Attachment 5

Public Correspondence Received as of December 31, 2025

BORISCH Roxann B * ODFW

From: Jordan Zettle <jordanzttl@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 2, 2025 11:29 AM
To: ODFW Commission * ODFW
Subject: Re: New mule deer plan

Categories: Wildlife, Field Staff

Hello,

I wanted to send another message, and ensure that my first comments were heard regarding the upcoming changes to the mule deer plan.
Overall, I want to reiterate the incredible opportunity this presents for changing the narrative on both Mule deer (the species) and Mule deer hunting in Oregon. Simply put, I think there are too many tags for most parts of the state, and I would like to see tag numbers reduced, new seasons presented, and more and better opportunity for archery and muzzleloader hunting. Oregon is a unique state - we have solid elk numbers and over the counter options for elk, we have over the counter options for blacktail deer. Let's reduce our mule deer tags, improve the quality of the hunts we put out, and work to make mule deer hunting stronger and better for future generations.

Thank you.

Jordan Zettle

On Mon, Mar 17, 2025 at 7:32 PM Jordan Zettle <jordanzttl@gmail.com> wrote:

> Hello,
>
> I wanted to share my thoughts and ideas as the commission begins considering changes with the new mule deer plan, specifically tag allocations, opportunity, and quality of hunts.
>
> To begin, as a lifelong hunter in Oregon, I want to stress that these changes present an incredible opportunity. Oregon is an increasingly poor state to hunt mule deer in, and I think we all know that decline has been going on for many, many years. There are many units that have had huge tag allocations, and they've been managed for opportunity instead of hunt quality. The forthcoming changes present an opportunity for the commission and the state of Oregon to change that narrative. Oregon has often been an opportunity state for mule deer, with minimal quality hunts during prime seasons. On the flip side, if we look at our elk hunting, which at this moment is really solid, has a lot of opportunity for success, and affords our residents ample opportunities to get out in the field every year, we are presented with an opportunity - we could decrease our mule deer tags and continue much of the great habitat work and aim to change mule deer hunting from a opportunity hunt to quality hunts. After all, we are fortunate - our state has many opportunities to hunt both elk and blacktail deer over the counter.
>
> What I would be really disappointed to see is for tag allocations to stay the same going into the new plan. As an example, the Upper Deschutes (which I realize is being split in two in the new plan) has 2,465 buck tags allocated to it between archery and rifle this year, but there's an estimate of 1,125 deer

in the unit. I understand success rates and opportunity, but I don't understand how those sorts of allocations could be sustainable as we head into an uncertain future for mule deer. Maybe that's the reason for this new plan, but I really want to advocate for lowering those tag allocations and increasing the quality of hunts. I think there's a few ways to do that:

1) The way I see it, the state has no goals for whitetail deer, so I don't see why whitetail tags shouldn't increase. We could increase doe tags and it is also important to keep and bolster some of those later season hunts, like the Sled Springs (157M) or Grande Ronde (152M) muzzleloader hunts, or create other hunts of that sort. Increasing whitetail opportunity decreases hunting pressure on mule deer, and it's a unique way to offer quality opportunity to our residents.

2) I also think that there should be more muzzleloader and archery tags during prime hunting periods (for both whitetails and mule deer). These would be tags that would range from later October into middle December. To use the Upper Deschutes example, what if you took away 500 of those rifle tags and then put 300 of them into a later season archery hunt? I think that is the sort of quality hunt that is much more exciting vs. having so many tags.

3) I also think the state should really consider new ways to increase revenue, and one simple way is to look at rollover permits. I always get frustrated with Oregon because we are fairly constrained; you can't have a general season rifle deer tag and a general season archery deer tag. I understand those constraints, but what if there were rollover tags that allowed residents to apply for a lottery that allowed them to roll over their unused/unsuccessful eastern Oregon archery hunt into a general season deer rifle tag, or a late season archery blacktail tag? I look at that sort of thing and I would apply for that every year and pay whatever the fee was, because if it meant I got more days to be out then I'd do it. I think the same could be done for general season elk tags too.

I realize the challenges this new plan will present, but I am certain it presents an exciting opportunity. I recognize the tradition of deer hunting and deer camp that many families and friends have, and realize there will have to be units that are opportunity units vs. quality units. But I urge the commission and ODFW to strive for more quality hunting and to look at ways to improve both mule deer populations and mule deer hunts in our state. I would be so much more excited to hunt deer in Oregon during the latter months of the season and to see less people, even if it takes 5-10 years to get to that tag. We are a unique state - we have blacktail deer in the west half of our state and they afford a great and challenging opportunity. While I do not want to take the OTC blacktail tags for granted, they afford our residents an amazing opportunity to still get out in the woods every year.

