



# Greene Environmental Services

33180 Dorset Lane  
Philomath, Oregon, USA 97370-9555  
(541) 929-5745

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17 March 2013

Subject: **Vote NO on House Bill 3251 (SB12)**

Dear Representative Bailey, Chairman  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

I am a retired U.S. EPA Scientist. I have over 30 years of national and international professional experience including consulting, research, and teaching for industry and government regulatory agencies. I held a courtesy faculty appointment for 7-years at Oregon State University in the Department of Civil, Construction and Environmental Engineering. Four of the seven years were spent on campus as an Adjunct Professor working on environmental research projects in the Western Region Hazardous Substance Research Center, Ecotoxicology Laboratory.

I oppose House Bill 3251 and hope you will find my information compelling. I am here today as a concerned citizen. If passed this bill would cause the involvement of more government intervention in who can and can't use public lands and limit recreational activities in the State Forests.

The Department of State Lands (DSL) holds the responsibility to permit and enforce activities being addressed in this bill. Its passage would circumvent the Public review process required by the DSL. Why would the Legislature want to do that? Without public input on public lands, the Oregon citizen is being deprived of their rights

When Mr. Michael Burdick, Legislative Coordinator, Oregon State Treasury, was asked why Senate Bill 12 had been submitted (HR3251 had not been submitted when this request for information was made), he provided information relating only to the Chetco River and a request by the Chetco River Watershed Council (CRWC). The request was signed by then CRWC President Carl Page who is described as an extreme environmentalist that has lost the backing of many residents of Curry County and the main watershed council. Furthermore Mr. Page is not a resident of the State of Oregon.

David Grimes, a member of the CRWC stated in 2008, that, "He is proud to report the Chetco River is in good condition". "The water is flowing, the fish are swimming, the trees are growing, the deer are roaming, the birds are chirping, Businesses are producing, people are recreating and cities are expanding all in mutual harmony on the beautiful Chetco River watershed".

So, what happened in just a couple of years to change the positive outlook for the Chetco River?

The answer lies in the takeover of the CRWC by environmental extremists. The city councilors of Brookings would agree. In January 2013 "Brookings city councilors vehemently came out against a proposal presented by the CRWC to ban vehicular traffic and play in the popular river, a ban proposed by a "radical extremist group" would do nothing to enhance the scenic river".

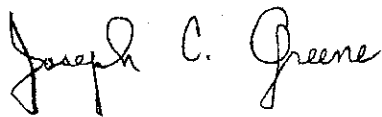
Earlier, in May of 2012 the South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council informed it could no longer support the CRWC because of bylaw violations, vendettas against landowners along rivers and general attitude toward the public.

There is no science supporting the claims that vehicular traffic crossing the river is damaging it. Vehicles have been traveling across this river for more than 50-years.

There is no science showing oil and other chemicals washed off vehicles harm the river any more than that of chemicals that wash off roads. The State Fish and Game Department has never investigated industry along the river because fish survivability has never been impacted.

This is an issue best left to the local residents of Curry County. Please vote no on House Bill 3251. Please make this letter and attached information a part of the public record.

Sincerely,



Joseph C. Greene  
Research Biologist, USEPA Retired

CC: Representative Deborah Boone, **Vice-Chair** [Rep.DeborahBoone@state.or.us](mailto:Rep.DeborahBoone@state.or.us)  
Representative Mark Johnson, **Vice-Chair** [Rep.MarkJohnson@state.or.us](mailto:Rep.MarkJohnson@state.or.us)  
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## Bullets for Testimony against HB3251

A. The Department of State Lands (DSL) holds the responsibility to permit and enforce activities being addressed in this bill.

1. Its passage would circumvent the Public review process required by the DSL. Why would the Legislature want to do that?
2. Without public input on public lands, the Oregon citizen is being deprived of their rights.
3. The DSL Chetco River Rulemaking Advisory Committee has been meeting and taking public comment through January 31, 2013. Why interfere with this process by passing HB3251?
4. What is a Chetco River issue has been made into a statewide issue to impact any waterways in the Common School Forest Lands or the Elloit State Forest Lands.

