



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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February 15, 2019
Heppner Ranger District
Attn: Leslie Taylor
Umatilla National Forest
PO Box 7
Heppner, Oregon 97836

Subject: Scoping Comments, Ellis Vegetation Management Project

The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) is writing to extend support for this very important project. We have a membership of over 10,000 and have 26 individual chapters across Oregon. In the recent past, our board and staff members have met with private land owners in the Gurdane area to discuss an ever-increasing problem of too many elk occupying private property causing hardship for livestock producers. We feel that this issue needs to be addressed from multiple perspectives and one of the key aspects is habitat enhancement performed on the federal lands, both USFS and BLM, which connect to the elk-impacted private land.

OHA supports the recommendations made by RMEF in their scoping letter on this project. We concur with their points for maintaining hiding and security cover, while also applying silvicultural actions that stimulate big game forage.

Elk redistribution from private back onto public land is a huge issue for western states, including much of Eastern Oregon. We strongly support the habitat enhancement as described through the elements of the Ellis Vegetation Management Project. Also, we support engaging partner agencies including ODFW and the BLM, and sportsmen's organizations, plus adjacent private landowners to yield effective results.

In sum, we wholeheartedly support the habitat enhancement efforts proposed for Ellis VMP and we would also be interested in utilizing our membership on projects where a volunteer labor force is needed.

Sincerely,

Jim Akenson
Conservation Director, OHA
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