

RECREATION
REPORT

Hunter education classes resume

SALEM — Hunter education classes have resumed in Oregon, with safety measures in place to protect both students and volunteer instructors.

To see the latest classes and field days available, visit <https://myodfw.com/articles/hunter-education-classes-field-days> and register. Students can choose to take a conventional class, or finish most of the class independently by workbook or online and just take a field day. More classes and field days will be added so check back if you don't see one in your area.

Among the field days scheduled in Northeastern Oregon:

- July 18: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Powder River Sportsmen's Club's Virtue Flat range 6 miles east of Baker City. Students must complete an online course or workbook and bring proof of completion. There will be a 60-question written exam. Students must wear a mask during COVID restrictions, and are asked to bring their own. Instructor is Richard Haines.

- Aug. 15: 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area, 59116 Pierce Road. Students must complete an online course or workbook and bring proof of completion. There will be a 60-question written exam. Students must wear a mask during COVID restrictions, and are asked to bring their own. Instructor is Darren Hendrickson.

- Aug. 29: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Powder River Sportsmen's Club's Virtue Flat range 6 miles east of Baker City. Students must complete an online course or workbook and bring proof of completion. There will be a 60-question written exam. Students must wear a mask during COVID restrictions, and are asked to bring their own. Instructor is Richard Haines.

All ODFW outdoor education classes have been canceled since March due to the pandemic, including hunter education, which is required to hunt in Oregon for ages 17 and under.

ODFW is taking a number of steps to protect both students and teachers participating in classes/field days. Class size will be restricted to 25 students/parents, and instructors will be encouraged to break the class into even smaller groups where possible. Social distance will be maintained except during those brief moments when closer distance is needed to safely handle firearms.

Visitors Center at John Day Fossil Beds stays closed

■ Current target for reopening is mid-July but that could be pushed back, National Monument superintendent says

By Michael Kohn
The (Bend) Bulletin

Day-trippers and tourists wanting to visit Oregon's best paleontology collection will need to wait a little longer to get their fill of fossilized bones.

The Thomas Condon Paleontology and Visitors Center at the John Day National Monument, currently closed

due to COVID-19, is not expected to re-open its doors until mid-July at the earliest said Patrick Gamman, superintendent for the national monument. While mid-July is the target, that date could be pushed back, Gamman added.

Gamman said he is acting out of an abundance of cau-



Terry Richard / The Oregonian file photo

The Sheep Rock Unit of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument north of Dayville is home of the Thomas Condon Paleontology Center and Visitor Center.

tion and wants at all costs to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the small communities that lie near the national monument.

While the museum is closed, all walking trails and

lookout points in the park are open to the public. Visitors are advised that water is not available in the park.

The John Day National Monument is spread across two main areas. The Painted

Hills unit on the western side tends to get the most visitors due to its proximity to Oregon's cities. The paleontology museum is located a 1-hour drive east of the Painted Hills, in the Sheep Rock unit.

ROADS

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That list of roads includes a section of another of the Wallowa-Whitman's scenic byways — Hells Canyon.

The Wallowa Mountain Loop Road, also known as Forest Road 39, crosses high ground between Highway 86 on the south end, in Baker County, and the highway leading from Joseph to Imnaha, in Wallowa County.

Story said travelers were getting through as early as May 14, and the 39 Road was officially open May 18.

Some years the route isn't open until June, but the snowpack this winter was below average in the eastern part of the Wallowa Mountains.

