

Application, Administration and Enforcement of Wildlife Laws

ORS 496.264

Findings

The Legislative Assembly finds and declares that:

(1)

Many small streams in eastern Oregon were historically inhabited by beaver populations and strongly influenced by beavers' unique ability to modify their physical surroundings. Beaver dams had the effect of slowing the flow of water, allowing for natural overflow onto surrounding ancient floodplains and providing many positive benefits to stream ecosystems and to the hydrologic functioning of streams and adjacent water tables.

(2)

Due, in part, to the near eradication of the once prevalent beaver populations, many stream systems have become severely degraded during the past century, developing deeply eroded and incised stream channels that have lost connectivity with the natural ancient floodplain. These changes to the stream systems have resulted in adverse environmental and economic impacts.

(3)

The public policy of the State of Oregon is to encourage and support a program for voluntary stream restoration actions by landowners that can help restore both environmental and economic health to eastern Oregon through the construction of environmental restoration weirs, provided that the voluntary stream restoration actions do not have significant adverse consequences for the environment or existing water rights.

(4)

Environmental restoration weirs constructed pursuant to [ORS 496.266 \(Environmental restoration weirs\)](#) may provide benefits to stream restoration that include:

a)

Improving habitat conditions;

b)

Slowing stream runoff;

c)

Decreasing the chance of catastrophic wildfire;

d)

Improving carbon sequestration; and

e)

Improving economic productivity of the adjacent ancient floodplain. [2021 c.63 §2]