

# House Bill 2875 Hunting On Public Lands



## 2023 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### **Background**

House Bill 2875 (ORS 496.246) was passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2011 and is intended to encourage state agencies that have lands open to access and use by hunters to maintain this access and to avoid making determinations that result in a net loss of access to hunting on state-owned or state-managed public lands.

### **House Bill 2875 Requirements**

HB2875 requires other state agencies to notify the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) of lands closed to hunting or lands opened to hunting during the previous calendar year, and to report the amount of acreage affected and the reason(s) for closures. Reporting does not apply to restrictions or closures for emergencies, fire prevention or critical wildlife management activities.

It also requires other agencies to notify the Department of their plans to restrict or close access and use for hunting within a sufficient amount of time so the Department can post such closure or restriction on its website to inform the hunting public.

The bill also requires the Department to submit an annual report on state land access changes related to hunting opportunity.

### **Closures or Openings of Public Lands in 2023**

- The Oregon Department of Forestry reported to the Department that no lands that were open to hunting were closed and no new lands were opened to hunting during the 2023 calendar year.
- The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department reported to the Department that 1,924 acres at Cottonwood Canyon State Park were closed to hunting effective 12/1/2023. The closure was enacted to provide a buffer around developed facilities and concentrated non-hunting visitor use. No new lands were opened to hunting during the 2023 calendar year.

*Recreational hunting is an important and traditional recreational activity for thousands of Oregonians.*

*Hunters and hunting organizations have been and continue to be among the foremost supporters of sound wildlife management and conservation practices providing direct assistance to wildlife managers and enforcement officers.*

*Recreational hunting is an environmentally acceptable activity that can be conducted on state-owned and state-managed lands without conflicting with other uses of the same land.*

*At issue is the concern by hunters and hunting organizations that state lands in Oregon that are currently accessible for hunting would be closed to such use in the future.*

- The Oregon Department of State Lands reported to the Department that the emergency closure of access to Crump Lake enacted in July 2022 due to low water levels exposing cultural item resulted in a de facto closure to hunting and extended into the first part of 2023. DSL lifted that emergency closure on July 1st, 2023, when water levels were high enough to protect the cultural items. No new lands were opened to hunting during the 2023 calendar year.
- The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reported that an additional 10,889.6 acres were purchased and made part of the Minam River Wildlife Area. These lands were open to hunting and no new lands were closed to hunting during the 2023 calendar year.



The Minam River flowing through the Minam River Wildlife Area.  
Photo by David Jensen