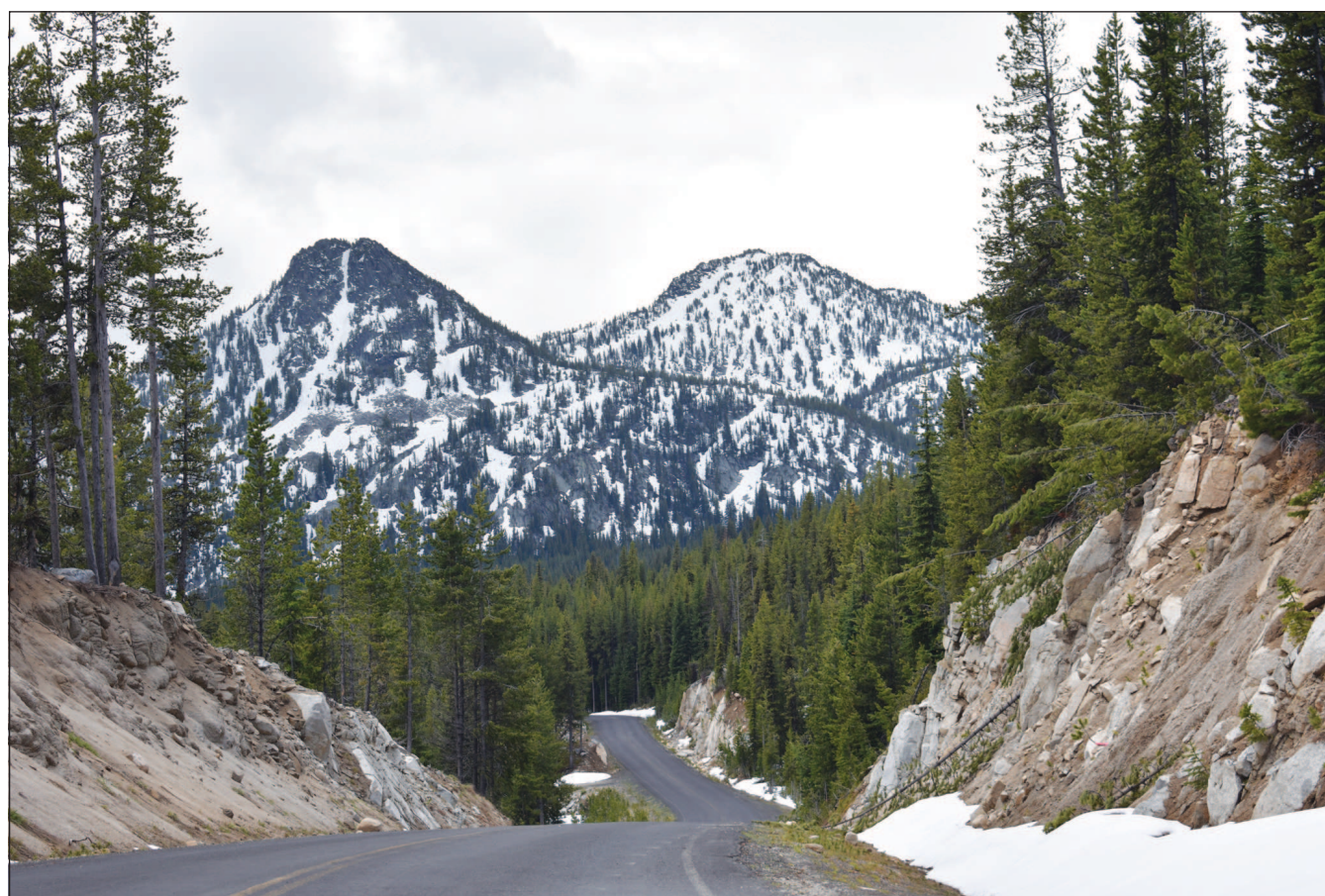
That was decidedly not the case on the western side of the great range, however.

The automated snow-measuring station at Moss Springs, above Cove, recorded the second-highest snowpack in its 39-year history this year.

The snow-water equivalent — a measure of how much water the snow will yield when it melts, a statistic that predicts water supply more accurately than snow depth does — reached a maximum of 36.6 inches at Moss Springs on April 5.

That's the most since 1982, when the Moss Springs station measured its all-time record of 38.8 inches on April 14.

Story said a Forest Service employee couldn't drive all the way to Moss Springs earlier this week due to lingering



Lisa Britton / For the EO Media Group

Gunsight Butte, left, and Van Patten Butte from the Elkhorn Drive Scenic Byway near Anthony Lakes.

snow. He expects that road will be open soon.

Most if not all roads along the southern Wallows, from the Medical Springs Highway east to Hells Canyon, are open — and in some cases smoother than usual.

Story said he hired a contractor this spring to grade sections of several popular roads in that section of the Wallowa-Whitman, including about 33 miles of Road 77, the Eagle Creek Road.

