



Established 1960

Association of Northwest Steelheaders

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Statement to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee in support of SB 838

From Bob Oleson of ANWS, April 15, 2013

The Association of Northwest Steelheaders has long favored strong regulation (and the elimination of destructive practices) for mining activities occurring in and around our waterways. This bill represents a good response to the serious problems associated with the increasing levels of suction dredge mining. It will produce needed protection for fish and habitat in many of our state's valuable watersheds. Thank you for giving your attention to this bill and this important issue.

Association of Northwest Steelheaders
Suction Dredge Mining Ban Resolution

Approved Nov. 20, 2010

The Association of Northwest Steelheaders (ANWS) and its chapters have been involved in the restoration and protection of in stream habitat for most of the organization's existence. There is a growing concern, based on research to date, with the adverse effects suction dredge mining (particularly large scale operations) has on salmon, steelhead, and trout habitat. There is currently no provision for mitigation of those effects.

WHEREAS, Suction Dredge Mining is a process of pumping stream bed materials into a material separation process and in so doing disrupts the natural fluvial geomorphology that native fish depend on for spawning and rearing within the stream, and

WHEREAS, The Association of Northwest Steelheaders is dedicated to protecting and enhancing fish habitat, and

WHEREAS, gravel structure needed for spawning is disrupted by suction dredging, becoming unstable and more vulnerable to scouring flows, and

WHEREAS, suction dredging causes buried silt to be discharged and re-deposited during low water periods when sediment input is normally low, and

WHEREAS, sediment deposition fills in the spaces between stone and gravel elements, decreasing available sheltering habitat and disrupting delivery of clean, oxygenated water to eggs and alevins, as well as other organisms forming part of the food base, and

WHEREAS, bank erosion typical and common to suction dredge mining activity is harmful to riparian habitat, and.

WHEREAS, There is no mitigation for the adverse effects of suction dredge mining being enforced upon the dredge mining operations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Association of Northwest Steelheaders will support a ban on unmitigated suction dredge mining.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Northwest Steelheaders will work to require a biological study of the effects on fish habitat of this activity within the specific reach of the stream involved before any such activity would be allowed, and enforcement of habitat protection and prevention of habitat loss to ensure no net loss of stream productivity.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Northwest Steelheaders will work with the Oregon and federal elected officials and agencies to enact such a ban.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Northwest Steelheaders will help to educate the public as to the effects of suction dredge mining on fish habitat...

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association of Northwest Steelheaders will work with other organizations that share these goals.