

March, 13, 2019

The Honorable Kathleen Taylor, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Jeff Reardon, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

My name is Dana Roberts and I live in Salem Oregon. As a volunteer with the Coastal Conservation Association of Oregon, I am here today to speak to the Columbia River reforms and the Columbia Basin Endorsement fee (CBE). I participate in the External Budget Advisory Committee with ODFW each year.

CCA supported the Columbia River Reforms that allowed a transition period of five years to remove non-selective gillnets from the main stem of the Columbia River. In 2017 and 2018, gill nets had been removed from the main stem of the Columbia for Spring Chinook and Summer Chinook and in the fall, main stem gill netting was limited to Zones 4 & 5 (from the mouth of the Lewis to below Bonneville Dam).

To compensate for the loss of mainstem gillnet fishing we supported increasing hatchery smolt releases in off-channel areas where the commercial fleet could still use gill nets and avoid the ESA-listed species and conserve wild stocks of Salmon / Steelhead. The increase in smolts to off-channel areas was to provide replacement revenue to the Commercial fishery.

The Columbia Basin Endorsement fee of \$9.75 per year or \$1.00 per day is up for renewal during this Session of the Legislature and is contained in ODFW sponsored legislation (SB42). The Department is asking to make the CBE permanent. However, there are serious concerns about continued efforts by the ODFW Commission to undo the Columbia Reforms and we would only support an extension of two years and only as long as gill nets stay off the main stem of the Columbia. Unfortunately, two commissioners are making a push right now to return gill nets to the main stem Columbia year-round – essentially eviscerating the reforms and the purpose of the endorsement.

The 2014 ODFW fishing regulations regarding the CBE stated: **“Money from the endorsement will help fund the transition to eliminate non-tribal commercial gill nets on the lower mainstem Columbia River and provide additional salmon and steelhead for sport fishing.”**

In those same regulations; then director, Roy Erlicker further stated: **“Under this new management regime, commercial gillnets are being transitioned off the lower mainstem Columbia River and into off-channel areas.”**

Now the electronic regulations read: **“Money from the endorsement helps fund improvements to Columbia River fisheries, including: expanded off-channel commercial fishing areas, fisheries specific research and monitoring, additional hatchery production, and commercial/recreational fisheries law enforcement.”**

A pretty stark change in policy although the ODFW Commission hasn't yet changed the policy. This is troubling to the people of the state of Oregon who pay ODFW's fees approved by the Legislature.

An effort is underway led by two pro-gillnet commissioners to reverse the reforms and put non-selective gillnets back in the main stem of the Columbia River. They want to do this before their terms expire in in June. We are asking our legislators to weigh in with the ODFW commission and Governor Brown to hold true to the reforms to remove gillnets from the Lower Columbia River and the conservation of our fish resources.

If gillnets are returned to the Lower Columbia River, we cannot support continuing the Columbia River Endorsement fee and would also suggest that the next step of the general fishing license fee increase scheduled for January 2020 be rescinded due to a lack of accountability at ODFW.

