The few Western Oregon hunters were less supportive and suggested alternative approaches like antler point restrictions and predator control.
- One local group reported they polled members present at a meeting and 9 of 10 in attendance supported the proposal with one person concerned with the impact to preference points.
- The impact to preference points was brought up multiple times in our conversations. The questions/comments fell into 2 categories:
 - What impact will forcing archery hunters into the controlled hunt process have on point creep or will it make it generally harder to draw any 100 or 200 series tag.
 - Concern from archers that had been applying for high point hunts (archery and rifle) but did not have enough points to draw them. Now they could be forced to burn points on a lower demand hunt or run the risk of being unsuccessful.
- We received one alternative suggestion to allow general archery season for traditional bows and controlled hunting for compound bows.
-

C:Trevor Watson - MAWD Wildlife Biologists

M E M O R A N D U M
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Lakeview Field Station

DATE: 07-22-2020

TO: Nick Myatt, Wildlife

Division From: Jon Muir

Subj: Big Game Regulation Changes – Summary of Lake Co.

Opinions cc: Watson, Landsiedel

The purpose of this memo is to summarize efforts made by the Lake District office to communicate proposed hunt structure and tag number changes to local constituents and to provide a brief summary of responses gathered to date from interested parties.

While significant hunt structure changes, such as the proposal to make all eastern Oregon archery hunting controlled, have dominated my messaging and the corresponding public responses, I have communicated with a number of individuals, the local archery club president and a number of its members, and the Lake Chapter of OHA about local tag numbers.

Additionally, I asked the local newspaper, the Lake County Examiner, to pick up ODFW news releases related to big game hunting regulation changes statewide. They have graciously agreed to do so and have run several articles that either print the ODFW press release verbatim or reference agency press materials.

Having no opportunity to conduct normal monthly meetings, my presentation of survey data and model outputs for local populations has been extraordinarily limited, but conversations with a broad selection of individuals in the community continues to be a daily task. In addition, the vast majority of individuals across the state who either thought they would draw a controlled hunt tag in Lake County or actually did draw a tag have called the office. While a majority of those tag holders do reside in other areas of the state (primarily western Oregon), input from those individuals represents a reasonable sample of statewide constituents who pursue big game hunting in the Lake District.

Given a sample of hundreds of conversations, I've only encountered one (yes, the number 1) individual who disagreed with any of the significant 2020-2021 proposals. That gentleman was an avid archer from the Bend area who offered that he had been active on the online hunter opinion forum as well as having encouraged a large number of his archery friends to provide comment to the commission via the online comment opportunities provided by the Department. His primary concern was that archery harvest was not the most significant portion

of the harvest, and so it was unfair to limit archers instead of rifle hunters. After discussion and pointing to several examples that defied his logic, he agreed to reevaluate his position.

With the above exception, I have heard nothing but complete support for moving to controlled archery hunting as proposed for both deer and elk in Eastern Oregon and mule deer tag reductions in local units. In no small part, that support is based on the assumption that controlling archery hunter density and forcing a choice of weapon type at the time of application will significantly reduce the preference points required to draw rifle hunting opportunities locally. As is well known, preference point creep and the inability for residents of Lake County to hunt in their own backyard continues to be one of the greatest complaints received in the District. I anticipated that a number of the more dedicated archers would express concern over reduced archery opportunity, but all I've heard is that both the local user groups and out-of-area hunters are happy to hear about reduced crowding, hunter pressure, and year-round public land disturbance from scouting activities.

Considering the overwhelming support for current proposals impacting Lake County big game hunters, it continues to be my recommendation that we move forward with currently proposed recommendations to the Fish and Wildlife Commission and seek to adopt the proposed rule changes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jon Muir', written in a cursive style.

Signed,

Jon Muir
District Wildlife
Biologist Lake District



M E M O R A N D U M
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Klamath District Office

DATE: July 16, 2018

TO: Nick Myatt

FROM: Tom Collom

SUBJ: Big Game Hunt Review – Public Outreach & Input

Klamath District Staff reached out to several local hunting organizations and sent approximately 70 emails to local hunters to provide information on draft proposals for 2021 big game regulations. In talking with hunters, many planned to comment through the big game hunt review website.

Comments received were all over the board. Comments can be grouped into 3 basic camps: # 2 comprised a majority of folks that commented to us

- 1) Some individuals do not like the proposed move to limited entry for deer and elk. Some of these folks were pretty active on social media
- 2) Some individuals don't like having their opportunities reduced, however agree that now is the time for controlled hunts given the multitude of issues with deer and elk archery seasons.
- 3) Some fully support the change to controlled hunts. Would like to point out that not all of these folks were rifle only hunters.

Other comments:

Proposed Beulah elk archery tags are too high

Favor a "Choose your weapon" strategy

No opportunity for those living in Eastern OR to buy a general archery season tag like Western OR hunters

Like the limit on non-residents especially for elk

Manage predators