B. The Chetco River Watershed Council that brought forward this complaint has become a discredited extremist environmental organization.

1. May 2012 the South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council Withdrew support because of bylaw violations, vendettas against landowners along rivers and their general attitude toward the public.
2. In January 2013 "Brookings city councilors vehemently came out against a proposal presented by the CRWC to ban vehicular traffic and play in the popular river". They passed Brookings City Council Resolution 13-R-999 which *"opposes the proposed rule as an attempt to address an environmental degradation issue that is unproven, and unduly restricts Brookings residents who have used the Chetco River as a recreational and economic resource for decades"*.

C. There is no science supporting the claims that vehicular traffic crossing the Chetco is damaging the river.

1. Travel would be limited by water depth and water velocity. Those conditions would be expected to occur during the in-water-work-periods defined by the Oregon Department of Fish and Game to assist the public in minimizing potential impacts to important fish, wildlife and habitat resources.
2. Rogue Watershed District, WATERWAY PREFERRED WORK PERIOD for the Chetco River (above Tide Rock) is July 15 - September 30  
[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/inwater/Oregon\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Timing\\_of\\_%20InWater\\_Work2008.pdf](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/lands/inwater/Oregon_Guidelines_for_Timing_of_%20InWater_Work2008.pdf)
3. There is no science showing oil and other chemicals washed off vehicles harm the river any more than that of chemicals that wash off roads.
4. Vehicles have been traveling across this river for more than 50-years.
5. This is a protected right grandfathered in under the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) Public Law 94-579. Cross river travel will continue on Federal lands in the Chetco River Watershed.

D. There is a large commercial gravel mining activity in the Chetco River which operates, under permit, within the ORDFG preferred in water work period. Gravel mining in the Chetco River has been since the 1930s. And, the salmon continue to return.





# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of State Lands

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Salem, OR 97301-1279

(503) 986-5200

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## State Land Board

Regular Meeting  
December 13, 2011  
Agenda Item 4

State Land Board

John A. Kitzhaber, MD  
Governor

Kate Brown  
Secretary of State

Ted Wheeler  
State Treasurer

### SUBJECT

Request for consideration to initiate rulemaking in response to a request by the Chetco River Watershed Council.

### ISSUE

Whether the State Land Board should initiate rulemaking to impose additional restrictions on the public recreational use of state-owned land on the Chetco River.

### AUTHORITY

Oregon Constitution, Article VIII, Section 5; specifies that the State Land Board is responsible for managing Common School Fund lands.

ORS 273.041 to 273.071; authorizing the Department of State Lands to exercise the administrative functions of the State Land Board; relating to the general powers and duties of department and board.

OAR 141-088-0000; relating to the purpose and applicability of public recreational use of state-owned property.

OAR 141-088-0004; relating to restricting the use of state-owned lands that pose a significant risk of harm or damage to the natural resources of the land or to the public.

OAR 141-088-0050; relating to restrictions for the state-owned banks of the Chetco River.

## **SUMMARY**

The Department of State Lands received a request from the Chetco River Watershed Council on October 20, 2011, to impose restrictions on public recreational use of state-owned land on the Chetco River, citing activity that allegedly "poses a significant risk of harm and damage to the natural resources of the land and to the public."

Oregon Administrative Rule 141-088-0050 currently restricts all uses between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. throughout the year, and generally restricts open fires at any time beginning May 1 and ending November 1 of every year.

The Chetco River Watershed Council has proposed additional recreational use restrictions through the following proposed rule:

"(1) The driving in, across, or through, the wetted channel of the river by motorized vehicles for recreational purposes is prohibited. Excepted from the closure are government-owned vehicles on official business; motor or non-motorized boats; vehicles used in the launching of boats; public and private utility vehicles performing company business; vehicles operating in activities under permit; vehicles involved in rescue or emergency activities; and permitted vehicles engaged in repair of fences and placement of bank protection material."

