



January 31, 2019

Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Natural Resources  
Co-Chairs Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon  
900 Court Street NE, Room H-178  
Salem, Oregon 97301

**RE: Support for HB 5527 and Oregon Parks & Recreation Department Budget**

Co-Chairs Taylor and Reardon and Members of the Joint Subcommittee:

On behalf of American Whitewater, I write today in support of the proposed budget for the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department.

American Whitewater (<http://www.americanwhitewater.org>) is a 65 year old national non-profit organization with a mission “to conserve and restore America's whitewater resources and to enhance opportunities to enjoy them safely.” We represent a broad diversity of individual river enthusiasts, river conservationists, and more than 100 local paddling club affiliates across America. The organization is the primary advocate for the preservation and protection of whitewater rivers throughout the United States, and connects the interests of human-powered recreational river users with ecological and science-based data to achieve the goals within its mission. The Oregon Park & Recreation Department plays a unique role in providing for Oregon’s outstanding rivers and river related outdoor recreation opportunities, including the management of the State Scenic Waterways program.

In particular, we strongly support continued funding for the Office of Outdoor Recreation, created by the Legislature in 2017. In the short amount of time it’s been in operation, the OOR has helped advance conversations core to outdoor recreation interests, including Search and Rescue operations, and waterway access. We have very high hopes that this office will play a significant role in coordinating between multiple agencies and private partners on an array of important issues for outdoor recreation in this state.

As an organization that represents a growing and unique user group that often enjoys the use of our states’ public lands and waterways to paddle, we strongly support policy package 105 which would enhance the Department’s ability to reach Oregonians currently not accessing the state park system. We believe that Oregon’s outdoor recreation assets can and should be accessible and enjoyable to all Oregonians. As stated in the budget proposal:

*“OPRD is focused on connecting everyone to Oregon’s special places because no one should feel unwelcome in an Oregon park. No one should feel that Oregon’s parks are off limits to them. Initial small steps include having conversations, listening to one other and learning to understand each other’s perspectives. This is vital to treating each other and park visitors with respect. OPRD in engaging in a model of “Engage, Relate, Adapt”.*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5527. We urge your strong support for the full proposal before you today and hope to continue strengthening funding for Oregon’s recreation assets in budgets to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Priscilla Macy' in a cursive script.

**Priscilla Macy**  
**Regional Coordinator, American Whitewater**

[www.americanwhitewater.org](http://www.americanwhitewater.org)

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