

Enrolled
House Concurrent Resolution 14

Sponsored by Representative MCKEOWN, Senator ROBLAN; Representatives BOONE, GOMBERG, SMITH DB (Presession filed.)

Whereas by the age of 15, Tom Rumreich knew he wanted to be a fish biologist and make a positive contribution to Oregon fisheries; and

Whereas five days after graduating from Oregon State University with a degree in fisheries science, Tom Rumreich was hired by the State Department of Fish and Wildlife; and

Whereas when the Legislative Assembly passed legislation in 1981 that created the department's Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP), Tom Rumreich was ready to step on board; and

Whereas the goals of STEP—to rehabilitate and improve natural habitat and native fish stocks, to ensure that the harvest does not exceed the fish population's reproductive capability, to provide for volunteer participation in achieving the state's fish management objectives and to support public educational programs related to fisheries—are goals that Tom Rumreich enthusiastically adopted as his own; and

Whereas as a STEP biologist for the Tenmile, Coos and Coquille district, Tom Rumreich put his vision and energy to work to partner with the community and other stakeholders in developing and carrying out a multitude of projects that include stream and bank restoration, tree planting, hatchery construction and creation of educational programs that also serve as volunteer opportunities, in addition to hatching millions of salmon and trout eggs and raising the fry; and

Whereas Tom Rumreich has been instrumental in the construction of the Millicoma Interpretive Center, hatcheries on Morgan Creek and Noble Creek and capture and release sites at local elementary and high schools; and

Whereas the part of Tom Rumreich's job that he enjoyed the most, and that he is best known for by many in the community, remains the educational programs that include instruction in the salmonid life cycle, hands-on fish wrangling and field trips that draw students from as far away as Medford, with 5,000 elementary to high school students involved each year; and

Whereas over the years, Tom Rumreich has taught so many classrooms of children the knowledge and skills to participate in fisheries work, such as egg harvesting, habitat restoration and the fin clipping used to distinguish hatchery fish from wild ones, that he was awarded recognition for "touching the minds of over 100,000 kids"; and

Whereas Tom Rumreich believes in involving the whole community in fisheries resources and understands that children can not only learn through the program but also be hands-on volunteers that make a difference, saying, "You provide for them the opportunity to become stewards of that resource at all different levels—it's all about that ownership and that stewardship—and those are some of the true dividends of being able to really get people involved on a large scale"; and

Whereas one of Tom Rumreich's most treasured moments was when he overheard a high school student tell another that the day of the hatchery field trip was one of the greatest days he had ever had; and

Whereas in addition to the inestimable educational value imparted by STEP, Tom Rumreich has, through the program, helped bring the Coos Bay area a positive local economic impact valued in the millions of dollars annually, with everyone from boat dealerships to restaurants benefiting from the improved fishery; and

Whereas in 1982 only 200 or so Chinook salmon were harvested in the Coos Bay estuary, in 2011 an estimated 11,000 Chinook were harvested, and STEP has been credited with 81 percent of that increase; and

Whereas 2.3 million fall Chinook salmon were released in the Coos River in 2016, of which two million were raised with the assistance of 3,000 STEP volunteers under the guidance of Tom Rumreich; and

Whereas in August 2016, Tom Rumreich retired after 37 years with the department, most of which were dedicated to improving Oregon fisheries through STEP; and

Whereas the naming of Rumreich Hatchery on Morgan Creek in his honor is a fitting tribute to the years of energy, creativity, hard work and expertise that Tom Rumreich has given to this state; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:

That we, the members of the Seventy-ninth Legislative Assembly, commend Tom Rumreich for his years of service with the State Department of Fish and Wildlife and his extensive contributions to his community and the salmon and trout fisheries of Oregon.

Adopted by House March 21, 2017

Timothy G. Sekerak, Chief Clerk of House

Tina Kotek, Speaker of House

Adopted by Senate April 12, 2017

Peter Courtney, President of Senate