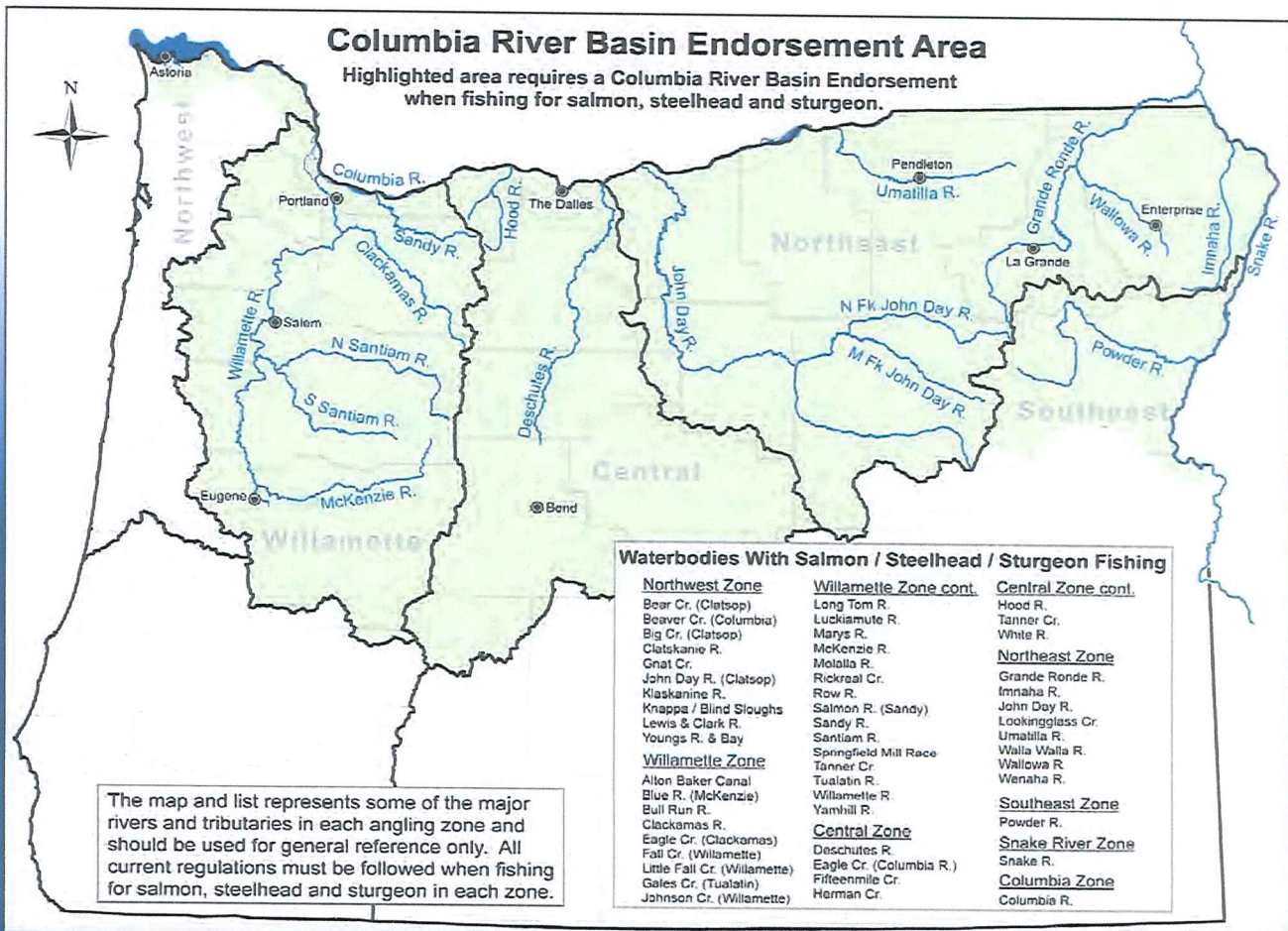


Beginning Jan. 1, 2014, anglers fishing for salmon, steelhead or sturgeon in the Columbia River Basin are required to have a Columbia River Basin endorsement.

- Cost is \$9.75 a year when purchased with an annual fishing license, or \$9.75 plus a \$2 agent fee when purchased separately.
- Cost is \$1 per day for daily fishing licenses.
- Endorsement will be in addition to a fishing license and Combined Angling Tag.
- Required when fishing for salmon, steelhead or sturgeon on all rivers and streams in the Columbia River Basin.
- Anglers with a resident disabled veteran, resident pioneer, and resident and non-resident youth under 14 licenses will be issued a free endorsement upon request to fish for salmon, steelhead or sturgeon in the Columbia River Basin.

The endorsement may be purchased wherever fishing licenses are sold.

