

Outdoors / Opinion

Holidays and outdoors



THE OUTDOOR COLUMN
By Todd Arriola

Though I paid nearly zero attention to two events—the Washington Redskins beating the New York Giants in the first Redskins-hosted football game on Thanksgiving, and the limited chaos from single-minded shoppers on Black Friday—I'm pleased to see that the holiday was a great success.

With no snow on the ground yet (down where I am, anyway), and temperatures still relatively forgiving, I wonder whether this winter will be as harsh as the last one. I also wonder about the water situation next year.

With the beginning of December, and the nearly month-long reminder of the Christmas holiday to come, I wonder how the year's gone by so quickly.

In the outdoor world, we saw the full spectrum of activity, from major accomplishments, successes, and bragging rights, to failures and outright poaching. In the special political firestorm that is Oregon, whenever there is death to wildlife—legal or not—there seems to always be a delicate balance between seeing both sides of the issue and getting along and playing well, and all parties kicking the crap out of each other in a series of cage fights.

This kind of combative attitude is expected year-long, especially with a subject such as wolves, the recent defensive shooting of an attacking wolf by an elk hunter, as well as deliberate or undetermined deaths, being prime examples.

In the case of the

defensive shooting, if Governor Kate Brown forced the investigation to be reopened, the message would basically be that the Oregon State Police (OSP) and the Union County District Attorney don't know what they're doing—probably not the best scenario.

Last winter was the harshest one in a long time, what we jokingly called an "actual winter," but it affected the numbers of game tags issued to hunters, because of the losses in deer populations, for example.

When I asked about the possibility of a deer damage tag this year, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) Baker District Biologist Brain Ratliff said something like, "You'll have a tough time convincing me to issue a damage tag for a doe." Fair enough.

I still had other opportunities, and I had ambitious goals for the year, outdoor and indoor, which included a honey-do list I dreamed would be non-existent by December 31st.

As in most cases, "Things don't always go according to plan," and that probably won't happen. And to the delight of some coyotes this year, my particular harvest was minimal, but there's still a month left, and all of 2018.

Brandi, Airianna and I did manage to get some fishing in, but maybe not as much as I would have liked. Still, part of the point was to do something together, and to teach the little one about the activity, and Airianna did learn quickly.

My girls don't exactly enjoy the sound of a centerfire rifle shot, but amazingly, when I stepped outside one night to shoot at a problem skunk with a shotgun, neither one of them awoke from their

nap, roughly ten feet away on the couch. Heavy sleepers.

Hunting and fishing reminds me of an interesting experience I had this year, while shopping at one of the local grocery stores.

Someone I know, a relatively recent transplant from another area to eastern Oregon, asked me about living in the region—basically, the "purist" kind of living, which involves "growing, catching, or shooting" all of his own food needed to survive, and living a more subsistence-type life where he lives (he said he could raise sheep and other animals in that area).

He said that most of the people he talked to don't live completely in that mode (many are older, and either aren't able to hunt and fish, for example, or choose not to, for different reasons), and that he has limited learning opportunities which teach the needed skills. I said that I don't really have all the answers to his question, and that I'm no expert, but that his situation could certainly be remedied.

In no case did he say that anyone was hostile about the topic, which makes sense, because I told him that people here are generally friendly and helpful.

Back to Thanksgiving. I got together with a small, merry tribe in our family, and we attempted to eat a large amount of food. A valiant effort every time we try that, and the company was great, but we always have leftovers (we're still eating them).

I've come to the conclusion that this is on purpose, because neither I, nor many people I know, complain about having extra food around, post-grand feast, despite being stuffed to the point of sickness at the time.

I presented my cats with some scraps, who tried to eat my hand in their excited state, and who were also thankful for another year.

They agreed—the turkey was wonderful...

— EDITORIAL —

Hodge Podge

The Privilege Tax. We reported earlier on the "privilege tax" being enacted as part of the new Transportation Package, which puts a .5% sales tax on dealerships for the privilege of selling new gas or diesel-powered vehicles. That sales tax would, of course, be passed along immediately to the consumer. That tax revenue would then be redistributed to citizens purchasing electric cars in the form of some whopping rebates.

We were pleased to see that this incredibly unfair (and we think illegal) tax is being challenged in court. The Oregon AAA and Oregon Trucking Association have filed a position with the Supreme Court asking essentially for the full repeal of that tax.

We certainly hope they're successful.