We have so many counterpart states to look at as examples of both success and failure, and so many unique ways to innovate and generate more revenue. I hope you will consider some of these changes and am eager to see the new ideas you put forth this year.

Best,

Jordan Zettle

BORISCH Roxann B * ODFW

From: David Roth <dsroth4@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 10:15 AM
To: ODFW Commission * ODFW
Subject: Mule Deer LOP Tag Reduction

Categories: Field Staff, Wildlife

You don't often get email from dsroth4@gmail.com. Learn why this is important

Dear ODFW Commission,

I want to write in to voice my opposition to the potential reduction of LOP mule deer tags. These LOP tags are a huge incentive to land owners to prioritize mule deer herd health as well as an economic help to rural areas that benefit from the influx of deer hunters come hunting season.

A focus on increased predator control would be, in my opinion, a much better place to start in order to help our mule deer populations.

Thank you for all that you do,
David Roth
dsroth4@gmail.com

South Fork John Day Watershed Council
150 East Main Street, Suite 102
John Day, OR 97845
541-792-0435
www.southforkjohnday.com

July 23, 2025

ODFW Commission
4034 Fairview Industrial Dr SE
Salem, OR 97302

ODFW Commission:

A cooperative landowner-based organization has existed in the South Fork John Day River, to improve the watershed since the 1980's. It started as private landowners and different Government Agencies working to improve the area and has developed into the South Fork John Day Watershed Council.

The Council Board of Directors consists of 7 private landowners, listed below:

1. Jeff Maben, Board Chair, Rockpile Ranch and Timber consultant
2. Phil St. Clair, Vice Chair, Rocking 9 Ranch
3. Scott Hess, Secretary/Treasurer, Jackass Ck Ranch
4. Joanne Keerins, Keerins Ranch
5. Richard Nelson, IZ Ranch
6. Jim Dovenberg, Widows Creek Ranch
7. M.T. Anderson, High Desert Land and Cattle, & Double R Ranch

This letter is also supported by:

1. Dean Pollman, High Izee Ranch
2. Kevin Harrison, Hawksview Ranch

The mission of the Council is to maintain and enhance the health of the South Fork John Day River watershed and the long-term economic stability of the region, to foster a better understanding of the multiple resources, to represent broad and diverse geographies and interests, and to work collaboratively to carry out voluntary watershed restoration activities.

Mule deer and big game habitat have been one of the main focuses of our watershed wide efforts. The Council officially adopted the ODFW Mule Deer Initiative in 2012. The John Day Basin Partnership performed an upland prioritization process that found the South Fork John Day to be a high priority for mule deer restoration.

Hunting stands out as both a cornerstone of rural tradition and a significant economic driver. The county's abundant public and private lands, including the South Fork John Day River watershed, draw hunters from across the state and beyond, creating a ripple effect that supports businesses, landowners, and local communities. Expenditures associated—such as licensing, equipment, travel, lodging, food, and guide

services—inject vital revenue into local businesses. Hardware stores, sporting goods retailers, fuel stations, restaurants, and motels all experience seasonal boosts during hunting periods.

Private lands play a critical role in sustaining healthy mule deer populations throughout the South Fork John Day River watershed. In Grant County, landowner preference tags serve as both an incentive and a reward for habitat stewardship and conservation activities. By aligning economic interests with ecological goals, these tags encourage ongoing investment in habitat improvement, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between landowners and wildlife agencies.

Many of the habitat improvement projects undertaken by the Council rely on partnerships with private landowners, whose stewardship and willingness to collaborate have enabled large-scale restoration across diverse landscapes. These efforts include enhancing forage quality, securing migration corridors, and protecting crucial winter ranges that support mule deer during challenging seasonal transitions. By aligning the interests of private landowners with the broader conservation goals, the Council has fostered an environment where the needs of wildlife and the viability of working lands go hand in hand, ensuring that both mule deer and local communities continue to thrive.

The Council urges the ODFW Commission to maintain the level of landowner preference tags, during the revisions to the big game regulations. Not only do landowner preference tags offer direct incentives for continued stewardship, but they also serve as a bridge between conservation objectives and the economic realities of those who live and work on the land. When thoughtfully managed, the system ensures that landowners remain valued partners in restoration efforts, reinforcing the Council's mission to balance ecological health and rural vitality.

We also strongly suggest that the commission reconsider the effects that overpopulated predator numbers are having on mule deer. According to the 2024 Oregon Mule Deer Management Plan, Oregon's mule deer populations have experienced significant declines over the past several decades, and predation from cougars (for adult mule deer) and coyotes (for newborn and juvenile mule deer) have been documented as the principal source of mortality.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) has implemented several changes in recent years to increase mule deer survival by reducing the numbers of predators that kill deer. Studies in Utah show that certain predator-control measures can increase mule deer populations. These measures include Reducing coyote densities in areas where mule deer are fawning and reducing cougar densities in areas where adult mule deer mortality is above 7% because of cougar predation.

