



March 15,2017

Trout Unlimited testimony on Columbia Gorge Commission budget

Co-Chairs Frederick and Witt, Committee members-

My name is Tom Wolf, here today representing Trout Unlimited, the largest cold water conservation group in the country. Our members are passionate about protecting the watersheds that native wild trout, salmon and steelhead dwell in. Without clean, cold and healthy streams, along with good riparian areas, our native salmonids of Oregon would not be able to survive.

That is why Trout Unlimited is supporting the 2017-19 budget of the Columbia River Gorge Commission. The Columbia River, home to millions of wild native fish, has serious temperature issues, especially above the dams during the summer. This is due to the impacts of climate change and of the dams that cover the river. The river gets above 70 degree Fahrenheit at times, with have a tremendous negative impact of salmon returning to spawn. Within the CR Gorge there exists many cold spring fed creeks which feed into the Columbia and provide thermal refuges for the returning salmon. This is very important habitat for salmon because it provides a place to rest and recover as they are embarking on their long journey to their spawning grounds. Without the cold water provided by CR Gorge streams , many salmon would perish.

This is why proper funding for the Columbia River Gorge Commission is so important. This agency provides an overall manage plan for protecting these streams. It can help make sure development doesn't overwhelm these streams and that agencies are coordinating in protecting and restoring these streams. The Columbia River Gorge Commission is not directly charged with protecting those streams but due to their overall mission and their goal of protecting the Columbia River Gorge area, protecting these cold-water refuges is an implied result.

Therefore, Trout Unlimited urges that the Columbia River Gorge Commission get their requested 2017-19 budget approved so that they can continue to pursue their mission that protects one of the most impressive areas in the United States-and the largest salmon run in the continental United States.

