



Memorandum

To: Honorable Senator Fred Girod, Sub-Committee Co-Chair
Honorable Representative Paul Holvey, Sub-Committee Co-Chair
Cc: Honorable Senator Floyd Prozanski
Fr: David A. Moskowitz, Executive Director
Bill M. Bakke, Director of Science and Conservation
Dt: February 28, 2018
Re: State funding for Operations at Leaburg Hatchery

The purpose of this memorandum is to raise important issues not being considered adequately by the Oregon Legislature regarding short-term funding for the US Army Corps of Engineer's Leaburg Hatchery.

The McKenzie River is home to the most viable and largest population of wild spring Chinook in the upper Willamette, though that population is protected as a threatened species through the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The McKenzie River is also home to a very robust wild trout population and includes wild cutthroat trout as well.

The proposal to continue operations at the Corps of Engineer's Leaburg Hatchery raises multiple issues that have not been discussed or addressed by the Legislature or by ODFW or its Commission.

These issues include, but are not likely limited to:

1. Have state and federal agencies evaluated the predation from hatchery trout and non-native summer steelhead on ESA-listed wild and hatchery spring chinook juveniles?
2. Will trout still be produced at this facility for release into the McKenzie River and if so, how will that affect native resident rainbow trout?
3. Will spring Chinook continue to be produced here and released into the McKenzie and how will that effect ESA-listed spring Chinook?
4. Will non-native summer steelhead still be produced and released into Willamette valley streams and how will that effect ESA-listed wild winter steelhead in the Willamette basin?
5. How does this proposed expenditure of state funds (either GF, OF (ODFW license-dollars) or possibly Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) dollars) fit into existing high-need ODFW priorities?
6. How can the ODFW backgrounder describe Leaburg as a high value facility and in good condition, and then make note of extensive repairs needed at Leaburg to keep it operational?

7. The Leaburg hatchery has known disease issues so how can Oregon support the continued release of chemicals, including formalin, into the McKenzie, one of Oregon's most pristine rivers
8. Is ODFW fulfilling its current obligations in the Willamette Basin such as:
 - a. finishing securing instream water right application approvals,
 - b. reviewing water withdrawal permit applications being considered by the Water Resources Department (WRD),
 - c. meaningfully addressing existing fish passage barriers in the Willamette Basin and tributaries which block wild winter steelhead or wild spring chinook?
 - d. completing annual spawning surveys for ESA-listed winter steelhead or spring chinook in order to determine if these species are meeting river-specific escapement goals?
 - e. participating meaningfully in efforts to modify fish passage at major federal dams to improve wild spring chinook and wild winter steelhead and address conflicts with hatchery trout fisheries upstream of these dams?
9. ODFW has recently rung the alarm bells on the impact of marine mammal predation at Willamette Falls. Has ODFW done everything it can to improve passage at the existing fishway for wild winter steelhead and wild spring Chinook and specifically reduce the predation impacts?
10. Has the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission approved or recommended that ODFW support this funding request to the Legislature?

Our Position

- Adequately addressing the above questions requires careful analysis and public input.
- This debate should occur during the development of ODFW's POP in their next agency request budget.
- The answer to some of these questions may need to wait until current litigation on all Willamette trout and steelhead hatchery practices has been resolved.
- The easiest call of all is to completely eliminate trout production at this facility. Trout are the fish species raised at Leaburg with the most disease problems.
- There are many deserving and priority places to spend that kind of money in the Willamette Basin.
- We encourage the Ways & Means Subcommittee to reject this appropriation.

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