



Photo by Chelsea Judy

While valleys were smothered in fog and low clouds Tuesday, the slopes at Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort were bathed in sunshine.

# Ski area needs a storm or 2

By Jayson Jacoby  
Baker City Herald

The snowstorms that bookended Thanksgiving didn't deliver quite enough snow to allow Anthony Lakes Mountain Resort to open for the season.

But it's getting close on the slopes, said Chelsea Judy, marketing director for the ski area in the Elkhorn Mountains.

"We're in really good shape," Judy said earlier this week.

Anthony Lakes has a base of 15 inches.

"We just need another good storm or two," Judy said.

She estimated that about 30 inches of snow fell over the holiday weekend, but it was the powdery variety that settled.

There was enough, though, for employees to use groomers to pack the snow into a solid base on several runs, Judy said.

Anthony Lakes doesn't plan any major changes to its operations this winter. Snow conditions, an events calendar and other information is available online at [www.anthonylakes.com](http://www.anthonylakes.com)

## ELK

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Elk, however, aren't exactly predictable in their movements.

The new general season hunts, by contrast, have no tag sale deadline. That means hunters can buy a tag at any time during the season.

The idea, Myatt said, is to give hunters more flexibility to take advantage of hunting opportunities that arise as elk move among properties.

As for damage elk tags, ODFW already issues about 3,500 to 4,000 of those per year to private landowners, mainly in Northeastern Oregon and the Columbia Basin, Myatt said.

But to get tags, landowners have to contact biologists at their local ODFW office. This is a time-intensive process for the landowners and the biologists, and in some cases by the time ODFW has approved the damage tag the elk have moved off the property and can no longer be legally hunted with the tags.

But hunters will be able to buy one of the new general season tags almost immediately through ODFW's cellphone app.

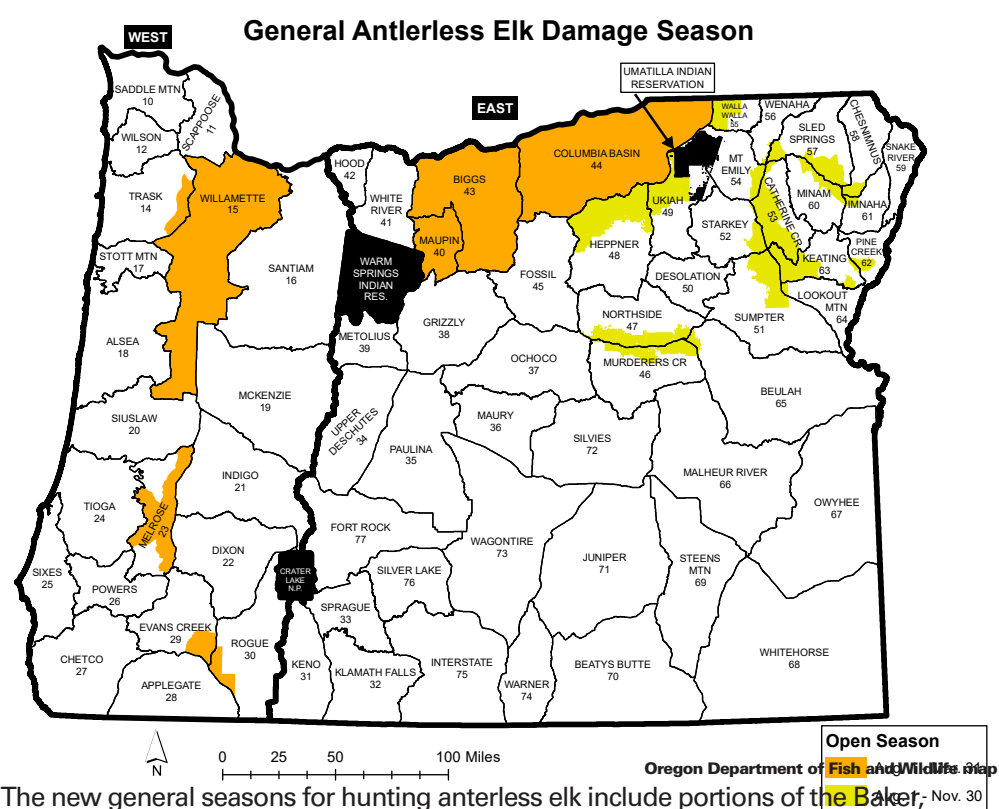
"We're hoping this is an easier way to get tags out to landowners who are having elk issues," said Justin Primus, assistant district wildlife biologist at ODFW's Baker City office.

