

Ways and Means Education Subcommittee Hearing
May 22, 2017, 8:30 a.m., Room H-170

Remarks by Paul Barnum, Oregon Forest Resources Institute

Co-chair Monroe and Co-chair Smith Warner, members of the committee, my name is Paul Barnum and I am the executive director of the Oregon Forest Resources Institute, a commodities commission created by the Oregon Legislature in 1991 to advance public understanding of Oregon's forests, forest management and forest products. OFRI is funded by a portion of the forest products harvest tax paid by industrial and non-industrial forestland owners, and it is governed by a 13-member board, with the voting members appointed by the State Forester.

It's only been the past five years that OFRI became more engaged with Oregon's Outdoor School movement. Frankly, I think OFRI's involvement was overdue. Staff and board members alike believe that Outdoor Schools represent a tremendous opportunity for young Oregonians to gain a fuller appreciation of the state's history, culture and economy as a natural resources-based state.

With increasing urbanization, fewer and fewer school children today have a connection to natural resources and the outdoors. I think that's a problem. Richard Louv, in his book *Last Child in the Woods*, aptly describes this as nature-deficit disorder.

Especially in Oregon, with our rich renewable agricultural, forestry, grazing and fishing resources, we need citizens who understand the linkages between sustainable natural resources management as the means to meeting our most basic needs: food, clothing and shelter.

OFRI's K-12 staff, as well as myself, have visited Outdoor Schools. We've met with Outdoor School leaders at both the Multnomah and Northwest ESDs to understand their needs and how we in the natural resources sectors can work together with them to provide outdoor school experiences that are relevant, meaningful and fun.

We are excited to be working with OSU Extension to extend outdoor school programs across the state, giving every fifth or sixth grade student the opportunity for a resident-based outdoor experience.

We believe that the advisory committee that has been formed is inclusive of Oregon's diverse interests, values, attitudes and beliefs. OFRI looks forward, along with our natural resource partners, to providing students an outdoor school experience that honors the roles of farming, forestry, ranching and fishing and that also impresses upon students the importance of environmental stewardship to maintain and protect all that we love about this great state.

Thank you.

Paul Barnum
Executive Director
Oregon Forest Resources Institute