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Bow hunting for the first time



THE OUTDOOR COLUMN
By Todd Arriola

Last year, I decided to try something that had been on my mind for quite some time, but with doubts about my potential success, had never been attempted before—bowhunting.

I knew that after being so used to using firearms for hunting, using a bow would be a foreign concept, and would be awkward at first. But, if I never tried anything new based on the possibility of awkwardness, discomfort or failure, I wouldn't have learned to hunt or fish (or tried anything else) to start with.

Like anyone beginning a new venture of this kind, I had to take stock of what, exactly, I already pos-

sessed in the areas of gear and skill, which is to say, nothing at all. What I definitely needed to begin with, hopefully without requiring a small fortune, was a bow.

As luck would have it, neatly preserved

for around 20 years in a closet in my parents' home were several compound bows, one of which I was privileged to be able to use for hunting, owned by my father.

Whether I'd be able to use the bow as-is was a concern, so I decided to seek some expert advice.

After weighing the advantages and disadvantages, in my specific case, of using an older bow versus purchasing a newer bow, I decided to go with upgrades for the older bow, a Pearson Spoiler Plus. The bow was given a new sight, a D-loop was installed for the newly-acquired, spring-loaded

string release, and six new carbon arrows replaced the older aluminum ones. It was ready for action.

I had no idea if the bow would truly work for me, but at the very least, I had to sight it in, which I did, using hay bales as a backstop. I shot from 20 yards on up to 60 yards, and I realized something immediately obvious—it's not easy. With a rifle, 60 yards can seem like nothing, but with a bow, such is not necessarily the case, with many factors affecting range and accuracy.

But, determined to stick with it, I eventually felt more comfortable and confident, and I was ready to tackle the seemingly improbable task, at the time, of harvesting a deer, an elk, and an antelope, in the first year of my attempted experiment as a bowman. Why I chose to pursue the fastest land animal in North America in addition to the deer and elk my first time with a bow I can't fully answer, but you never know unless you try.

One of the reasons bowhunting appealed to me is the length of the deer and elk season, a month long, from the end of August through the end of Septem-

ber. Another is the open hunting area, basically almost all of eastern Oregon, with a few exceptions, and of course, with permission, on private ground.

Most of the time I spent with the bow in hand was in the pursuit of deer, a buck specifically. I had permission to hunt on some private land, which included a hay field next to sagebrush I had my eye on, in the South Sumpter Unit area, so I focused my efforts there.

I noticed a pattern in the times the deer, different herds of both does and bucks, traveled down from the sagebrush into the field, which was early in the afternoons. The group at times also included several antelope, but my antelope tag was valid only in the Lookout Mountain Unit area, so that was just a cruel tease.

I had the advantage of being both downwind and beside the established game trail, while I was hidden behind one of the small juniper trees in the sagebrush, so I tried that. I had on a white T-shirt, but a camouflaged light jacket over it. I had on blue jeans, which is basically the worst color to attempt

to hide from deer in low-light conditions, but since I was there in the early afternoon, I didn't fret over it. I should mention, I love wearing white T-shirts and blue jeans.

Anyway, after I made attempts on different days to be comfortable with a good shot, I was in a situation where the herd had already passed into the hay field, because I moved to check out another spot. I was in the unfortunate position of being upwind and having to move to get closer to them.

The sagebrush and fence between it and the field provided some cover, but I had to literally crawl—with a bow—so I could get close enough to feel good about taking a shot. Since a deer's ability to detect movement, albeit with blurry vision, is better than my ability at the time to conceal that same movement crawling with a bow, I was busted. As I approached within range, a doe snorted at the herd, and they all bolted to the other side of the field.

By that time, the last day of the season, it was becoming darker, so I was about to call it quits. I noticed the herd had grouped

at one end of the field, so I drove over to see what I could accomplish. I had an almost perfect shot at a buck where I stopped, but there were several reasons why I didn't.

I was beside my pickup, on the highway, in low light, with NO HUNTING and NO TRESPASSING signs attached all along the fence surrounding the field. I had permission to hunt on that property, but that's the only positive point in that scenario. It's better to be sure, safe and legal, and if necessary, to wait for another opportunity. There will be more.

The bad news is, I didn't fill any tags with the bow, but failures are expected. The good news is, I did harvest a deer later in the fall. I filled a doe tag in the South Sumpter Unit area, with a rifle. Maybe not the same doe who snorted at the herd (and me), but a good one, nonetheless. Considering my first not-so-successful time hunting with a bow last year, what does that mean for this year? It means I'm going to most likely try again.

Good luck with your adventures.

Mining Association talks about pivotal court case

By Todd Arriola

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On Friday, January 2, 2015, the Eastern Oregon Mining Association (EOMA) held its Board meeting at 6 p.m., and its general meeting at 6:45 p.m., in the Council Chambers of Baker City Hall.

