Big Game Hunting Review

- Project goals
- Hunter survey
- Summary of proposals from our review
- Specific proposals
- Public outreach
- Next steps
Project Goals

- Improve customer service through simpler big game hunting seasons, bag limits, boundaries and associated regulations
- Allocate hunting opportunity fairly and consistent with hunter preferences
- Review hunting season structure and allocation of hunting opportunity to promote hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation (R3)
- Ensure hunting seasons meet biological objectives and maintain or improve opportunity
Hunter Survey

• What do Oregon hunters want?
• 2,000 (1,000 deer hunters, 1,000 elk)
• Presentation of results in September 2019
• Summary report available next week
• Primary results used in proposals
  – Opportunity to hunt every year
  – Hunt for meat and to spend time outdoors with friends and family
  – Harvesting a trophy animal is not very important
  – Finding time to go hunting is a constraint
  – Weapon preferences
Q122. Of all weapons allowed, which one weapon would you most prefer to use to hunt deer in Oregon? (Deer survey)

- Rifle: 78%
- Compound bow: 16%
- Muzzleloader: 2%
- Traditional recurve or long bow: 1%
- Shotgun: 1%
- Handgun: 1%

Percent (n=1067)

Q122. Of all weapons allowed, which one weapon would you most prefer to use to hunt elk in Oregon? (Elk survey)

- Rifle: 75%
- Compound bow: 20%
- Muzzleloader: 3%
- Traditional recurve or long bow: 1%

Percent (n=1105)
Proposal Summary

• 127 existing hunts consolidated into 49 hunts
• 91 dates expanded, made simpler or consistent with other hunts
• 85 hunt areas expanded to the entire unit or hunt boundaries made simpler
• 57 bag limits made simpler or consistent with other hunts
• Nine new controlled hunt opportunities
• Overall hunting opportunity maintained or improved
Western Oregon Deer Bag Limits

• Currently
  – “One buck having not less than forked antler”
  – “One antlerless or spike deer”

• Bag limit for >60 years

• No biological basis for bag limit

• Potential negative impact on population

• Enforcement concerns with hunters differentiating spikes from forked antler bucks
Western Oregon Deer Bag Limits

• Proposed
  – “One buck with visible antler”
  – “One antlerless deer”

• Statewide consistency

• Biologically justified

• Less enforcement concern

• Increase harvest opportunity
Consistency and Equitability

• Department’s intent for annual opportunity:
  – One buck or either sex deer tag
  – One antlerless deer tag
  – One elk tag

• Review identified several areas of inconsistency
  – 100 Series – Buck Deer
  – 600 Series – Antlerless Deer
Consistency and Equitability

• 100 Series proposals
  – Eliminate four “antlerless deer” hunts

• 600 Series proposals
  – Move three “one deer” bag limit hunts to 100 series
  – Hunts take many points to draw
  – Provide hunters one year notice before implementing change in 2021
  – Significant expansion of area and increase tags in two hunts
General Season Elk Damage Tag

- Elk population increases on private, agricultural land
- Project objective – reduce elk population on private land, shift elk to public land
- Currently primarily utilize controlled hunts and Landowner Damage Program Tags
- Despite tools, private land elk populations continue to increase
General Season Elk Damage Tag

• Controlled hunt constraints
  – May 15th application deadline
  – Hunters must know up to 10 months in advance they have private land access and elk are present
  – Tags are limited, while populations warrant unlimited tags
General Season Elk Damage Tag

- Landowner Damage Program tag constraints
  - Over 4,000 issued annually
  - Only valid on single property
  - Can only be issued when staff present at office
  - Time intensive for landowners and staff
  - Often issued when existing controlled hunts already taking place
  - Most tags are being issued as an exchange and utilized as a second elk hunting opportunity
General Season Elk Damage Tag

- **Proposal**
  - Pilot period for 2020
  - Establish a new, over-the-counter antlerless elk tag
  - Valid in chronic elk damage areas identified/mapped annually
  - Replace Landowner Damage Program tags during designated areas and times
  - No tag sale deadline
Traditional Archery Hunting

• Expand traditional archery hunting opportunity
  – Maintain one deer hunt and propose new elk hunt in Eastern Oregon for 2020
  – Commit to proposing one new deer hunt and one new elk hunt in Western Oregon for 2021

• Address complexity of existing hunts
Traditional Archery Hunting

- Proposed changes:
  - Set number of tags for Trout Creek deer
  - New elk hunt in North Fork John Day Wilderness
  - Simplify general archery season by making Murderer’s Creek Unit open to all archery equipment for entire season
Public Outreach

- January: Information to sport groups and public
- Late-May: Proposals to sport groups and public
- June: Commission information and public testimony
- July: Public meetings around the state
- August: Department final proposals
- September: Commission review and adoption
Continuing Review

- Continue identifying opportunities to consolidate controlled hunts and make boundaries simpler
- Timing and duration of primary general seasons
- Western Oregon late season deer and elk hunts
- Archery deer and elk seasons
- Allocation of hunting opportunity
- Hunter recruitment, retention and reactivation