

# Gardner Enterprises, Inc.

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Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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PLEASE READ

To whom it may concern:

My name is Tony Gardner; I am 58 years old and have been an avid big game hunter for all my life. We have always hunted deer in the murderers creek unit.

Over the last 5 years or so I have seen a huge decrease in the deer population, and yes even a big decrease in the canyon creek fire part of the murderers creek unit.

My son Garret drew a murderers creek buck tag this fall 2023. I went hunting with him for 7 days of the season. I have never seen anything like this before, there was so many people hunting the canyon creek fire that we couldn't get away from them. Everywhere we would try to go to get into a deep dark hole looking for mature bucks only there was already man tracks there. A lot of times before we would be able to out walk these people and find big bucks but this year there were less deer and more hearty folks hunting them.

After thinking about this a bunch I think there are only a couple of ideas I could think of to help out the problem.

First I think you need to cut the tags in the murderers creek unit down in the canyon creek fire portion. Right now you give out 800 and some odd tags for the 146 hunt, but the problem is that about 650 or more of them are hunting in the canyon creek fire in east murderers creek unit. They are doing this because there are very few deer in the other places in the unit that are out of the fire, so they are hunting where the deer are at, and you can't blame them for that as they have about five preference points invested in the hunt, so they want to hunt where there is some deer. Unfortunately the canyon creek fire is one of the only places where there is a group of deer.

So if you cut the tags down to about 250 tags in east murderers creek it would put a lot less pressure on the deer that are left in the burn.

I have went with my ~~own~~ tag or with someone else that had a deer tag in 146 in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and this year 2023. We always usually hunt in the east half of the unit 146 and a lot of times in the canyon creek fire. In these years we have seen the number of deer each year that we have went decrease by a bunch.

Another thing that may help is to put a 3 or 4 point minimum on the harvest. I think something else that is going on here now is that it takes people 5 points to get the tag and they all come with high hopes of getting that big buck. They all stay a lot longer into the season because they have so much time invested into the hunt (5 points). After a week then you start hearing a few more shots on the second weekend because people feel that with that many points to get the tag they are going to get some kind of buck before they go home. So many of the bucks killed in the later part of the season are spikes and forked horns.

I don't think it is too late for this unit to still be a great unit for real good buck hunting, but the time is now for some changes to keep it this way.

I am worried about the opportunities that my grandchildren may have at some great fun buck hunting in the future.

Sincerely,

Anthony J Gardner  
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Please call with any questions.