



May 29, 2015

"NO" ON HB 3217

Chair Clem and Committee members-

My name is Tom Wolf and I am here representing the Oregon Council Trout Unlimited with 2800 members in the state. I am here today to voice Trout Unlimited's opposition to HB 3217.

1. Although the purposes of HB 3217 to restore stream conditions are commendable, the actual proposal for artificial beaver dams may be counterproductive to the purposes of the bill.
2. Artificial beaver dams are not likely to mimic all the desired functions of actual beaver dams. In particular-
  - a. Natural beaver dams allow fish passage for trout and other fish species to go upstream from the dam. The artificial dams will actually impede fish passage at least at certain water levels.
  - b. The woody material which comprises real beaver dams is an important food base for aquatic insects, which are important food for fish. Artificial dams are not made of materials which insects can feed on.
3. Hydro-logically, artificial beaver dams are not likely to closely mimic beaver dams under the varying flows that these structures are exposed to. Natural beaver dams often erode away under high flows, which is important for the ecosystems of streams.
4. There are many added benefits to actually having beavers. For example, beavers naturally maintain their dams. Beavers are also likely to be better at proper placement of their dams. Trout Unlimited doubts that we have adequate knowledge to know precisely to build the artificial dams to actually mimic natural beaver dams.

Instead of just putting in an artificial "fix", we need to look at ways to improve the habitat in a natural way. We need to look at reintroducing beavers which will be able to build beaver dams in the way that adds to the ecosystem. Artificial dams don't mimic the important contributions that beaver dams make, either in providing food for insects, allowing passage, allowing flow and allowing the creating of natural riparian habitat.

The importance of beavers on the natural ecosystem are vastly undervalued. They provide great values that cannot be replaced by artificial structures. I have included papers that show the importance of beavers in history for the natural ecosystems.

So while HB 3217 motives are very well meaning, it is not the best thing to do for the ecosystem. It is better to work with ODFW to reestablish beaver populations in the watersheds. So Trout Unlimited urges the committee to not pass this bill, as it will not provide for the natural ecosystem in the way which beaver dams can.

Sincerely,

Tom Wolf,

Executive Director

Oregon Council Trout Unlimited