



BACKCOUNTRY HUNTERS & ANGLERS OREGON

January 26, 2024

RE: The North American Wildlife Model of Wildlife Conservation and the Selection of the New ODFW Director

Members of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Commission,

As representatives of the Oregon chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, a community deeply rooted in the ethos of conservation and responsible stewardship of our natural resources, we wish to express our views regarding the recruitment of the next Director for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Our experience as hunters and anglers has imbued us with a profound appreciation for Oregon's rich wildlife heritage, a treasure that we, along with all Oregonians, have the privilege and duty to safeguard.

Central to our conservation efforts is the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, a principle that has ensured the survival and thriving of many of our continent's wildlife populations. This model, predicated on the Public Trust Doctrine, has long guided responsible wildlife management, ensuring that wildlife remains a shared resource, accessible and sustainable for all. It is our firm belief that the future leadership of ODFW should embody a strong commitment to these principles, integrating them with emerging strategies that benefit our wildlife and habitats.

We underscore the importance of recognizing the substantial contributions of the hunting and angling community to Oregon's wildlife management funding. According to the 2021-2023 biennium revenue report, a significant portion of ODFW's budget is derived from the sale of licenses, tags, and the participation in hunting and fishing activities. Our community's financial investments, coupled with our active involvement in conservation initiatives, exemplify a partnership model that is vital for the ongoing stewardship of our state's natural resources.

It should also be noted that the Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 496.012 outlines the state's wildlife policy, which aims to balance the conservation of indigenous species with providing recreational and aesthetic enjoyment for both current and future generations. This policy mandates the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to pursue coequal goals that ensure the maintenance of wildlife species at optimal levels, enhance wildlife production and public enjoyment through effective land and water management, and allow for equitable wildlife utilization. It emphasizes developing and maintaining public access to state lands and waters, regulating wildlife populations in harmony with land and water uses, and maximizing recreational opportunities. Furthermore, it mandates making decisions that benefit wildlife resources and consider the diverse social, economic, and recreational needs of all user groups, ensuring a sustainable and inclusive approach to wildlife management.



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In the selection of a new Director for ODFW, we advocate for the following criteria to be prioritized:

Commitment to the North American Model: The ideal candidate should have an extensive understanding of and experience in applying the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, demonstrating a track record of effective wildlife management practices.

Recognition of Hunters and Anglers' Contributions: Acknowledging the pivotal role that hunters and anglers play in funding and advocating for conservation efforts in Oregon is crucial. The new Director should be dedicated to fostering this vital relationship.

Engagement with a Diverse Range of Stakeholders: Effective wildlife management requires the ability to navigate the interests of various groups, from those focused on habitat preservation to those engaged in recreational viewing. The new Director must skillfully balance these perspectives, ensuring a holistic approach to conservation that includes traditional stakeholders.

We trust that the Game Commission will weigh these considerations carefully, selecting a leader who is not only capable of navigating the challenges of modern wildlife management but also passionate about preserving Oregon's natural legacy for future generations.

We appreciate the opportunity to contribute our voice to this critical process and look forward to a future where Oregon's wildlife management reflects the shared values of conservation, respect, and scientific integrity.

Sincerely,



Ian Isaacson | Co-Chair, Oregon Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers



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