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Department recommends the Land Board authorize the Department to initiate rulemaking to impose additional restrictions on the public recreational use of state-owned land on the Chetco River in order to better restrict activity that poses a significant risk of harm or damage to the natural resources of the land or to the public.

## **APPENDICIES**

- A. Chetco River Watershed Council communications
- B. OAR 141-088-0050

Chetco River  
Watershed Council

OCT 20 2011

EN 25 85103  
PO Box 882  
Brookings OR 97533

"Stewardship and Advocacy"

October 16, 2011

Louise Solliday  
Director  
Oregon Dept. of State Lands

RE: REQUEST FOR RESTRICTION ON PUBLIC RECREATIONAL USE OF  
CHETCO RIVER STATE LAND

Dear Ms. Solliday,

Pursuant to Oregon Administrative Rule 141 - 088 (2), the undersigned do hereby request that the Department of State Lands impose restrictions, as more particularly described in the attached Proposed Rule, on public recreational use of all state land under the jurisdiction of the Department of State Lands in the area known as the Chetco River in Curry County.

The restrictions are necessary because the objectionable activity, to wit, driving recreational vehicles, automobiles, and trucks in, across, and through the Chetco River, poses a significant risk of harm and damage to the natural resources of the land and to the public.

The Chetco River's water quality was found to be an ORV by the federal government, "based on its striking color and clarity, its ability to clear quickly following storm events, its contribution to both recreation and fisheries, and its contribution of exceptionally pure and clean water for the domestic water supplies of both Brookings and Harbor." (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/rogue-siskiyou/recreation/rivers>) The river can be adversely affected by small quantities of pollutants, in some cases a gallon or less can significantly impact aquifers. (Water Assessment Report, Harbor Water P.U.D., Harbor, Oregon PWS #4100150 - May, 2002, prepared by DHS and DEQ, Water Quality Division, Drinking Water Protection Program). In addition, there is a significant risk presented in the form of smaller amounts of dangerous and polluting chemicals and substances, including asbestos from brake linings, and copper. Driving vehicles through the river obviously poses a significant risk of harm and damage to the public. The land is heavily used by children and the rest of the public for swimming and other water related recreation, and the activity poses a great risk because the vehicles crossing have limited control, are moving at a relatively high speed for momentum, and are often operated by persons coming from activities where alcohol is consumed. See attached Exhibits 1 and 2 attached. [See attach photos of truck crossing, with little girl in foreground, and photo of truck stuck in river]