Sincerely,

Amy Stiner

Amy Stiner

SFJDWC Executive Director

BORISCH Roxann B * ODFW

From: ODFW Commission * ODFW
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 2:10 PM
To: BORISCH Roxann B * ODFW
Subject: FW: Aldrich LOP deer tag reduction concern

From: AJ Tweeddale <aj@scaffolderectors.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 27, 2025 11:38 AM
To: ODFW Commission * ODFW <odfw.commission@odfw.oregon.gov>
Cc: WOLFER Brian H * ODFW <brian.h.wolfer@odfw.oregon.gov>
Subject: Aldrich LOP deer tag reduction concern

Some people who received this message don't often get email from aj@scaffolderectors.com. Learn why this is important

Hello,

It has come to my attention that there are plans to limit the amount of LOP deer tags issued for properties located in Murders Creek or Aldrich unit. If this is the case, I would like to understand the reasoning as well as voice my opposition. I am a landowner in that area and provide feed and water to help the wildlife population, and to limit my hunting rights on my own property seems like government overreach and immoral if not illegal. Please let me know if what I hear is true and the reasoning behind it.

Thank you,

A.J. Tweeddale

Scaffold Erectors, Inc
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Direct: 503-720-0219 Main Office: 503-233-9438
Email: aj@scaffolderectors.com
www.scaffolderectors.com

From: Robert Hodge <rjhodge1@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 9, 2025 12:11 PM
To: ODFW Commission * ODFW <odfw.commission@odfw.oregon.gov>
Cc: WOLFER Brian H * ODFW <brian.h.wolfer@odfw.oregon.gov>
Subject: LOP deer tag reduction Murderers Creek Unit

You don't often get email from rjhodge1@outlook.com. Learn why this is important

As a landowner in the above named hunt unit I am protesting the proposal by the ODFW to reduce the number of LOP's in this and other units. I suggest that this action will have little impact on increasing mule deer populations but only continue to erode the property rights of the landowners in these units.

It is very discouraging to read ODFW news releases regarding Mule Deer population decreases and blaming random issues rather than, in my opinion, the most obvious "Cougar Kills". We believe that with 6-7,000 cougars in Oregon with a kill rate of 1 deer a week for a total of 350,000 deer/year that all other issues "pale in significance". We have observed on our property cougar kills, cougars on game cameras, cougar tracks in the winter and a few live sightings. Now that the deer population has been decimated they are killing the neighbors sheep and goats. These kills are very close to residences!

AND NOW WE HAVE WOLVES!!!

We urge the ODFW to actively inform the public of the predation problem, promote plans to address the reduction of cougar populations, and implement programs to reduce predator populations.

It may be too late, but it is an EMERGENCY!

Respectively,

Robert Hodge
541-977-2009

From: Rep Breese-Iverson <Rep.VikkiBreeseIverson@oregonlegislature.gov>
Sent: Friday, September 12, 2025 10:00 AM
To: ODFW Commission * ODFW <ODFW.COMMISSION@odfw.oregon.gov>
Subject: 2026 Big Game Seasons and Regulations

Commissioners,

I write to express significant concerns regarding ODF&W's proposed 2026 Big Game Seasons and Regulations, particularly the 9% reduction in mule deer tags.

My community understands reduced mule deer populations are a reality. However, they are frustrated by the increased restriction of hunting tags and have a general concern over the consolidation of hunting units.

The primary focus of ODF&W's management approach appears to be on a reduced number of hunting tags. In conversations with members of the ODF&W's team, and in a recent Bend Bulletin article, it seems this initial focus is considered the "more conservative" start to the management plan. However, there is considerable concern across my district about the lack of a full management plan which includes management of other factors putting pressure on the decreasing numbers of mule deer.

My constituents want to see a solution which ensures a healthy mule deer population and part of such a solution must include an analysis, consideration and plan for the increasing numbers of wildlife predators. A comprehensive plan with all factors included would be a much more balanced approach for a real solution to the mule deer population.

Simply reducing hunting tags while ignoring predation impacts and habitat challenges will not achieve recovery goals and create more distrust and discontent with Oregonians and Oregon agencies.

Hunting drives rural Oregon's economy and funds wildlife management through license and tag revenue. The proposed reductions will reduce ODF&W revenue, harm rural businesses and eliminate traditional family hunting opportunities and culture.

I urge the Commission to amend the proposed new regulations and come back to Oregonians with a comprehensive plan for mule deer population management that addresses all root causes of population decline rather than relying solely on hunting restrictions.

Our hunters deserve to see active predator management and habitat improvement implemented alongside any considered tag reductions.

Respectfully,

Vikki Breese Iverson
State Representative
Oregon House District 59