

Written testimony:

I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding recovering from the 2020 Wildfires. Your committee work can make a substantive difference to the recovery of many miles of Oregon's waterways keeping our water clean and safe for fish, wildlife, and people that are dependent upon our rivers remaining healthy and functioning.

I am speaking on behalf of Friends of the Breitenbush Cascades in the Mt Jefferson area. On Sept 8, 2020 I lost my primary home in Gates, Oregon along the N. Santiam River, and a secondary off-grid Forest Service cabin within the Breitenbush watershed. I also volunteer to my local watershed council and was one of the first properties to mitigate the riparian on the N. Santiam river by placing straw-bales between my home's foundation and the river, along with placing wattles, jute mats, and seeding on the riverbank to prevent contaminants and slow erosion. Soon I will be replanting the riparian and securing the banks with native shrubs and trees, shading the waterways, and providing habitat.

My cabin was along Devils Creek that feeds into the Breitenbush River. And that is a different story. To this day there has been no riparian mitigation upon Devils Creek or the Breitenbush River.

My present concern is the availability of native plants for repair of the riparian in fire affected areas. We need native plants to restore the riparian whether the riparian is on private, state, or federal lands. Please help to secure funding and assist nurseries in providing stock to distribute to property owners, contractors, and volunteers. This needs to extend into a permanent and robust system as we move into the era of extended fire seasons. It is essential to facilitate cooperative endeavors with county Soil and Water Conservation Districts, watershed councils, and state and federal land managers. The need extends far beyond the typical reforestation stocks contracted on behalf of Oregon Department of Forestry, Bureau of Land Management, and United States Forest Service. Adequate funding provided to Soil and Water Conservation Districts and watershed councils can assist the recovery while encouraging volunteer and contracted efforts.

In conclusion, we need more native plants distributed throughout fire impacted efforts. Your efforts to find the funds and distributed to the counties will make a critical difference to wildlife and all Oregonians dependent upon clean water.

Thank you,

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