From: feltys@olypen.com
To: Wildthing (DFW)
Date: Monday, February 16, 2015 6:08:00 PM
Attachments: Hunting comments.docx

Sent from Windows Mail

Dear, Wildlife Commission

I'm writing this letter to express my concerns in regards to the proposed 2015-2017 hunting seasons and hunting areas on the Olympic Peninsula. I am 43 years old and have lived in Port Angeles, WA my entire life. Hunting and fishing has been an important part of my life since I was a child. Like most young hunters I started out hunting elk and deer with a rifle. The older I got the more I realized that I wanted to take my hunting experiences to the next level so I began archery hunting. I can't begin to explain the incredible experiences I have had and the respect I have gained for the animals I have pursued since setting out on my first archery hunt.

After studying the 2015 -2017 proposed hunting information, I couldn't help but notice the drastic proposed changes in regards to the archery and muzzle loader elk hunting on the Olympic Peninsula. I did a comparison on the overall changes that have taken place over my 15 years of archery elk hunting on the Olympic Peninsula and the results seem a bit overwhelming.

15 years ago to present the early archery season on the Olympic Peninsula included GMUs # 601,602,603,612,615 and according to the proposed season we will be limited to GMUs 601 and 615. I was unable to acquire the actual acreage; however, after looking at the Game management unit map it appears that the archery hunters will be losing approximately 60% of their normal hunting areas on the Olympic Peninsula. In addition to this, we have also lost one day of hunting over the past 15 years. The two GMUs that you propose on keeping open for the archery hunters are separated by a 1 ½ hour drive and most of the good hunting areas in GMU 615 is now leased land through Rayonier.

In comparison, 15 years ago to present the muzzleloader season included GMUs # 602,603,607 and according to the 2015-2017 proposals they will have GMUs # 602,603,607,612 and 615. Again, by looking at the map it appears they will be gaining at least 50% more land all of which used to belong to the Archery hunters.

Over the years GMUs 612 and 615 have been popular archery GMUs and are next to each other which increase opportunities without driving great distances. After studying the past harvest reports for both archery and muzzleloaders, I cannot understand why the state would want to take so much hunting area away from the archery hunters and give it to the muzzle loader hunters. The archery hunters are by far the weakest link in the various forms of hunting and at the very minimum should be able to maintain their current hunting areas.

I feel that those hunters who are willing to dedicate so much time and effort into hunting animals with the most primitive form should be rewarded not punished. I do not understand how these proposed changes by our state could possibly benefit our game management program. I hope that this letter does not go unread. In addition I would greatly appreciate it if someone would respond to this so I could share it with my fellow archery hunters. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Steve Felton (wild ID # 2516-000-0613)