

WITNESS REGISTRATION

Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission

June 5-6, 2014, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Salem, Oregon

EXHIBIT B

PUBLIC HEARING ON: EXHIBIT B: 2014-2015 BIG GAME REGULATIONS

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Exhibit B - 2014-15 Big Game Regs - Public Testimony

Testimony Opposing the "Siskiyou Plus Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*) Hunt" Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

June 5, 2014

By Scott Beckstead, Senior Oregon State Director,
The Humane Society of the United States

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our supporters in Oregon, The HSUS submits the following comments on the "Siskiyou Plus Bear Hunt." We vigorously oppose the proposal to expand the spring bear hunt to the southwestern portion of Oregon by and additional 250 tags (added to the 4,400 bear tags that Oregon already issues) for the reasons that follow.

The HSUS Opposes Springtime-Bear Hunts

Springtime black bear hunts have many problems.

- 1) Hunters kill nursing mothers and that orphans cubs, who suffer from starvation, predation, or exposure and that is unacceptable wildlife management.
- 2) Springtime bear hunts occur when bears are physically stressed as they are just emerging from the den after months of not eating making them especially vulnerable to hunter harassment.
- 3) Springtime hunting may cause resource damage to roads, including causing siltation in streams, or harm to vulnerable ungulate and other wildlife populations.

Springtime-Bear Hunts Orphan Cubs

Black bear cubs, usually born during the months between December and February, emerge from hibernation with their mothers in the months of April and May.

Springtime bear hunting occurs when cubs are a handful of months old and still nursing, or when cubs are dependent yearlings.

Some researchers assert that mothers with cubs of the year can be spared from the hunt because nursing mothers are the last demographic of the black bear population to emerge in springtime - after all the other sex and age classes of bears. Tom Beck, a retired bear researcher for the Colorado Division of Wildlife, along with a cohort of five other Western states wildlife managers warned, however, that even as most studies indicate that males emerge earlier than females from dens, that the time differential is merely two or three weeks. Beck et al. write: "The [spring bear hunt] regulation looks good on paper but is very difficult to implement in the field because of bear behavior."

In other words, the spring-bear hunt seasons do not protect nursing females. The assertion that a spring season will close early enough to protect nursing females is proved false by a number of other studies:

- ◆ In an Alaskan study, Schwartz et al. found that "no significant difference" between the average den-emergence dates for their study bears.

- ◆ In Nevada, Beckmann and Berger found that the chronology of den emergence times overlap between sex and age classes of bears.
- ◆ In New Mexico, Inman et al. found that bears in *northern* New Mexico entered and left their dens at different times depending on their sex, but not so for bears in the *southern* part of the state, whose denning chronology was the same for both sexes.

Cubs, who are only a handful of months old when they emerge from their dens, are not weaned until the months between July and September, long after Oregon's spring-hunting season has ended.

To conclude, killing bears, who are nursing or raising young cubs taints hunting itself. The springtime-bear hunt calls "fair chase" into question, the cornerstone of hunting ethics.

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Exhibit B - June 5, 2014
Public Testimony

June Commission Testimony

My name is Craig Starr and I live in Lebanon. I'm here today to testify on behalf of Oregon Bow Hunters (OBH).

First, I would like to express OBH's appreciation for being included in the recent Archery Review Public Advisory Committee (ARPAC) process. The ARPAC meetings included a lot of discussion on issues that have concerned OBH and other Oregon bowhunters, in some cases for years. It'll likely be next year at this time before we really see whether there will be any alleviation of bowhunters' concerns around the issues discussed in ARPAC, but there is now at least some hope for optimism in that regard.

One concern following so closely on the heels of the ARPAC process is ODFW's proposal to eliminate portability of the "one elk" archery controlled hunt tags in the Heppner, Ukiah, Snake River, Sled Springs and Chesnimnus units next year. The archery representatives on ARPAC were unanimously skeptical of restricting tag portability and to have that proposal come forward as one of ODFW's first post-ARPAC proposals ahead of proposals to address the concerns long held by bowhunters raises credibility questions about the ARPAC process.

OBH appreciates and supports the proposals to break the link between controlled tags and general tags in the Mule Deer Initiative (MDI) units and the Sled Springs and Chesnimnus controlled elk units. We believe that severing that link except in special situations such as in the so-called trophy elk units (Wenaha, Walla Walla and Mt. Emily) is a positive move. However, OBH opposes continuing controls on archery deer hunting and establishment of new controls on archery elk hunting in the Warner and Maury units. An administrative "pilot program", like the MDI process, should never be used by ODFW as a back door means to permanently control archery hunting in the absence of a compelling biological justification for the need for controls.

