

Remembrance of Bob Sallinger

DATE: December 11, 2024

Oregon Wildlife Coalition

includes Oregon Wild, Bird Alliance of Oregon, Western Environmental Law Center, Cascadia Wildlands, Humane Society of the US, Humane Voters Oregon, Defenders of Wildlife, and Think Wild

submitted by Danielle Moser

Bob's incredible passion and commitment to Oregon's wildlife and habitat fueled his long-standing career and made him an inspiring and accomplished advocate. From the Klamath marshes to the Malheur refuge, across to urban nature preserves and backyard habitats, Oregon's landscapes and the wildlife that depend on them are better safeguarded because of Bob's fierce dedication.

Accomplishments under Bob's leadership:

- Did the heavy lifting for the conservation community to help transform the Elliott State Forest into the Elliott State Research Forest, where carbon storage, older forest habitat, and clean water are now the priorities.
- Part of the team who negotiated the historic Private Forest Accord
- Worked with ODFW and Commission to update wildlife coexistence and stewardship practices and policies.
- Better protections for the rare nesting seabird: the marbled murrelet
- Dedicated funding for ODFW's wildlife conservation and nongame programs
- Advocated for and helped pass a bill to ban indiscriminate M-44 cyanide devices in Oregon.
- Served on multiple workgroups led by ODFW and the Commission to strengthen trap check times for wildlife.
- Created some of the most innovative conservation programs in Portland, including Cats Safe at Home, Bird-safe Buildings, Lights Out, Peregrine Watch, and the Backyard Habitat Certification Program.
- Advocated for legislation to ban coyote killing contests.
- Led efforts to restore bird habitat on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding floodplains.
- Known as the original Portland coyote man, Bob helped to co-found and continued to be actively involved with the Portland Urban Coyote Project
- Bob spent over 2 decades fighting for a 600+ acre natural area on Hayden Island at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers
- He helped in the recovery of the Peregrine Falcon in the Portland Metro area.

Bob highlighted the mismanagement of double-crested cormorants on East Sand Island and efforts to prevent the collapse of the largest colony of this species on the West Coast.

WaterWatch

submitted by Kimberley Priestly

Bob was a brilliant strategist and advocate with a spirit, sense of humor, and outlook that made him uniquely successful in protecting all kinds of places and species across Oregon. He was one of a kind and made Oregon a better place. He was also someone we all loved working with. Many of us at WaterWatch had the honor of working with Bob over the last three decades and

we are beyond words to describe this loss. To honor Bob, we should all strive to go the extra mile to protect Oregon's wetlands, forests, rivers and grasslands for the birds, wildlife, fish, salamanders, and other critters that he so dearly loved. We thank Rep Helm and the committee for honoring him. May his spirit live on through our collective work.

Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon

submitted by Karen Kraus

I had the great pleasure of working with Bob for more than 25 years on issues impacting the welfare of cats and birds. Bob saw that Portland Audubon (now Bird Alliance of Oregon) and the [Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon](#) (FCCO) had a shared vision of fewer cats in the outdoor landscape and he reached out to FCCO (a spay/neuter program for feral and stray cats) to see how we could partner for the betterment of cats and local wildlife.

He understood the common cat and bird conflict could be best addressed by engaging the community and that, in Portland, people care deeply about the welfare of cats and birds and prefer humane approaches to addressing the issue.

The [Cats Safe at Home](#) partnership has focused on raising public awareness, public policy, research, and community engagement, with the Catio Tour being the highest-profile activity. In its 12 years, it has hosted more than 10,000 people visiting catios (outdoor cat enclosures) and resulted in a "movement" of catios being built – we now track more than 1,200 in the metro region. Bob talks about the Tour [here](#). Bob's novel idea to bring cat and bird advocates together was not only visionary but remains unique today, as very few

places have anything even remotely similar.

We worked as closely with Bob as we do with any animal welfare programs, maybe closer. We had trust and shared a deep respect that resulted in meaningful and measurable outcomes that improved life for cats, birds and the people who live here. We are deeply saddened to have lost a friend, advocate, and visionary. We remain steadfastly committed to carrying his vision into the future.

It is still so unimageable that he is gone. He was the face of conservation in Oregon and untold animals and species live and thrive here because of his tireless efforts. We must all step up to ensure our wildlife continue to have a voice at the table and be recognized for their intrinsic value and rights, and we protect the spaces that they call home. Without them, Oregon isn't Oregon.

Portland Urban Coyote Project

submitted by Zuriel van Belle

I worked with Bob on coyote issues in the Portland metro area for the last 10 years and, like so many, was impressed, inspired, and activated by his knowledge, advice, and diligence. He helped develop the [Portland Urban Coyote Project](#). Our project advisor and I wrote [tributes](#) to him on our website. I have also shared mine below in case it is useful to provide more context about his contribution to coyote issues (just one tiny corner of his massive impact across the state). Thank you for your time.

The day before Bob died, he had to skip a Coyote-palooza planning meeting. As we discussed various elements of the event, funding, outreach strategies, and partnerships myself and others in the meeting, as often happened when Bob wasn't there, said things like, "We'll need to ask Bob," "It would be good to know what Bob thinks," "I'd want Bob's perspective on that before we make it official," and "Bob would know!" I deferred to Bob in his absence so much during that meeting that I finally said something like, "Turns out, I'm nothing without Bob." It was a joke, but I think we all understood what I meant. Bob would know.

Bob was a part of the coyote project from the very beginning and [documented the charismatic coyote in Alameda](#) that prompted the first version of our website (a single-page report form created by masters student Jenny Grant, and geography professor and advisor to the project, Barbara Brower). As the project grew, Bob guided us, advised us, warned us, and humored us. He shared with us freely and for the good of the coyotes and the community. He served as a member of my master's thesis committee and provided excellent notes, encouragement,

and ideas. During his transition from Bird Alliance to Willamette Riverkeeper, he was beyond generous with his time; staying committed to coyotes among his many, many, *many* other commitments. At one point, when discussing the project, he said something like, "I want to stick around but I also don't want to be that old guy hanging on—I only want to stay if you want me to..." I could only laugh and say something like, "Oh my gosh, please *never* leave us. We *definitely* want you to stay."

He was a trusted collaborator and an absolute fount of knowledge—about coyotes, partners, and messaging. His input, advice, and wisdom were indispensable for our project and we, like so many others, have lost a piece of the project we won't get back.

My last private email to Bob, on Thursday morning, ended with "I'd love your perspective as the original Portland coyote man." As usual, I was asking him to draw from his wealth of knowledge about coyotes and coyote issues in Portland. Bob was the *original Portland coyote man*.

Losing Bob will reverberate through the environmental community immeasurably. I know that I am one of the countless many who relied on his depth of knowledge, drive, sensibility, practicality, wisdom, experience, integrity, and humor. I hoped to learn so much more from Bob.

Our deepest condolences go out to Bob's family, to his friends, to his colleagues, and to our whole community.

WildAid

Submitted by David Kracke

Bob's vision and dedication to the preservation of wild places and wild animals inspired all of us who worked with him. As John Muir said, "The clearest way into the universe is through a forest wilderness." Bob knew this as well as anyone. We have lost a giant and owe it to him to keep up the good fight.