That road has been graded from the Halfway Summit, along Highway 86 between Halfway and Richland about 48 miles east of Baker City, to the junction with Road 67

near Tamarack Campground.

The contractor has also graded the Empire Gulch Road between 5 Corners and Eagle Creek, Forest Road 70 from 5 Corners to Goose Creek, and the Fish Lake Road, No. 66, north of Halfway.

Story said the Wallowa-Whitman largely avoided the flood damage that afflicted the neighboring Umatilla National Forest when heavy rain fell on rapidly melting snow in February.

"The La Grande District had a little, but we still had pretty good snowpack when that flooding hit," he said.

Rain and melting snow

did dislodge more rocks than normal, especially along sections of the 39 Road between Halfway and Joseph.

Story said he had to hire heavy equipment to move some of the multi-ton boulders that landed in the road.

North side

Brandon Barnett, who is Story's counterpart at the Wallowa Mountains office in Enterprise, said although he hasn't traveled as much this spring as usual due to the coronavirus pandemic, some popular routes on the north side of the Wallowa-Whitman are open.

That includes the 46 Road

in the Chesnimnus and Zumwalt Prairie areas, and the Whiskey Creek Road from Wallowa to Highway 3 north of Enterprise.

Barnett said he hasn't had a report about the road to Buckhorn Lookout.

A contractor has been grading the Hat Point Road, and Barnett said the crew planned to plow through the remaining snowdrifts leading to the popular viewpoint of Hells Canyon by this weekend.

Barnett said he hasn't had recent reports about the Lostine River Road leading to Two Pan Campground, or the Big Canyon Road south of Highway 82.

The Velveteen ... Elk

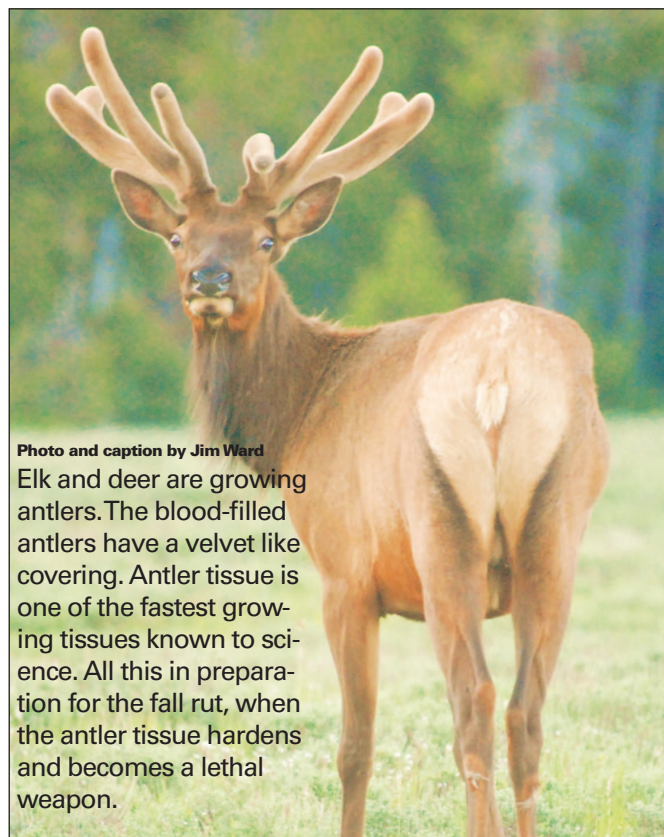


Photo and caption by Jim Ward

Elk and deer are growing antlers. The blood-filled antlers have a velvet like covering. Antler tissue is one of the fastest growing tissues known to science. All this in preparation for the fall rut, when the antler tissue hardens and becomes a lethal weapon.

To Our Fans & Supporters:
We are deeply sorry to have to cancel the
75th Annual
Chief Joseph Days
Due to Covid-19
We look forward to seeing you next summer
Follow us on facebook for news & updates

The Board of Directors
Chief Joseph Days Rodeo Committee

If you have already purchased rodeo tickets, and you would like a refund, please mail the tickets to

CJD Ticket Refund
PO Box 13, Joseph, OR 97846.

Thank you.