Carl Page



President

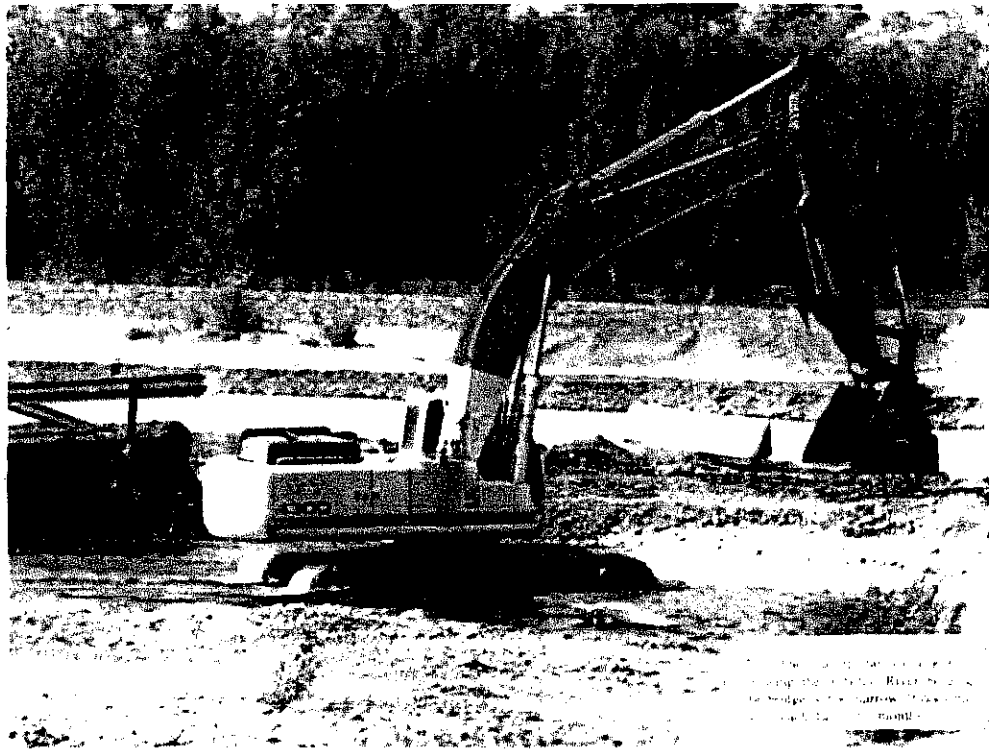
Chetco River Watershed Council







USFS Campers and RV's along Chetco at NWMPCC Claim



Gravel Mining in lower Chetco-leased land



# Chetco River Watershed Council

PHONE 531-33425  
PO Box 832  
Brookings OR 97513

## "Stewardship and Advocacy"

April 26, 2011

Dear Watershed Council Members,

Unquestionably every year the Chetco River suffers more "stressors" from human impacts. From short sighted and inconsequential housing developments in the lower floodplain to ever increasing water demands upon the river and riparian and aquatic habitat destruction, the CRWC is concerned with the rate of habitat destruction and responsible resource agency enforcement of State and Federal water quality laws. Curry County has now ranked Chetco River water quality as second to last behind Flores Creek.

Ever increasing water extraction from the river during late summer low-flow conditions, for the cities of Harbor and Brookings, further reduces water quality and increased water temperatures downstream. The capacity of crucial lower mainstem reaches and the estuary to support rearing fish is thus reduced. Cumulative impacts continue to reduce the ability of river ecological processes to heal itself. The CRWC cannot allow what were permissible practices in the last century, set the rivers future fate. Clearly we need a better vision for how to manage, conserve, and restore crucial habitats of the Chetco River.

Every year more salmon and steelhead spawning habitat in tributaries is lost to avoidable siltation. Water quality parameters including dissolved oxygen and pH are reduced while water temperatures increase to the detriment of rearing fish and prey species. Current fisheries science is beginning to understand the vital importance of lower tributaries as *thermal refugia* for rearing coho salmon which require colder water temperatures than other salmonids. Ongoing temperature monitoring shows that Joe Hall and Jack Creeks provide the coldest temperatures of any tributaries during summer months.

It is of specific concern that the spawning and rearing habitat for the remnant population of federally threatened coho salmon in the Chetco River and its continued decline. A screw trap in Jack Creek captured and recorded over 450 coho and well over 1000 chinook and steelhead out-migrants several years ago. Last year over a dozen returning coho adults were caught and released. The conservation of their habitat in the lower tributaries is critical for the survival and recovery of coho salmon in the Chetco River.

In the Federal Register Vol.64, No. 86/ Wednesday, May 5 1999 / Rules and Citation (50 CRF part 226) clearly requires something be done about the destruction & adverse modification of designated critical habitat for SONCC coho salmon, which is Federally protected pursuant to the statutes of the United States Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. Jack and Joe Hall Creeks are Federally protected Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), pursuant to the statutes of the U.S. Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation Act, managed under the Pacific Coast Fisheries Management Plan for Pacific Coast Salmon (coho and chinook).

