



NATIVE FISH SOCIETY

Advancing the Recovery of Native, Wild Fish in Their Homewaters

January 12, 2015

Governor John Kitzhaber
254 State Capitol
900 Court St. N. E.
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

The Native Fish Society takes this opportunity to provide our perspective on the selection of two new members to the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission to fill the vacancies in the first and second congressional district positions. We hope our comments are helpful to you and your staff in the selection of qualified people who can help you to accomplish your future vision for the agency.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is in a critical period in its evolution from being primarily focused on allocating wildlife resources to the various consumptive interests to one more focused on the long-term protection and conservation of our valuable native wildlife. With the appointment of a new director on the horizon, along with filling the two vacancies on the commission, you have a unique opportunity to reshape the agency into one of the premier wildlife conservation agencies in the West.

Our recommended selection criteria for appointing members of the commission include:

- * Understands that the agency's overriding obligation is to prevent the serious depletion of native species so that public resources are protected and provide optimum benefits to future generations.

- * Will represent the public interest of the state and make decisions affecting wildlife resources for the benefit of those resources.

- * Is open minded and seeks the best conservation outcome from commission decisions while providing for the sustainable utilization of fish and wildlife.

- * Will provide a fair hearing of issues, listens to public concerns and makes decisions based upon facts rather than personal preferences and opinions.

- * Is interested in having a dialogue with agency staff on issues and is committed to promoting factual science based decision making by the commission.

* Is interested in discussing management issues with field staff and visiting with them to learn about their concerns and solutions to problems.

* Is interested in the job performance of the director and executive staff so that the agency accomplishes its mission by adhering to the statutes and rules that direct its operation.

Based upon these criteria, the Native Fish Society supports Jason Atkinson of Jacksonville to fill the vacancy in the second congressional district. We believe that Mr. Atkinson has the knowledge, experience, abilities and desire to serve the state well on the Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Based upon those same criteria, we have determined that none of the current candidates that we are aware of for the first congressional district position have the necessary qualifications for the job. That's not to say that these people don't have many admirable qualities, but to us, most would have a difficult time separating their past positions from their future decision making on the commission, setting up ongoing conflicts of interest. We suggest that you continue your search to fill this position until you find someone that can represent the broad public interest of the citizens of Oregon and make decisions based upon what's good for the wildlife resources of the state and not what might benefit any particular user group.

Sincerely,

Bill M. Bakke
Founder, Director of Science and Conservation