

From: Stosh Thompson
To: [SENR Exhibits](#); [Sen Dembrow](#); Rep.GeneWhisnant@oregonlegislature.com
Subject: Fwd: Please support HB 2027-A
Date: Saturday, May 06, 2017 4:32:56 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Stosh Thompson** <stoshthompson@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 1, 2017 at 1:13 PM
Subject: Fwd: Please support HB 2027-A
To: Rep.GeneWhisnant@oregonlegislature.gov, Tim & Kristen Phillips
<tphillips@phillipsandco.com>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Stosh Thompson** <stoshthompson@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, May 1, 2017 at 12:58 PM
Subject: Please support HB 2027-A
To: Sen.MichaelDembrow@oregonlegislature.gov, Sen.AlanOlsen@oregonlegislature.gov,
Sen.DennisLinthicum@oregonlegislature.gov, Sen.ArnieRoblan@oregonlegislature.gov
Cc: Rep.GeneWhisnant@oregonlegislature.com

"Chair Dembrow and Members of the Senate Environment & Natural Resources Committee"

I am the owner/manager of the 45-acre Helen M. Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary on the Upper Deschutes River, which includes almost a mile of the river below the site desired by the Bend Parks and Recreation Department for a high use pedestrian/bicycle bridge. To that end Parks is trying to get a change in the State Scenic Waterway rules which currently bans bridges in this area.

Bend Parks just hosted three open public meetings on the southwest and southeast sides of Bend to address the issue of changing the rules on Scenic Waterways. The public opinion voiced in those meetings which I attended, was almost two to one against changing the rules. The local Bend Bulletin, whose editor lives in one of the only neighborhoods that would be served by the bridge, has tried to cast the issue in terms of private landowners vs. public recreational interests. That is incorrect. Those opposed to a rule change permitting a bridge expressed many concerns. Among them were impacts on riparian wildlife habitat, damage to rare plants, interference in wildlife movements - especially wintering deer and elk, deterioration of an area already denuded by overuse on the west bank, conflict with users of the leash free dog trail, exceeding maximum trail counts, impacts to an important trout fishery, threats to cultural resources, and hazards to an increase in floaters from dangerous rapids downstream. Many residents of Deschutes River Woods, where the bridge would go, had concerns about traffic, noise, trespassing and illegal parking by those wanting to take a shortcut to the bridge.

The Bend Bulletin claimed Rep.Gene Whisnant showed "contempt for anyone wanting to see the Deschutes River Trail completed from Tumalo to Sunriver" by sponsoring HB 2017-A. That is wrong. There is no gap in the Deschutes River Trail from Bend to Sunriver. In a follow-up article after the Bill passed in the House 54-0, The Bulletin observed that "walkers and cyclists can currently go from Bend to Sunriver by using the Haul Road trail." That is correct. This trail is described in a Bulletin article as "great for people that live on the west side but does nothing for people on the east side." That is not accurate. The vast majority of people in east Bend can access the trail directly through The Mill District much easier than they

could by going backwards south and west down rustic Buck Canyon Road where the proposed bridge would go.

There are at least 50 miles of trail next to the river between Tumalo and Sunriver. We are lucky in Deschutes County to have this bonanza of public river access. Not every mile of river should have a trail on it or heavy foot and pet traffic, so that wildlife habitat, riparian vegetation and other uses can be given priority - at least somewhere. Bridges have huge impacts on the river, as recognized by the original authors of the State Scenic Waterway rules. A rule change would open up all State Scenic Waterways in Oregon for the same loosening of environmental protections. Those protections should be left in place, as intended by House Bill 2027-A.

Please support HB 2027-A. This bill would simply elevate an existing ban on a bridge in the State Scenic Waterway on the Upper Deschutes River to a statute. Your vote will place the legislative body firmly in charge of long standing environmental policy.

If you would like any further information on the unique wildlife and riparian habitat of the Sanctuary, or any photos, statistics or data on the plant and animal life here, I would be happy to provide that.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

Stephen E. Thompson, PhD (Zoology and Wildlife Management)
Director, Helen M. Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary