



Dedra Siemon smiles after shooting a .30-06.

Contributed photo

SHOOTING THE BREEZE

# GIRLS WITH GUNS!

By Dale Valade

For the Blue Mountain Eagle

Like it or not, fellas, the number of women participating in the various outdoors activities is on the rise. I am glad to see this taking place, mostly for selfish reasons. The more people we encourage and mentor to hunt and shoot, the more people that will vote and fight to preserve our rights to do so for generations to come.

Some may feel that it's somehow not a woman's place to know how to handle a gun or to engage in hunting or shooting of any kind. This couldn't be further from the truth for many reasons. Sadly, women as a group are specifically targeted each year by criminals. Women are fully capable of defending themselves against any deviants if they are properly equipped and trained. Guns, of course, are the proper equipment in a fight for one's life, virtue, safety or property. They are an equalizer.

And as far as hunting goes, growing up in the country, all of us, boys and girls alike, were taught how to shoot, hunt and fish. I've never felt belittled or emasculated to be joined in the field by family members or friends of the opposite sex. I enjoy shooting and hunting alongside these skilled, experienced women. There is much to be learned from these huntresses. Being more patient with your shot and lighter on your feet when stalking come to mind. Hunting itself is a life skill, and being able to successfully provide meat for the table is



Dale Valade

something everyone should learn how to do regardless of contrarian social sentiments.

Women can and do shoot very well, and they are typically much better pupils than men. They follow instruction and take advice much better in my experience. While women can be biologically inclined to be more recoil sensitive than men, I know many ladies that shoot the big stuff too. Everything from 7-mm and .300 magnums clear up through the various .45- and .50-caliber shoulder stompers. Dealing with recoil is largely mind over matter, something anyone can learn to build up a tolerance for. Having a big game rifle that fits your physique does even more to mitigate a lot of "felt recoil" as well.

Most females I've informally polled about shooting and hunting don't get caught up in the stigma of numbers or bravado like us males. They don't feel desiccated by not carrying a veritable cannon or by refraining from lobbing shots into the next county. They do typically focus on what's most important when hunting like staying warm and well hydrated, safe gun handling, making good shots and treating every game animal they take as a trophy, regardless of antler orientations. Bragging rights and Boone and Crockett scores are of much less importance than

putting venison in the freezer for the women I've talked to.

In magazines and on television, we see an increasing number of female hosts with their own network shows and in professional capacities as competitive shooters or guides on dangerous game hunts. These lovely women are just deadly with a rifle or bow. And what a fulfilling way to spend time in the outdoors! Ladies, if you're curious, look up Eleanor O'Connor, Salome de Villiers, Eva Shockey, Julie Golob, Lena Miculek or Melanie Peterson.

I, for one, welcome these newcomers and veterans alike. And I'm not alone, the various manufacturers have taken note. All manner of new product lines have been designed with the features most appealing to a feminine shootist in mind. Rifles, bows, camouflage clothing, boots, headgear and packs are just a few of the items available that are fit for Jane Q Hunter.

Don't miss the chance to expose more folks to the wonderful traditions we here in Eastern Oregon hold so dear. Positive reinforcement and good experiences afield can impact lives for generations.

Ladies, if you're wanting to learn how, or if you are already hopelessly hooked like the rest of us, we want to hear from you! Email us at shootingthebreezebme@gmail.com and sound off.

*Dale Valade is a local country gent with a deep love for handloading, hunting and shooting.*



## Oregon makes case for prescribed fire smoke

Jes Burns

Oregon Public Broadcasting

Oregon is proposing to change how it regulates smoke. The idea is to make it easier to use intentionally set or prescribed fire on public and private land.

Wildfire smoke has increasingly become a point of contention in communities across the Pacific Northwest. For example, Southern Oregon has experienced the worst air quality in the state this summer. There have been around 25 days when the air quality has reached unhealthy levels.

It's broadly accepted that lighting prescribed fires in times when fire danger is low can burn up excess fuels in the forest and help reduce the severity of wildfire — and it should also help with smoke in the summer.

The Oregon Department of Forestry and the Department of Environmental Quality are working on rule changes that will increase the number of burn days available for prescribed fire. Currently ODF says about 165,000 acres are burned each year in the state, and they'd like to get that number up.

The main push is to relax air quality standards around communities.

The smoke from prescribed burns is regulated and currently not allowed to blow toward most of the population centers in the state.

The changes would allow limited amounts of smoke to enter communities.

The 24-hour average smoke level would have to stay below a certain level. There would be a 1-hour smoke limit as well, but communities with approved public information plans could apply for an exemption. The changes are designed

to increase the number of burn days and should eventually lead to more annual prescribed fire.

"If we don't have the ability to use prescribed fire in and around communities in specific areas, then the wildland fire they're going to learn to live with would be catastrophic," said Joe Stutler, a natural resource advisor for Deschutes County who supports the effort. "The issue is, 'How do you like your smoke?'"

There has been some opposition to relaxing air quality standards. The American Lung Association in Oregon says it can't support the proposal.

Lisa Arkin of the environmental health group Beyond Toxics isn't thrilled either. She thinks the rules are too broad.

"The agencies have failed to separate out prescribed burning as part of an ecological and fire prevention tool in fire landscapes as opposed to increasing the amount of smoke that's allowed from slash burning on corporate timber plantations," she said.

Slash is the bark and branches left behind and piled after a logging or thinning operation. According to the Oregon Department of Forestry, slash is often removed (through burning or other means) to reduce the risk of wildfire and/or prepare the site for replanting.

Both kinds of burning are considered prescribed burns under the state's Smoke Management Plan.

Even if the rule changes are approved, it may be a while before any substantive changes happen in wildfire season. Public comment on the proposed changes will be accepted through Sept. 14. Separate decisions by ODF and DEQ are expected over the next several months.

## Forest Service announces new Pacific Northwest regional forester

### Glenn Casamassa appointed to position

By George Plaven  
EO Media Group

The U.S. Forest Service has named a new regional forester for the Pacific Northwest covering Oregon and Washington.

Glenn Casamassa, a long-time Forest Service employee and former supervisor of the Arapaho and Roosevelt national forests and the Pawnee National Grassland in Colorado, will take over Sept. 17 at the Portland office. He suc-



Glenn Casamassa

ceeds Jim Pena, who retired July 3.

Casamassa is a 30-year veteran of the Forest Service. As the regional forester, he will oversee 16 national

forests, two national scenic areas, the Crooked River National Grassland in Oregon and two national volcanic monuments.

In a statement released by the Forest Service, Casamassa said he is committed to working with agency employees, tribes and local communities to share stewardship of public lands across the two states.

"Being good neighbors and setting a standard of excellence for public and customer service are priorities for the region in working alongside the people who care for, value, and depend upon these lands," Casamassa said.

Casamassa earned his bachelor's degree in forest ecology from Utah State University, and completed

post-graduate work in logging system engineering at the Oregon State University College of Forestry. He began his career as a forestry technician, working as a seasonal firefighter on the Tonto National Forest in Arizona.

Casamassa landed his first permanent job on the Tongass National Forest in Alaska, and from there went to work on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest in Utah. He has also served as district ranger of the Moab and Monticello ranger districts on the Manti-La Sal National Forest, and was the regional environmental coordinator for the Forest Service Intermountain Region, spanning portions of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Nevada.

Casamassa also worked as a legislative affairs specialist at the agency's Washington, D.C., headquarters. Forest Service Interim Chief Vicki Christiansen said Casamassa has played a leading role in reforming regulations at the national level, and brings with him "tremendous land management and conservation leadership experiences."

Jerome Rosa, executive director of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association, said he is looking forward to working with Casamassa to address outstanding issues — namely

livestock and grazing guidelines — in the final draft of the Blue Mountains Forest Plan Revision, which sets goals and desired conditions for 5.5 million acres in the Umatilla, Wallowa-Whitman and Malheur national forests in Eastern Oregon.

"We're really excited about the opportunity to work with him," Rosa said.

Dianne Guidry, who has served as the acting regional forester since Pena retired in July, will resume her role as deputy regional forester after Casamassa arrives.

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