Our Mail System. It's pretty common for us to get complaints about the length of time it takes for our mail subscribers to receive their newspapers. Sometimes those complaints come with threats to cancel the subscription entirely. Sadly, we have no more control over the United States Postal Service than we do over the number of stars in the sky. If your paper spends a week stuck on the floorboard of your carrier's truck,

go speak to a supervisor at your local post office. If your paper is routinely lost in transit, always winding up in your neighbor's box first, please talk to the USPS about it. While we can report the problem, we have no real effect on the solution. We do offer up electronic subscriptions, which are cheaper, and give subscribers who are out of the area instant access to their papers—it's worth a thought.

News Tips. We love getting news tips from the public. And, while most of the tips we get are rooted in fact, every so often we do encounter one that seems to have been created out of thin air. Much of our duty, and that of our reporters, ends up somewhere in the business of debunking fact from fiction. So when we don't run a suggested story, it's truly because we didn't find a story underneath it all to run.

It's also interesting to note that in four years, we have never received a tip that was 100% accurate. The reason? There are usually at least three sides to every story, and it takes all sides to paint the full picture. The most common response to this statement is, "But I spoke with her directly!" Or, "I heard it from a member of his family!" We'll refer those folks back to our original statement.

We're pretty sure if this theory applies to news tips, it applies even more so to local gossip. Every single time. Something to consider ...

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

Walden examines online consumer protection

Continuing his efforts to strengthen consumer protection in the digital age, Rep. Greg Walden (R-Hood River) today led a hearing at the House Energy and Commerce Committee to examine the personal data collection and online content management practices of technology companies. Walden, who chairs the Energy and Commerce Committee, stressed the need for consumer protection online to ensure sensitive personal information is safe, and that consumers maintain control and choice over the content they see online.

"The goal for today's hearing is to help provide all Americans with a better understanding of how their

data flows online, how online platforms and online media sources determine what they see or don't see, and the extent of and methods by which their information is collected and used by online firms," said Walden. "Americans should be able to feel confident that their well-being, freedom of expression, and access to the content of their choice are not being wholly sacrificed for profit.

Americans should have vibrant, competitive markets both offline and online, where consumers know their rights and options, and have the freedom to choose what is best for their circumstances."

Specifically, the Energy and Commerce Committee today examined how

companies' algorithms, and decisions about personal data and online content, are impacting consumers.

This hearing comes as the Committee is continuing to investigate the massive Equifax data breach, which compromised the personal information of over 145 million Americans, including over 1.7 million Oregonians.

During today's hearing, Walden said that as the internet economy continues to grow substantially, consumer safety and choice must remain a top priority.

"Consumers should remain as safe from unfair, deceptive, and malicious practices by online firms and their algorithms on the internet as they do in the real world," said Walden.

Salmon and Trout committee to meet

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) Advisory Committee will meet Thursday, Dec. 7 beginning at 8 a.m. in the Commission Room at the ODFW Headquarters Office, 4034 Fairview Industrial Drive in Salem.

The meeting is open to the public and the agenda includes STEP program planning, STEP program updates, and review of mini-grant applications.

The Oregon Legislature created Salmon and Trout

Enhancement Program in 1981 to provide a way for volunteers to participate in the restoration of native stocks of salmon, steelhead and trout. The STEP Advisory Committee makes recommendations to ODFW and the Fish and Wildlife Commission on issues regarding its programs. The committee's 13 members are appointed by the Governor and represent all areas of Oregon.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided as needed for individuals requesting assistive hear-

ing devices, sign language interpreters or large-print materials. Individuals needing these types of accommodations may call the Information and Education Division at (800) 720-6339 or (503) 947-6002 at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

For more information on the Salmon Trout Enhancement Program visit the ODFW Web site at <http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/STEP/> or call program staff at (503) 947-6211.

Parks and Rec permits go on sale Dec. 1

From Dec. 1-31, holiday shoppers can buy the annual parking permit for only \$25—that's \$5 off the regular price of \$30. The permits are transferable from vehicle to vehicle.

Shoppers can round out their gift with holiday gear branded with the iconic Oregon State Parks shield,

including hats, water bottles, dog bowls, ornaments and stickers. The holiday gear will be on sale during the month of December.

Gift gear and parking permits are for sale online at <https://store.oregonstateparks.org/>. Gift items can also be purchased in person at Oregon State Parks

headquarters in Salem, 725 Summer St. NE Suite C.

Parking permits are also sold at major OPRD offices, some state park friends' group stores and selected local businesses throughout the state. For a complete list of vendors, visit <http://oregonstateparks.org/>.

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