Virtually all of the discussion around the need for controls in the MDI units was in order to obtain better information on the archery deer harvest. Information from five (5) seasons of MDI experience will be available by the time the current proposal would be implemented and mandatory reporting has become an effective source for harvest information in the meantime. The need to continue controls on archery deer hunting just to obtain meaningful harvest data no longer exists for the MDI units if it ever did and continued controls on archery deer hunting should only occur if they are based on a demonstrated biological need which hasn't yet been presented.

Further, evidence of a biological need to control archery elk hunting was never even mentioned with respect to initiating the MDI process and still hasn't been presented in support of the current controlled elk hunt proposals in the Maury and Warner units. Unless and until ODFW presents substantial evidence that archery hunting for elk must be controlled because of adverse biological impacts, archery elk hunting in the Maury and Warner units should continue as a general season opportunity as it was prior to the MDI restrictions.

Especially in the Warner unit, the proposal to control archery elk hunting seems almost laughable. Over ten (10) seasons – 2003 through 2012 – for which harvest data is available on ODFW's web site, archers reportedly harvested **exactly two (2) elk** in the Warner unit. Investing time, effort and money to control such a small harvest opportunity seems like a total waste in view of tough budgetary times for ODFW. And, from 2010 through 2012 (during the period of MDI limitations), rifle hunters in the Maury unit harvested **nearly 20 times** as many elk as bowhunters (217 to 11 elk overall, including 49 to 1 for antlerless elk). If there is a biological need to reduce elk harvests in the Maury unit, it doesn't appear that that burden should fall first on bowhunters!

Finally, we haven't even had the first archery season in the Trask unit since ODFW eliminated all archery antlerless elk hunting opportunity in the unit and ODFW is already proposing to add rifle cow hunts in the unit next year. This proposal demonstrates an incredible lack of sensitivity on ODFW's part, especially since much of the discussion at ARPAC was related to our on-going objections to this same inequitable approach occurring in many central and eastern Oregon units.

Thank you for the opportunity for OBH to comment on the 2015 regulatory proposals.



Exhibit B Public Testimony

5 June, 2014

Chair Levy, Commissioners, Director Elicker,

For the record, my name is Rich Thompson, Newberg, OR, Traditional Archers of Oregon

Traditional Archers of Oregon are pleased to have served on ODFW's Archery Review Public Advisory Committee (ARPAC) this past winter in support of ODFW game management programs and OSP enforcement activities, especially with regard to changes in the Walla Walla, Wenaha and Mt. Emily trophy elk areas. TAO believes these changes will allow ODFW to grow opportunity for trophy elk and allow enhanced enforcement, ultimately benefiting all Oregon hunters regardless of weapon choice.

As recognition of that support, ARPAC agreed that ODFW should consider additional opportunities to replace lost archery hunting in the name of preserving and growing trophy elk hunting. Craig Starr (OBH) has already outlined areas ARPAC felt should be strongly considered in addition to the 9 day controlled deer hunt for replacement value.

In brief summary, these proposals included:

- Initiate archery hunts in N.E. Oregon for Whitetail Deer
- Remove tied tag restrictions in Chesnimnus, Sled Springs, Ochoco
- Restore in M.D.I. unit hunts to general archery season status

← not covered in written packet on Internet

TAO agrees with the disappointment expressed by our ARPAC partners, Oregon Bow Hunters & Professional Bowhunters Society, that ODFW has immediately proposed Chesnimnus, Sled Springs, Ukiah, Heppner, Snake R. be "archers only elk opportunity" for 2015, after ARPAC's collective lack of support for limiting any form of tag portability in archery seasons.

As for lighted nocks, TAO believes these devices aid and abet the overall HI-TEK/TACTICLE mentality leading to increased success, pushing social and biological opposition to our relatively liberal archery seasons and increasing temptation for hunters to become unethical, if not illegal. Can you envision long range shots (potentially outside legal shooting hours) in the open, until they zero in with lighted nocks?

TAO asks you to consider all the technology currently being offered to archery hunters (range finders, lighted sights, trail cameras, laser broadheads, I Phone sights, electronic tracking devices, night vision optics, etc) which are constantly pushed by print and video entertainment, all in the name of ensuring success on your next hunt. It is the collective total along with the overall mentality and philosophy of hunters that never knew or have forgotten that bow hunting was never intended to be "easy".

"Industry will resist change. They will cite that:

- **The price of turning back the clock is too high,**
- **Hunters are too ingrained in modern hunting concepts to change."**

R.I.P.

Glenn St. Charles

Founder, Pope & Young Club