The Scientific Literature\* out-migrant traps, ongoing temperature monitoring, and instream habitat survey indicates the critical importance these tributaries play in supporting coho salmon life history strategies in the Chetco watershed. Photo-documentation of fish habitats and overwhelming stressors they are being subjected to should prompt immediate State and Federal resource agency actions to protect these invaluable fishery resources. From unmaintained logging roads and off-channel gravel mines and storage above Joe Hall Creek to the cumulative effects from chemical pollution and siltation from Salmon Run golf course and Freeman Rock quarry siltation, coho are under threat from with inadequate ineffective erosion control measures. This water quality violations fall under jurisdictions of State and Federal resource agencies including DEQ, NOAA, ODFW and DOGAMI.

The watershed council voices our concerns over the lack of oversight and commitment to habitat conservation and restoration the Chetco River and Fishery. It is the life-blood of our sport fishery economy and significant portion of our local tourism dollars. It can also contribute to our local commercial fleet's success- meaning local jobs and healthy economy. To this end the watershed council wishes to reiterate its support for riparian and salmon habitat conservation and restoration opportunities such as easement and property purchase, as well as increased fisheries surveys.

We hope to coordinate with agencies dealing with actions that degrade Salmon habitat so that we may efficiently work together on riparian protection strategies for these two tributaries and the overall Chetco River watershed.

Sincerely,



Carl Page  
President  
Chetco River Watershed Council

\*The Fate of Coho Salmon Nomads: The Story of an Estuarine-Rearing Strategy Promoting Resilience <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/4/iss/art4/main.html>

**OAR 141-088-0050**

**Restrictions for the State-Owned Banks of the Chetco River**

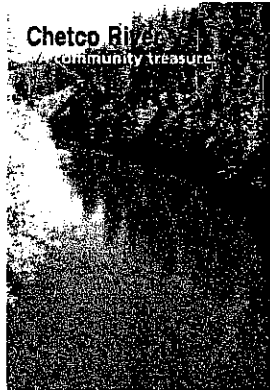
All state-owned land that is under the jurisdiction of the Department that is between the line of ordinary high water and the line of ordinary low water on the Chetco River from the Highway 101 Bridge to River Mile 11 (about one mile upstream from the mouth of Elk Creek) is closed to:

- (1) All uses between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. throughout the year, and
- (2) Open fires at any time beginning May 1 and ending November 1 of every year, unless a longer period is ordered by the Coos Forest Protective Association.



# STATE OF THE CHETCO REPORT

April 23, 2008 12:00 am



(Pilot file photo).

By Leah Weissman, Pilot staff writer

After six months of careful compiling, the Chetco River Watershed Council finally has the answers to all their questions concerning the Chetco River – and is making the information available to the public.

Titled the "State of the Chetco Report," this comprehensive, informational writeup involves all the "happenings" along the Chetco River watershed from logging to environmental testing and fishing. It is currently available at the Chetco Community Public Library for anyone interested in learning more about the health and quality of this important river.

David Grimes, a member of the Chetco River Watershed Council, spearheaded the project and, with the help of several council members, compiled information from 14 federal, state and local agencies conducting business along the Chetco River.

"Really, this report is just an example of what is going on along the Chetco," he said. "We mostly obtained data by talking to different agencies, such as South Coast Lumber, the South Coast Watershed Council, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)."

The report, which is 39 pages long and includes maps, graphs and its own appendix, is the Chetco River Watershed Council's first attempt at putting together a comprehensive look at the Chetco River – and is truly a collaborate effort between the council and other organizations.

After completing the State of the Chetco and presenting it to the council April 2, **Grimes said he's proud to report the Chetco River is in good condition.**

**"The water is flowing, the fish are swimming, the trees are growing, the deer are roaming, the birds are chirping, businesses are producing, people are recreating and cities are expanding all in mutual harmony on the beautiful Chetco River watershed,"**

## **Grimes wrote as an introduction to the State of the Chetco report.**

According to Grimes, the Chetco River Watershed is 352 square miles in size, and stretches 56 miles inland from the Southern Oregon coast all the way into the Kalmiopsis Wilderness area.

