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Extensive Investigation by OSP Fish & Wildlife Troopers Leading to Multiple Convictions, Pending Adjudications in Central Oregon Illegal Guiding & Hunting Activities



July 16, 2014

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In perhaps one of the most extensive investigations involving troopers of the Oregon State Police (OSP) Fish & Wildlife Division, a Bend area man was recently sentenced after pleading guilty to multiple misdemeanor and felony charges related to illegal guiding and hunting activities in central Oregon. In total, 23 people have been charged for more than 200 counts/charges filed in Wheeler County and 15 additional charges were filed in Deschutes County. Ten of those individuals pled guilty or no contest; and cases are pending adjudication for 13 other people.

In October 2012, an OSP Fish & Wildlife trooper received an anonymous tip about alleged illegal guiding and hunting activities in Wheeler County. The initial tip only provided a first name of a suspect. As the investigation progressed, the trooper identified the primary suspect as ALAN ROY ARONSON, age 43, from Bend, who was alleged to be conducting illegal guided hunts, primarily for elk and buffalo, on another person's ranch property without the owner's consent.

During the investigation, OSP Fish & Wildlife troopers across the state were involved in a coordinated effort and interviewed over a hundred people. Information indicated ARONSON was performing guided fee hunts, to hunters on private lands, whether or not they had valid hunting licenses or tags. Between 2010 and 2012, hunters

accompanying ARONSON killed dozens of elk, including several large trophy elk that were shot and killed by persons without valid tags, and at least 9 buffalo from a neighboring ranch without the ranch owner's consent. Oregon State Marine Board records revealed that ARONSON was not a registered hunting guide in the State of Oregon during the time of the unlawful activities and was operating on land he did not own and therefore was illegally guiding hunters without an outfitter/guide registration.

Investigators also found evidence that a 6x7 bull elk was unlawfully shot and killed by his wife, EMILY ARONSON, age 34.

Search warrants were served at two different locations tied to the ARONSON's in Deschutes and Wheeler County. Subsequent to searching the properties, evidence seized included documents, a computer, untagged trophy elk and deer mounts, vehicles, a rifle, and three freshly skinned buffalo hides.

Both ALAN ARONSON and EMILY ARONSON were sentenced in Wheeler County Circuit Court on June 20, 2014. ALAN ARONSON pled guilty to three misdemeanor counts of failure to register as an outfitter and guide, and two felony counts of theft in the first degree. ALAN ARONSON was sentenced to 30 days in jail, a lifetime hunting license suspension and approximately \$66,050 in fines and restitution, in addition to forfeiture of property to include a 2005 Ford pick-up and two UTV's vehicles that were determined to be used in the illegal guiding operation. EMILY ARONSON pled no contest to one misdemeanor count of hunting wildlife without a valid tag, was sentenced to a three year hunting license suspension and ordered to pay fines and restitution of \$15,350 for the illegal taking of a 6x7 bull elk.

The global resolution for the 10 adjudicated persons to date, have resulted in the following cumulative sanctions:

- * 180 days in jail (all jail sentences suspended except for the 30 days levied against ALAN ARONSON)
- * 34 years in hunting license suspensions, plus the lifetime suspension for ALAN ARONSON
- * Over \$152,000 in fines, fees, restitution, and forfeitures
- * 140 hours of community service
- * 222 months of probation

"The case resolution was successful in part from the great efforts and investigative skills of the lead investigator and team members whom worked tirelessly on this extensive and complex case, along with assistance from other Fish and Wildlife troopers from across the state," said Captain Jeff Samuels, OSP Fish & Wildlife Division director.

OSP Fish & Wildlife Division was assisted in this investigation and prosecution by Wheeler County District Attorney's Office, Deschutes County District Attorney's Office, and Oregon Department of Justice.

Questions regarding this investigation and court matters should be directed to the Wheeler County District Attorney Daniel Ousley at (541) 763-4207.

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