Present were Ken Alexander, President; Chuck Chase, Executive Director; Terry Drever Gee, Director of Governmental Affairs; Jan Alexander, Mineral Policy Director; Carmelita Holland, Recording Secretary; and Bobbie Danser, Treasurer.

Also present were Tork and Wanda Ballard, Alice Knapp, Jasper Coombes, County Commissioner Bill Harvey, Charles Cree, Jim Iler and Richard Cochran of the Baker County Chapter of Oath Keepers, Kody Justus, Keith Magnuson, and Holland's great-granddaughter, Kandice Holland.

The Board meeting was called to order, and Holland read the minutes from the last Board meeting, on Friday, December 5, 2014. The minutes were approved with a motion from Danser, and a second from Jan Alexander.

Danser gave a treasury report, including financial information about EOMA's general bank account, silver medallions, legal fund, etc. The report was approved by the Board.

There was a discussion about a possible discount for bulk purchases of EOMA's silver medallions. These medallions, minted in the current and previous years, are one ounce of .999 pure silver, with a gold accent, sold currently for \$50 plus \$5 shipping on EOMA's website (the price is subject to change, depending on the price of silver).

During a five-minute break between the Board and general meetings, Ken Alexander informed those present that there would be a drawing held at the conclusion of the meetings, for one of EOMA's silver medallions. Several individuals each purchased six tickets for \$5, for a chance to win the medallion.

The general meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m., and Holland read the minutes from the last general meeting, on Friday, December 5, 2014, at 6:45 p.m. The minutes were approved with a motion from Jan Alexander, and a

second from Danser.

Chase began a discussion about nominations for Board members for 2015. He said that Ken Alexander consented to run for President again, Ed Hardt for Vice President. Chase consented for Executive Director, Danser for Treasurer, Gee for Director of Governmental Affairs, Jan Alexander for Mineral Policy Director, along with others who seek to run again. The Board is seeking candidates for Holland's position, as she may resign.

Those nominated will be listed in the February EOMA newsletter, and voting will be in March, with the results published in the April EOMA newsletter.

Ken Alexander informed those present that Jerry Hobbs, who was President of Public Lands for the People (PLP), a land rights advocacy group, and who played a vital role in the fight against the California dredging ban, passed away on December 28, 2014.

Hobbs's efforts for the last ten years included lawsuits against environmental groups and government agencies. One of his last arguments in court, ironically, was the irreparable

harm the delays in seeking an injunction to the ban was causing, as miners were aging and passing away.

Ken Alexander and Chase, along with others present, echoed the sentiments of Hobbs, discussing issues with delayed decisions, stall tactics, and lost mining opportunities, etc.

There was a discussion about a pivotal court case, *People v. Rinehart* (California), concerning a miner, Brandon Rinehart, who was charged with illegal mining on June 16, 2012, on his Federal mining claim, "Nugget Alley," in Plumas County. Rinehart was charged with dredging without a permit, however, since Federal law allows the dredging, and permits aren't issued, the argument from Rinehart's attorney, James Buchal, is that the State has no authority to cite a dredger for this. A ruling on the basic argument, Federal preemption of the State's ability to prohibit mining, is expected this month.

The outcome of the case could affect mining in Oregon, too, according to Ken Alexander and Chase. The Board discussed plans to make a donation to the

Rinehart legal defense fund.

During the meeting, Harvey was asked by Ken Alexander to present his thoughts about issues miners face, like those discussed.

Harvey said he'd like to help, but more information from EOMA concerning the issues would be needed in order to provide effective assistance. He said that he was confused as to why a miner would be forced to wait years to be able to resolve an issue on federal land. "Let's take one issue at a time, and win some battles," Harvey said.

Iler echoed Harvey's thoughts, and added that Oath Keepers and the EOMA could work together to accomplish some mutual goals.

"We feel that we have a strong base that would compliment the local miners in our foundational goal of holding the federal government to its limits," he said.

Iler talked about assisting with mining legal issues, concerning drafting proper complaints, arguments, etc. He informed the Board that Oath Keepers meet on the third Thursday of the month, and he plans to

possibly use City Hall as the meeting place.

Both Harvey and Iler congratulated the Board on the quality and thoroughness of EOMA's mining newsletter, published monthly.

Gee mentioned the upcoming mining forum, presented by Greg Smith, Baker County Economic Developer, and Rich Angstrom of the Oregon Concrete and Aggregate Producers Association (OCAPA), scheduled for Friday, January 27, 2015, from 2 to 5 p.m., at the old armory in Baker City. Metal miners, sand and gravel operators, support industries, ranchers, ATV advocates and more representatives are expected to attend the event.

Upon adjournment of the meeting, the drawing for the silver EOMA medallion previously mentioned was completed, and Wanda Ballard held the winning ticket.

EOMA's next Board and regular meetings are scheduled for Friday, February 6, 2015, at 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m., respectively, in the Council Chambers of Baker City Hall.

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