

## TESTIMIMONY TO THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 7, 2013

Paul Engelmeyer

Thank you for the opportunity to speak your committee today. My name is Paul Engelmeyer and I live just south of Yachats on the Oregon Coast. I am involved in a diversity of natural resource conservation issues primarily on the central coast. I wanted to introduce myself to you, see how I can support your committee's work and offer myself as an informational resource to you if that would be of assistance. There are already a number of issues that you are dealing with that are of interest to me and the groups that I work with and support and others I'm just learning about.

My perspective comes from wearing a number of conservation hats and working in collaborative partnerships with federal, state, and non-profit organizations. I represent multiple conservation organizations on the Coast specifically, Audubon Society of Portland, the Native Fish Society, and The Wetlands Conservancy . I have managed lands for both the Wetlands Conservancy and Audubon for over 20 years and have worked with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the Siuslaw National Forest, and the local MidCoast Watersheds Council on watershed education and restoration activities for multiple species including Coho Salmon, and the Marbled Murrelet. I have worked with The Wetlands Conservancy, state and federal agencies in identification and acquisition of lands that conserve lands for their biodiversity and other functional values (water quality, flooding) education and overall community quality of life. My work with the Native Fish society is one of policy but also as a River Steward, helping to advance watershed restoration.

My collaborative work involves working with groups that realize that despite our diverse perspectives, have many common goals such as habitat protection that will help recover species in trouble and avoid stricter regulations, restoration measures to assure strong populations of fish that support recreational and commercial fisheries, and restoration work that stimulates the local economy by helping assure there is work in the woods and in the ocean for forest and fishing workers.

Another common goal is to protect Oregon for present and future generations in ways that encourage tourism that takes advantage of Oregonian's love of the coast and its resources. Recent studies by Runyon and Surfrider Foundation that I can provide you if interested, show approximately 2 million visits to the coast per year *that are dependent on natural resource*

*focused activities* These generate over \$2.4 billion/year. Activities include viewing wildlife such as seals, pelicans, and whales, enjoying scenic vistas, and fishing and hunting.

One of the collaborative groups that I participate in is the Siuslaw National Forest Stewardship Group. Our Stewardship Group was awarded the ***'Two Chief's Partnership Award' in 2010.*** This national award is presented annually by the Chiefs of the U.S. Forest Service and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to recognize exemplary partnership efforts promoting conservation and forest stewardship. Our group works with the forest service to promote and advance forest health through restoration activities which create additional jobs while timber harvest and road building activities are conducted.

Another recent result of cooperative activities, this time between an international non-profit Birdlife International, Oregon's Audubon Society which is 14,000 members strong, the Siuslaw National Forest and our local Ten Mile Creek Sanctuary, was the designation of the 80,000 acre landscape unit surrounding Audubon's Ten Mile Creek Sanctuary and including the Forest Service's Cummins and Rock Creek Wilderness as a ***'Globally Significant Important Bird Area for the Marbled Murrelet'***. This latest International Bird Areas joins over 100 IBAs areas in Oregon and are a magnet for tourism. I give many tours for universities, local, state, national and international audiences in my area. If you are interested in more information about the IBA program I would be more than willing to arrange a tour of one the many special places for birds in Oregon or provide a presentation in the future.

I have also been serving as the statewide conservation representative on the Ocean Policy Advisory Council (OPAC) for two terms. As you know one of the key issues facing this advisory body was to develop a system of marine reserves that protect marine biodiversity. I am proud to say that our community team process, involving a broad diversity of ocean users including commercial and recreational fishermen, resulted in a ***15 to 1 vote in favor of the 'Heceta Perpetua Marine Reserve, Marine Protected Area, and Seabird Protection Area'*** which is one of the 5 areas in Oregon's near-shore that make up the backbone of a network of Marine Reserves.

Finally, I am a member of the Local Stakeholder Advisory Committee related to the Clean Water Act. I am working on the Implementation Ready – Total Maximum Daily Load process for the mid-coast basins. This gives me the unique opportunity to give input on the development of practical and easy to implement Best Management Practices to improve water quality for public health, fishing, and other beneficial uses and meet the mandates of the Clean Water Act.

During the 2013 session of the Oregon Legislature, the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee may have the opportunity to discuss and act on a number of bills that directly relate to the long-term health of Oregon's near-shore species, and sensitive habitats as

well as wild native fish populations, wildlife and avian species. From my perspective we must acknowledge the fact that much of our landscape – our watersheds and estuaries have been altered but still have incredible ecological and economic value to Oregon’s native fish and wildlife species.

A few examples of bills that have been introduced that we will support include:

HB 2396 Management of large wood in streams

HB 2401 Protects salmon and steelhead spawning beds

HB 2530 Prohibits the import of genetically engineered fish

These bills are indicative of the type of actions we support because they adopt a protection and restoration perspective that will lead to the sustainability of our forests, watersheds, and estuaries and help assure abundant salmon in our streams as well as benefit other native wildlife species. They will also help to carry out the legislatively mandated State Wildlife Policy (ORS 496.012), which directs the state ‘to prevent the serious depletion of any indigenous species.’ I have heard about a few forthcoming bills on restoration and wetlands that the groups that I represent and work with will want to review.

I truly appreciate this opportunity to come before the committee today and I look forward to an interesting and productive session. Finally, I have The Wetland Conservancy’s Publication ***“Heroic Tales”*** for each committee member to showcase the stories, strategies, and creative solutions and partnerships that rural Oregonians, many farmers and ranchers have used to conserve Oregon’s wetlands.

Paul Engelmeyer, [541-547-4097](tel:541-547-4097)/[pengelmeyer@peak.org](mailto:pengelmeyer@peak.org)

Audubon Society of Portland

The Wetlands Conservancy

Native Fish Society