"It's big, and as the Chetco River Watershed Council, we want to make sure we protect it and learn all we can about it," he said.

Grimes first got the idea to put together the State of the Chetco report after asking a question of the council that no one could answer.

"I remember asking, 'Does anyone know that several individuals removed water from the Chetco River last month, and plan on removing more water next month?'" Grimes said. "And everyone panicked and, with a worried collective voice said, 'No, who?'"

He was actually referring to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) taking a gallon of water from the Chetco every month for water quality testing and long-term river monitoring.

"I used that as an example for why we needed to do an informative report that would bring everyone up to speed," he said. "Here we are, the watershed council, and we didn't know the answer to a question about the Chetco.

"And I realized there were so many other things we didn't know were going on in or near the Chetco – from derbies that help fundraise money to school field trips to the watershed," Grimes added.

By August 2007, Grimes had submitted an outline to the Chetco River Watershed Council on what the State of the Chetco report would cover, and created a committee of four watershed members to help him find sources and gather information.

"For some topics, I went to Web sites for information, other times I talked with people face-to-face. Usually I put together an outline from an agency's Web site, created a list of basic questions, and then went back and forth with the agency to get the information."

**Groups, businesses, and agencies that contributed to the State of the Chetco report include: Chetco Watershed Council, South Coast Watershed Council, Lower Rogue Watershed Council, city of Brookings, Friends of Cal-Ore Fish, Harbor Water People's Utility District, ODEQ, ODFW, Port of Brookings Harbor, Salmon Run golf course, Slam'n Salmon Ocean Derby, South Coast Fishermen, South Coast Lumber, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the United States Geological Survey.**

"It was a lot of work, but enjoyable because I was on a learning curve that started at zero," Grimes said. "When we explained this was an informational report and not an



interpretive report, companies and organizations were pretty open to our questions."

According to Grimes, a majority of the information gathered could be used by the city of Brookings for water conservation projections.

"Really, the information we got can be used by anyone," he said. "For instance, the information we learned about the Chetco's river flow is important for fishermen, river guides – even people who like to kayak down the river."

Topics in the report include:

- Chetco River watershed facts – including square mileage of the watershed area, elevation and land use near the watershed.
- Logging on the Chetco River watershed in 2007 by South Coast Lumber – including tree species logged, harvest methods and time of year logging occurs.
- Gravel mining in the Chetco River watershed during 2002 to 2007 by Tidewater, Freeman Rock and South Coast Lumber – including methods and impacts.
- Dredging in the Port of Brookings Harbor.
- Water supply, production usage, and future requirements in the Chetco River watershed.
- Chetco River streamflow information from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) streamflow gauging station – located along the North Bank Chetco River Road upstream from second bridge – and from the USGS Web site at [www.water.usgs.gov](http://www.water.usgs.gov).
- Chetco River watershed minimum and maximum temperatures in 2007 – provided by the South Coast and Lower Rogue Watershed Councils.
- Chetco River water quality monitoring program and results by the ODEQ.
- Chetco Check-Up volunteer program that annually cleans the banks of the Chetco River.
- Storm chaser program which monitors water quality in the Chetco during winter and heavy precipitation.
- Chetco River boat basin study by the South Coast Watershed Council on oxygen conditions and nutrient sources in local boat basins, Chetco River and its tributaries.
- Chetco River restoration projects by the South Coast Watershed Council on stream bank stabilization and tree planting on the Chetco River.
- Natural Resource Day in May for Kalmiopsis Elementary School third-graders to learn

about the Chetco River ecosystem.

