

78th Oregon Legislative Assembly
Oregon House of Representatives
Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

March 10, 2015

Oregon Outdoor Council
Testimony - HB 2053
Trophy Trout Lakes

When I was growing up at the Leaburg Trout Hatchery on the McKenzie River, I fished for trout most every summer vacation morning below Leaburg Dam. I was an outside kid. I was more at home casting for trout in the river's riffles and pools than anywhere else. My Mom used to say I was obsessed with fishing, hunting and trapping.

The night before opening day of "trout season" was to say the least, quite restless. I was too excited to sleep and was awake most of the night thinking about catching my limit of big trout. I was out of bed and dressed in my smelly fishing garb hours before dawn. At daylight, Mom finally got tired of me asking if it was light enough to go yet, and with my Mitchell 300 and Eagle Claw spinning rod, a coffee can of squiggly night crawlers (caught with the aid of a flashlight in the backyard a few rainy nights before), she shooed me off to the river. The McKenzie was my classroom and the lessons I learned on the Princess of Oregon's rivers laid the foundation for very successful and rewarding careers in conservation law enforcement and guiding whitewater boating and fishing trips. It has been said, and I have found it to be quite true, that fishing teaches life and natural history lessons that only can be learned while fishing!

Mom was correct, I was obsessed back then and I am just as obsessed today. **Fishing is Fun!**

My memories of thousands of youthful and adult days spent on the McKenzie are filled with hundreds of days of fishing on what I considered back then and still do today, a "Blue Ribbon or Trophy Trout" stream. I realize that HB 2053 is not a trophy trout stream bill, but I would like the committee to think about expanding its scope to include designated trophy trout streams near the backyards of thousands of urban and rural kids.

Sadly, in today's modern world, outdoors kids are becoming very rare and in most urban communities, if outdoors kids were classified as an animal species, they would most assuredly be listed as endangered. Kids today just don't have the angling opportunities we had during our youth. This is a sign of changing times according to those who don't understand largely because they have not experienced the excitement of being a youngster armed with a fishing pole, a worm on the hook and the tug of a fish! **We can change this very disturbing trend if we care enough about our kids, our families and conservation. HB 2053 - The Trophy Trout Bill is a "cast" in the right direction.** Kids need to catch fish to have fun and HB2053 has the ability to have kids catch Trophy Trout or dream about the big one that got away.

Let's look for a few moments at the importance of fishing in Oregon:

- 638,000 Anglers spent 5,658,000 days fishing in 2011
- **There were 71,000 Oregon anglers 6 to 15 years old**
- Anglers spent \$640,855,000 on fishing related expenses
- Oregon sportsmen and women spend \$2.5 million per day
- Anglers support 11,043 Oregon jobs
- Oregon sportsmen and women pay \$515 million in wages
- Oregon sportsmen and women had a ripple effect on Oregon's economy to the tune of \$1.6 billion in 2011

(2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation - Oregon, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Census Bureau)

As you can see, angling is a powerful economic engine that has the ability to provide a much needed economic and social stimulus to many rural Oregon communities struggling to recover from the latest economic downturn.

HB 2503, a pilot program for trophy trout in four standing waterbodies in Oregon can reconnect kids and their families through a modest \$1.00 angling license surcharge with the 42,000 year old tradition of catching fish with a hook. **Fishing is Fun** and the memories are **Priceless!**

Keep in mind, that these are not uncharted waters so to speak, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Utah, Wisconsin and Colorado have all established some form of Blue Ribbon or trophy trout programs.

The Oregon Outdoor Council respectfully requests that you consider placing Oregon on the list of states who embrace our heritage sports by passing HB 2503 and thereby enhancing the angling opportunities for all Oregonians, young and old, and our visitors.

To borrow a phrase from a well-known angling retail chain who has recently opened two stores in Oregon, "It's In Your Nature." By working together, we can cause many restless nights for generations of young anglers lying sleepless while thinking of the next "Big One."

Fishing is Fun,

Stan Steele, Chairman
Oregon Outdoor Council