

RECREATION
REPORT

FLOATING BUOYS
TO BE INSTALLED
NEAR BROWNLEE

Idaho Power Company is preparing to install floating buoy lines above and below Brownlee Dam to prevent boats from getting too close to the dam.

A contractor has begun staging equipment at the Woodhead Park boat launch in preparation for installing anchors for the buoy lines on both sides of the Snake River, above and below the dam. When the lines are installed, no water access will be allowed within 600 feet upstream of the dam or 1,000 feet downstream. The barriers will not impact streambank access to the river.

One part of meeting these requirements is controlling water access near Brownlee Dam and power plant. After evaluating many options and consulting with other hydropower facilities, Idaho Power determined that installing barriers to restrict boat access to Brownlee Dam and power plant is the best solution, according to a press release from the company.

Installation of the buoy lines will be finished late this month or early in January, according to Idaho Power.

ROCK SWAP SET
FOR DEC. 8 AT
BAKER CITY

Baker Rockhounds, a group of local rock and outdoor enthusiasts, will host a rock swap on Dec. 8 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the main gallery at the Baker Heritage Museum, 2480 Grove St.

There will be rock specimens to buy and swap. Rocks will also be given away to encourage people to take up rock collecting. Everyone is welcome to attend, and there is no entry fee. Please enter through the Museum's main entrance.

The rock swap will be in lieu of the Baker Rockhounds' regular monthly meeting, which takes place the second Sunday of each month at 2 p.m. in the lapidary room at the Museum.

STATE PARK
PARKING PERMIT
DISCOUNTS

An annual day-use parking permit for Oregon State Parks costs \$25 during December, a discount of \$5 from the regular price. Passes are for sale online at store.oregonstateparks.org, at some Oregon Parks and Recreation Department offices, and at some businesses. Permits can be moved among vehicles.

State's New Tactic To Deal With Elk Damage



S. John Collins/Baker City Herald file photo

Elk munch alfalfa hay at a state-operated winter feeding site near Baker City.

2020 brings new options for elk hunts

■ A 4-month general antlerless elk season targets elk causing damage on private agricultural lands

By Jayson Jacoby
Baker City Herald

Oregon wildlife officials are trying to make it easier for hunters to harvest antlerless elk that are damaging croplands in Northeastern Oregon.

The state Fish and Wildlife Commission recently approved a pilot program that, starting in 2020, will allow hunters to buy a tag to hunt antlerless elk over a four-month period in areas including parts of Baker, Keating, Eagle and Pine valleys in Baker County, the Grande

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— Nick Myatt, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ronde Valley in Union County, the Wallowa Valley in Wallowa County and the John Day Valley in Grant County.

The new general season antlerless elk damage hunt, which will run from Aug. 1 to Nov. 30, is one of two such hunts that will debut in 2020.

The other, which includes areas west of the Cascades as

well as the Columbia Basin, Maupin and Biggs units east of the mountains, will run from Aug. 1, 2020, through March 31, 2021.

The goal in both cases is the same, said Nick Myatt of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) — to try to deal with chronic elk damage on agricultural land.

“Our goal was to see if there’s anything we can do to reduce the impact of the growing problem of elk distribution from public land to private agricultural areas,” said Myatt, who lives in Baker City and has been leading ODFW’s multi-year effort to streamline and, where possible, to simplify hunting regulations statewide.

That campaign also has another goal, Myatt said, which is to adjust hunting seasons to address current problems. Elk congregating on private land is one such conundrum, particu-

larly in Northeastern Oregon.

ODFW’s existing tools to deal with that challenge — controlled antlerless hunts and issuing damage tags to private landowners — haven’t been as effective as agency officials would like, Myatt said.

The downside of controlled hunts is that hunters have to decide long before the season whether to apply for one, and even if they draw the tag they’re limited to hunting in a specific area, Myatt said.

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A venison recipe you won’t be able to resist

One Christmas I thought I’d cook something different than the regular of turkey. So I grabbed some ribeyes and grilled them. They were great. But ... to cook anything other than a turkey for Thanksgiving and a turkey or maybe a ham for Christmas seems almost sacrilegious doesn’t it?

So, since that culinary disaster I’ve never cooked anything but turkeys (OK, actually Mom always sends us a smoked turkey from Greenberg Smoked Turkeys down in Texas). But I thought it’d be fun to do an article on a wild game recipe for the holidays this year.

With a little counseling I was able to bring myself to venture out on the topic of some main dish other than a turkey. And think back to the first Thanksgiving. The pilgrims were starving and they no doubt were a little worried. Then they showed up where some friendly Indians had laid out a meal fit for a king for the starving pilgrims.

Suddenly it went from doom and



BASE CAMP
TOM CLAYCOMB

gloom to a spirit of thanksgiving that has been celebrated across America since that original feast. And who knows what all they actually ate? I’m sure a few people brought in some venison.

In fact, after thinking about it for a while (and since I’ve been in the beef industry since I was 8 years old) it suddenly dawned on me. Those slick scalawag turkey marketers are the ones that spawned the idea that they only ate turkey at the first Thanksgiving. They think of all the slick marketing ideas before us beef guys do.

How do we know they didn’t just eat venison? In fact, I think they did. So now after mulling through the above thoughts I can write a deer recipe article for Thanksgiving with a clear conscience!

I love deer meat and have been



Tom Claycomb photo

Put venison in a smoker on low heat to impart a smoky flavor before finishing in the stove.

eating it nearly every day for the last week. My favorite is backstrap with French fries and milk gravy.

But another cut that I love almost as good is the forequarter. Inside of the shoulder is a muscle that is the

third most tender muscle in the carcass, but you have to cook it slow. For years we boned out the forequarter for sausage.

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