The new general season damage tags will force some hunters to choose when they want to hunt, however.

As with other general season tags, hunters who buy one of the antlerless damage hunt tags will not be able to also hunt in a controlled elk season, Myatt said.

"These hunts are a hunter's only elk hunting opportunity for the year," ODFW warns in the 2020 Big Game Hunting Regulations.

Nonetheless, Myatt said he expects ODFW will sell about the same number of tags for the new hunts as the agency



The new general seasons for hunting antlerless elk include portions of the Grande Ronde, Wallowa, Keating, Eagle, Pine and John Day valleys in Northeastern Oregon.

sold for 19 controlled antlerless elk hunts that have been canceled for 2020, combined with the number of damage tags the agency has been issuing.

(None of those 19 hunts is in Baker Valley, Myatt said, although several antlerless hunts in the Grande Ronde Valley have been eliminated and, in effect, replaced by the new general season.)

Because the new general season hunt areas are almost exclusively on private land, ODFW cautions hunters to ensure they have permission to hunt before they buy a tag.

But Myatt points out that that's also the case with damage tags ODFW has issued in the past. He said agency officials are optimistic that landowners who received those tags in past years will

continue to allow hunting on their land so long as they're having elk damage.

Charles Lowry, a rancher in Keating Valley about 15 miles northeast of Baker City, is one of those landowners.

Lowry said this was the first year in his nearly 30 years in the area that he didn't have to deal with elk herds gobbling his alfalfa and grass.

But over the years he's had around 200 elk on his property, more than enough animals to cause significant damage to his crops and, as a result, his profit margin.

"They eat anything and everything," Lowry said. "If you don't keep 'em out they'll strip a field in no time. We quit raising grain because they knocked it down before it was dry enough to be threshed."

Lowry said he has allowed hunters with controlled season tags to pursue elk on his land, as well as receiving damage tags from ODFW.

But he said he much prefers the agency's new approach with the four-month general season, since it doesn't require him to track down a biologist and fill out paperwork.

"Most of us don't have time, we're busy enough," Lowry said. "I'm fully in support of allowing the public to help us deal with elk. I'll even help them."

The 2020 Big Game Hunting Regulations include general maps of the new hunts as well as written descriptions.

But Myatt said more detailed maps will be available soon on ODFW's website, [myodfw.com](http://myodfw.com)



Tom Claycomb photo

Laying strips of bacon on venison can mask any gamey flavors.

## VENISON

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After boning it out and removing the tendons and ligaments you're lucky to have a handful of meat. Then about 40 years ago a guy I worked with told me how he smoked his forequarters. I couldn't believe him but I tested it out.

Oh my gosh, it is the best thing in the world and will rival any beef brisket sandwich that you've ever eaten at the best Texas barbecue restaurant. And it is super easy, although it will take 13 hours to prepare.

To begin, put it on your smoker on low heat. I use a Camp Chef pellet grill because they are handier than feeding wood into the old-time smokers every 15 minutes. Usually I use hickory pellets but I'm smoking a forequarter right now and I'm testing Camp Chef's new Competition Blend pellets. Sprinkle on a bit of garlic salt and pepper.

Smoke it for about 3 hours and then pull

off of your smoker and put in a black turkey roasting pan. Put in 2 to 3 cups of water and then place in the oven overnight at 180 to 190 degrees. If you wake up in the middle of the night, check it. If it runs out of water, it's toast. If it's low, add a couple of more cups.

The next morning when you wake up, check it. If the meat falls off the bone with a fork it's done. If not, turn up the heat to 300 and since it has been cooking all night it should get done in 30 to 45 minutes.

When it is done remove it from the oven and pull all the meat off of the bone. There will not be enough meat on the bone for an ant to eat and all of the collagen and gristle has disappeared. Chop it into ¼- to ½-inch chunks.

Toast some hamburger buns in a Lodge black skillet with butter and throw a handful of meat on the buns. Sprinkle on a little tobacco sauce, pour on the barbecue sauce and sprinkle on some Tony Chachere's spices to taste.

Dr. Juno Choe and the staff of Eastern Oregon Cancer Center at Pendleton want to wish you a

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