Money from the endorsement will help fund the transition to eliminate non-tribal commercial gill nets on the lower mainstem Columbia River and provide additional salmon and steelhead for sport fishing. More information about the endorsement and Columbia River fisheries reforms can be found at, [http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/columbia\\_river\\_basin\\_endorsement.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/columbia_river_basin_endorsement.asp)





# Director's Message



## A great year for salmon

Salmon is Oregon's most iconic game fish, and Oregonians are passionate about salmon and salmon fishing. Whether it's because of their epic round-trip journey from river to ocean, or the fact they fight hard and taste great, there's something special about salmon.

I'm pleased to say that in 2013 there was some special salmon fishing in Oregon. The fall Chinook return on the Columbia River was record-setting. Almost one million adult fall Chinook were counted at Bonneville Dam, and on one day alone - Sept. 9, 2013 - 63,870 passed the dam.

There were also solid returns of salmon to coastal rivers as fall Chinook returns continued to build and are approaching the levels anglers enjoyed in the early 2000s.

The Deschutes River opened for fall Chinook for the 12th straight year - remember when there was no salmon fishing on the river? This 100 percent wild run is one of the healthiest in the Columbia River Basin and was on track to set a new record in 2013.

Impressive numbers of coho headed up the Willamette River, where managers predicted at least 15,000 would pass the Falls in Oregon City.

## And for the Columbia River

The year 2013 marked another milestone in salmon management with the adoption of a package of management reforms for fisheries on the lower Columbia River.

For years, sport anglers on the lower Columbia River have been advocating for a greater share of the available salmon harvest, and the removal of non-tribal commercial gill nets from the mainstem. Thanks to the management reforms adopted by the Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Oregon State Legislature, we're well on our way to accomplishing these goals.

Under this new management regime, commercial gill nets are being transitioned off the lower mainstem Columbia River into off-channel areas, and the sports share of available salmon harvest is increasing. By the end of the transition period in 2017, for example, 80 percent of available spring Chinook harvest will be earmarked for sport anglers.

Taxpayers and anglers will share the costs of this new management approach. Sportfishing groups and others involved in developing this compromise agreed that in return for increased fishing opportunities, sport anglers would be asked to help fund this effort through a new

Columbia River Basin Endorsement beginning January 1, 2014.

Anglers will need the \$9.75 annual endorsement (or \$1 per day for daily licenses) whenever they are fishing for salmon, steelhead or sturgeon in all rivers and streams within the Columbia Basin. The endorsement will fund the transition of non-tribal commercial gill nets out of the mainstem Columbia River into enhanced off-channel areas, freeing up additional salmon and steelhead for sport fishing.

You'll find more details about this endorsement on the inside front cover of this booklet, or on the ODFW web site at:

[http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/columbia\\_river\\_basin\\_endorsement.asp](http://www.dfw.state.or.us/fish/CRP/columbia_river_basin_endorsement.asp).

## And don't forget trout

Finally, while salmon management was high priority this year, we didn't ignore other popular fisheries. We continued to work to restore and enhance trout fisheries throughout the state using both experimental and tried-and-true techniques. For example:

- In Baker County we introduced tiger muskies into Phillips Reservoir to help control an exploding yellow perch population that has decimated the trout fishery. Since the illegal introduction of yellow perch in the early 1990s, angler use and the value of the fishing to the local economy had declined 90 percent.
- In Lake County we treated Lofton Reservoir with rotenone (a plant-based fish toxicant) to eliminate an invasive Tui chub population. This will allow us to save money by stocking smaller fingerling trout that couldn't compete with the Tui chub.
- Throughout the Cascade mountain range and Eagle Cap Wilderness, we stocked hundreds of high elevation lakes with almost half-a-million fingerling trout to provide fishing opportunities for those who like to add solitude and scenic beauty to their fishing experience.
- At popular Diamond Lake, we revised the regulation to allow year-round fishing and hundreds of anglers took advantage of the new ice fishing opportunities.

For 365 days of the year there is great fishing somewhere in Oregon. Whether it's an iconic world-class river or a small neighborhood pond, take advantage of what this great state has to offer and GO FISHING.

Roy Elicker, Director