- Statistics on the collection, rearing, release and return information of Chetco River fall Chinook and winter steelhead by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.
- Slam'n Salmon Ocean Derby figures on the amount of fish caught from 2003 to 2007 and how many people the festival attracts.
- Friends of Cal-Ore Fish's Fishing Derby figures on the amount of fish caught in 2007 and how many people the derby attracts.
- Salmon Run Golf Course facts.
- Future goals for the State of the Chetco report.

"Each one of these topics includes useful and new information that even people who have lived here forever may not know," Grimes said. "Knowledge is such an important tool – and **I hope this report will increase the knowledge of the council and the community.**"

With the first State of the Chetco report completed, Grimes said he hopes to update the report on an annual basis.

Future plans for the Chetco Watershed Council include looking at "best management" on urbanization, commercial fishing, sports fishing, timber harvesting, gravel mining, urban development and port management.

"Our challenge is to hand off our watershed to the next generation in as good or better condition than we found it," he said.

## City says no to ban on vehicles in Chetco

Written by Jane Stebbins, Pilot staff writer, January 29, 2013

<http://www.currypilot.com/News/Local-News/City-says-no-to-ban-on-vehicles-in-Chetco>

Brookings City councilors Monday vehemently came out against a proposal presented by the Chetco River Watershed Council to ban vehicular travel and play in the popular river, saying a ban, proposed by a "radical extremist group," would do nothing to enhance the scenic river.

"This group has proven itself to be a group of environmental extremists and done nothing but cost property owners by the river money in litigation," said Councilor Jake Pieper. "They have done nothing to better the river at all.

"Their sole purpose is to promote their extremist radical agenda, and does not adhere to any logic or reason," he added. "They're on par with the religious extremists who can't be reasoned with. They won't be happy until no one is using the river except the salmon that swim in it."

No one from the watershed council was in attendance at the city council meeting.

Watershed council president Tim Guzik said Tuesday he was baffled by the council's attitude.

"It's unfortunate they're not supportive of something as important as protecting the wild and scenic Chetco," he said. "We're doing our very best to protect the river for future generations."

The issue came to a head after the watershed council, which as of last May is no longer recognized or subsidized by the Curry County Watershed Council, asked the state Lands and Conservation Department to consider banning vehicular water play in the river. It cited pollution and protection of salmon habitat among its reasons for the proposal.

Scores of residents, however, disagreed, and came to a state Department of State Lands public hearing to express their disapproval. Most said they felt it was a land-grab, a violation of their rights and would lead to more restrictions on the Chetco.

The lands department is accepting comments until Thursday before it rules on the proposal.

The council was so opposed to the proposal, it opted not to send a letter, but instead pass a resolution that more strongly states their opinion.

"Because who's proposing it, I'm adamantly opposed to it," Pieper said. "I want to send a strong message that this doesn't fly here. We don't support them or their agenda."

"I'd love to know what our 'agenda' is," Guzik said. "I would love to understand why they're supporting the idea that it's OK to drive trucks up and down the river and through their water supply. I don't understand. I'd love to know why they think that's such a great idea."

Some in the audience cited local documents from 1901 and others from the United Nations in their quest to keep the river open.

"I oppose closing the river," said Lois Kirby of Brookings. "I have never used it; I probably never

will use it. But I know what this is the beginning of."

"It is a right protected by law," said resident Dianna Blazo. "This crossing is not hurting anybody. Because a very, very few people on a council don't like it, they want to stop it? I don't think that's right. It's everyone's river, and everyone's right to use it."

Councilor Brent Hodges agreed, saying he was opposed to it in every "way, shape and measure."

"I oppose any added restrictions than it already has," he said. "We have this rogue group acting on its own accord. I feel like we need to bend or compromise, and I don't feel the least bit inclined to do so. I don't see any good coming of this at all."

"I don't want to fight," Guzik said. "It's a small thing to ask people not to drive their trucks up and down this beautiful river and crush fish and little animals, dirty the water supply. I'm a dreamer, right?"

