



By Electronic Mail this 11th day of April, 2013
Attention: The Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Natural Resources

To the Honorable Co-Chair Senator Chris Edwards & the Honorable Co-Chair Representative Ben Unger,

It is an honor to present testimony on behalf of the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife budget to you and the committee today.

My name is Cam Parry and I am a resident of Charleston, Oregon. For the past 30 years, from my efforts as a volunteer and professional (Bio-Engineering Associates & Parry Associates), to work as a writer and editor...to my time as county commissioner; I have been deeply involved in restoration, protection, and advocacy on behalf of salmon and steelhead. I was honored to receive NOAA's Environmental Hero Award for my work restoring Wild Coho runs, and each week I host the Oregon Outdoors Radio Show on Bi-Coastal Media with my dear friends Mike Cook and Dan Barnett.

The first time I cast a fly over the sparkling waters of the North Umpqua and watched it drift towards a magnificent summer steelhead lying in the deep shadow of a boulder, I was 11 years old...and I knew at that exact moment I was in heaven. They hadn't mentioned the Umpqua (or fly fishing) in our Sunday school bible stories, but I was positive that was simply an over-zealous editor's omission.

It's been almost 45 years now, and each day since that magical trip I've fallen more in love with our magnificent Oregon rivers, from the blue-green Chetco to the silver ribboned rapids of the Deschutes. The wonderful news is...I'm not the only one. There are millions of folks just like me. From my small home town on the coast to major European cities (and territories in lands we can't begin to pronounce). If they cast a fly here, or simply walk our riverbanks and see an eagle or an otter...their heart will be in our keeping for the rest of their lives. From the smallest child in our largest city to our tribal brothers and sisters across the state, these rivers and fish have a spiritual value that cannot be replicated.

This is the part of Oregon that speaks to our souls. It's the reason all of us love this special place so deeply and the reason so many wish they could call our state home. It's also the part of Oregon we have largely entrusted to the dedicated men and women of the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. Like you, their hours never stop when a hearing is over and their work days never neatly fit into a 9 to 5 box. You have dedicated your lives to public service for the people of Oregon because you love this work and you truly care about people. They have dedicated themselves to the enhancement and preservation of our most precious natural resources for the same reasons.

The most wonderful thing about all of this...is the spectacular fish and wildlife resources ODFW works to preserve and protect do not solely represent the best of who we are and how others view us as a state. These resources represent a vastly important bedrock for Oregon's economy. Just as salmon carry the mineral wealth of the ocean back to our rivers, they also carry critically needed dollars to our communities. Through good times and bad, our wildlife resources have provided strong and consistent economic returns to the people of Oregon...sometimes when we have had little else to rely on, especially rural Oregon. Strong fishing and hunting seasons mean busy harbors and launches, full hotels, restaurants

and campgrounds, even lines at our gas stations...and so much more. Strong sporting and commercial seasons are also often the difference between many of our families having work...or not, or eating regularly...or not. The work these seasons produce is good work...hard, but meaningful work, and people are proud of it.

It's also not small dollars to our state and its' almost 4 million residents that these seasons produce. According to a 2009 study by ECONorthwest, the Rogue River alone produces \$1.5 billion dollars of economic benefit annually (*that's \$1.5 billion, not million*) from the entirety of its' salmon and steelhead runs. Can you imagine the total annual economic benefit for Oregon when you add the Columbia, Willamette, McKenzie, Coos, and all of our other river systems and streams? This is the value the men and women of ODFW are charged with preserving, protecting and enhancing on behalf of the people of Oregon (and keep in mind we have not even touched on the economic values of our hunting seasons and the annual state tourism created through wildlife viewing). Now it seems the things we once thought only spoke strongly to our hearts, additionally represent one of our state's best economic streams. That certainly presents a critical priority when it comes to budgeting, and probably a much different view of what ODFW's work means to us as a state.

This agency provides an amazing balancing act of preserving and protecting, coupled with providing a wide variety of species for harvest. At the same time they juggle the effects of urbanization and a rapidly changing world, while navigating a regulatory maze of dizzying proportions. Yet each year their management, innovation, and sciences produce a dazzling economic benefit for the people of Oregon.

So let's truly change our game this budget session. Other cities, counties and states are running scared economically. They won't take the time to see where their strongest economic value and jobs creation lies. They will impose across the board cuts that in-turn cripple their government's best economic producers and hasten their demise. Since the days of Tom McCall, Oregon has been known as a maverick and a leader...for thinking outside the box and not following the sheep herder. Let's build on that reputation by saying; instead of cutting, we will invest...and we will invest in what is most important to this state and our people. Let's show everyone the magnificent resources entrusted to ODFW are the most dynamic part of Oregon's economic investment portfolio.

Once we have drawn that line, let's tell our nation and the world...loudly and clearly...Oregon's money is behind our salmon and steelhead, our elk and bear, our rivers and streams. We're investing in our greatest resources and preserving a spectacular legacy, creating immediate economic dividends that will pay for generations. If we do this, more people will come to see the heart of Oregon, and businesses will come to invest. Because no one else has what speaks to *our souls*...and that, in-turn, will rebuild our economy...creating new jobs and opportunities across the state.

Thank you so much for your time, and your relentless commitment to Oregon. I know if a one-time small town newspaper editor could convince a beautiful girl (far out of his league) to get married... and then spend her entire honeymoon fly fishing across Oregon...*we can do this*.

All the best,

Cam Parry