## Chetco River Watershed Council struggling to stay afloat

Written by Jane Stebbins, Pilot staff writer, January 04, 2013

<http://www.currypilot.com/News/Local-News/Chetco-River-Watershed-Council-struggling-to-stay-afloat>

The Chetco River Watershed Council is down to its last \$300 since the South Coast Coordinating Watershed Council (SCCWC) severed its relationship and ceased funding the Brookings-based council last May.

That could leave important studies in the Chetco River – including water-temperature monitoring critical to coho salmon, and that is in its fourth of five years – in limbo.

The Chetco River Watershed Council (CRWC) is trying to establish a baseline of information regarding water temperatures to help it obtain grant funds to restore salmon habitat – one of the watershed's primary goals.

Most recently, the council hosted a representative from the Oregon Dept. of State Lands to take public comment about the group's opposition to recreational vehicle travel in the Chetco River.

Other studies it would like to conduct include evaluating the health of aquatic insects, snorkeling tributaries to count fish, educating people about erosion and estuary pollution, continuing with clean-up operations on riverbanks and getting a say in future floodplain development.

"Again, it's about time and money," said Tim Guzik, chair of the CRWC. "It's important work."

They didn't get much funding before the SCCWC decided to withdraw its support. Most money came from the council's own fundraising efforts and, in the case of the temperature probes in the Chetco River, was contributed by Trout Unlimited.

SCCWC, based in Gold Beach, told the CRWC in May it could not longer support that group, citing bylaw violations, vendettas against landowners along rivers and general attitudes toward the public.

CRWC member Yvonne Maitland says the allegations are unfounded.

Yet, without the support of the SCCWC, the CRWC is now merely considered a group of citizens interested in the health of its watershed. A representative from the State Lands Board said they consider all comments equally, whether they originate from individuals or a council.

"We're still a watershed council," Maitland said. "We're just not being funded."

The SCCWC is funded by the Oregon Watershed Environmental Board (OWEB), which gets some of its funds from Oregon Lottery revenue. SCCWC, through the Soil and Conservation District, then allocates money, as it sees fit, to councils that address watershed issues in its region.

There are six regional watershed councils in the state and seven under the auspices of the SCCWC. There are 10 watersheds and five national Wild and Scenic rivers in the SCCWC region.

Some CRWC members plan to attend next month's OWEB meeting to figure exactly how they

will be affected now that their council is no longer supported by SCCWC. Theoretically, duties of the Chetco council would fall to SCCWC. But that has yet to be seen, Maitland said.

"We have had so little money for the Chetco," she said. "There's no management plan – we have no money for the river. It's very egregious, it's very unjust."

Regardless, CRWC members insist they will do what they can for the river, and spent time at a meeting earlier this week discussing short- and long-term goals.

"We have to think about what we can do, and get the biggest bang for our buck," Guzik said. "Our projects might be relatively small, but they could have a great impact."

A little education could go a long way, they agreed Wednesday.

One suggestion at the meeting was to educate residents of low-lying river properties about the effect their septic tanks have on water quality when the river rises and floods their land, as it did at the end of November.

Septic systems can fill with flood water and release their contents into the river. If they were drained in the fall, before potential high water incidents, their effect could be greatly reduced, said member Carl Page.

The council also discussed three landslides that occurred in Tuttle Creek after the last heavy rainstorms and the effects of that soil in the estuary below.

"We don't even have the money to buy materials to help landowners that are losing properties to soil erosion," Guzik said. "It'd be nice to do little projects like that."

They don't plan to quit, even if they aren't allowed back under the umbrella of the SCCWC.

"I'm not sure how we're going to go forward," Guzik said. "But even if we don't get funding, these are people who genuinely care about the river. We'll try to stay as positive as we can. I just want us to do good things and do our best to look out for the river."

"We are trying to do our best for the river," Maitland said. "That's our only objective."

